

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Song of Songs 3: 9-10

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time again for our Bible reading. We will continue reading Song of Songs chapter 3, and today we will read verses 9-10.

The wilderness is a place of testing. In the past, Moses led two million Israelites through the wilderness, where they were tested for forty years. Ultimately, only Joshua and Caleb, along with the new generation of Israelites, emerged from the wilderness to enter the promised land of Canaan. This shows that only in the newness of resurrection can one enter God's good land. Jesus, the Son of God, before beginning His earthly ministry, was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, where He was tempted by the devil for forty days and nights. After overcoming the temptation, Jesus came up from the wilderness and began His earthly ministry.

Now, this saint who loves the Lord has walked through the first two stages of spiritual growth. Though not yet complete, he has developed considerable stature. As he emerges from the wilderness, mature saints in the church see him and joyfully ask one another, "Who is this coming up from the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh, frankincense, and all the spices of the merchant?" Some respond, "He is King Solomon's bed, the place where the Lord can rest at night." Not only does he provide rest for the Lord, but he is also joined to sixty valiant warriors—mature saints in the church who stand guard for the Lord's testimony. Each one has their sword drawn, vigilant against the enemy's nighttime attacks.

Dear brothers and sisters, in your church, do you see valiant warriors standing guard and bearing witness for God? Do you see saints who serve as a bed, providing rest for the Lord? A church that loves and follows the Lord is always a target of Satan's attacks. For the church to remain secure at night and filled with the Lord's presence, it needs both these groups of saints. I hope each of us can develop

spiritual vision to treasure and cherish the saints around us who protect God's testimony and provide rest for the Lord.

Verse 9: "Of the wood of Lebanon, Solomon the King made himself a palanquin:"

King Solomon rests at night, but in the day, he moves, so he made himself a palanquin from the wood of Lebanon. We have said that King Solomon represents our Lord, and the Lord moves on earth. When the Lord came to earth to minister, He accomplished the great work of redemption. After rising from the dead, He ascended to sit at the Father's right hand, serving as High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary. His earthly movement was entrusted to His disciples. The Lord intercedes in heaven, while His disciples on earth follow the course He set before His ascension: preaching the gospel, building the church, perfecting the saints, and preparing for His return.

The history of the church has entirely followed the Lord's command at His ascension: "Beginning from Jerusalem, to all Judea, to Samaria, and to the ends of the earth, bearing witness for the Lord Jesus Christ." Now, nearly two thousand years later, we continue to take up the Lord's commission, building the church, perfecting the saints, and bearing witness for the Lord in the places where we live.

The Lord's movement continues today, but how does the Lord move? This saint coming up from the wilderness is likened to the Lord's palanquin. The Lord's movement relies not on carts or horses but on a palanquin carried by people. The Lord's testimony never borrows worldly tools. Worldly methods are fast and fairly efficient, but the Lord's testimony cannot use carts or horses. Instead, it requires individuals to rise, take up God's commission, and carry the palanquin step by step. God's testimony is carried forth.

In the Old Testament, the Ark of the Covenant prefigured God's testimony. When King David captured Jerusalem and Zion, he wanted to bring the Ark from Abinadab's house. In 2 Samuel 6, it is recorded that David initially used an ox cart to transport the Ark. 2 Samuel 6:6-7 says: "And when they came to Nachon's

threshing floor, Uzzah put out his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled. Then the anger of the Lord was aroused against Uzzah, and God struck him there for his error; and he died there by the ark of God.”

Later, David learned that the Ark could not be transported by ox cart but had to be carried by priests. Knowing the correct method, 2 Samuel 6:12-15 records: “So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David with gladness. And so it was, when those bearing the ark of the Lord had gone six paces, that he sacrificed oxen and fatted sheep. Then David danced before the Lord with all his might; and David was wearing a linen ephod. So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet.” Here we see that God’s testimony is entirely different from worldly work. Worldly work is fast and efficiency-driven, but God’s testimony is wholly tied to people.

Recall Song of Songs 1:9, when this saint first began to love the Lord, before being shaped by the Lord’s hand, “the Lord likened him to a steed in Pharaoh’s chariot.” At the start, he was used by Pharaoh; the world always treats people as tools, as horses. When a horse grows old, it is replaced with a new one, because the world demands swift galloping to lead its trends. These trends constantly change, constantly renew, yet they are unaware that their destination is the lake of fire—the faster they run, the quicker they reach it.

Our Lord does not treat people as tools. The Lord personally crafts the palanquin, and this palanquin carries the Lord and His testimony forward. This saint who loves the Lord has been shaped by the Lord, has come out of the world, entered the wilderness, and now emerges from the wilderness. He has become the Lord’s chariot, made from the wood of Lebanon. Lebanon, in the northern mountains of the promised land, is renowned for its cedar wood, which prefigures Christ’s resolute, upright humanity. The Lord’s palanquin is made of cedar, indicating that this saint coming up from the wilderness is full of the virtues of Christ’s humanity, like cedar wood. These virtues are not innate but crafted by the Lord.

Dear brothers and sisters, sometimes when we make mistakes, we say, “That’s just my natural personality,” or “It’s the negative influence of my family background.” This isn’t entirely wrong, as we are all sinners by nature, living in a world full of sinners. But after being saved by grace, this way of speaking should change. Remember this saint’s earlier declaration: “I am dark, but lovely.” If we live out the life of the old self, we are indeed dark. But after being saved, we receive a new life from God. If we live out this life, we can live a lovely life.

Thus, we should no longer blame our innate personality or family background but ask ourselves: Why haven’t I lived out the life of the new self? Why haven’t I woven Christ’s sweet humanity into my being? Why haven’t I lived a life full of Christ’s virtues? If you see these things, you will confess and repent. May you become the Lord’s palanquin, crafted by the Lord from cedar wood.

Verse 10: “He made its pillars of silver, its support of gold, its seat of purple; it was inlaid with love by the daughters of Jerusalem.”

The Lord’s palanquin is meticulously crafted. Besides the main structure of cedar wood, it has pillars, a support, and a seat. Let’s examine each in detail:

“Its pillars are of silver”: the pillars are the palanquin’s supports, and the surrounding cedar boards are attached to them. The pillars are made of silver, which prefigures Christ’s redemption. We have all been redeemed by Christ — “the life of the old self was crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.” This is from Galatians 2:20: “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

This indicates that the virtues of cedar wood are joined to Christ’s redemption and supported by it. Typically, the pillars are the tallest, most prominent feature of the palanquin. This saint coming up from the wilderness continually exalts Christ’s redemption, and all his virtues are gained through redemption. Thus, all praise and glory should be given to the Lord.

“Its support is of gold”: gold prefigures God’s nature. The support is the chariot’s foundation; if it is not sturdy, the palanquin will collapse when someone sits in it. The support must be reliable. “Its support is of gold”: God’s nature is eternal, faithful, and unchanging. This saint who loves the Lord, having been shaped through the first two stages, has, as 1 Peter 1 says, partaken of God’s nature, and God’s nature forms the palanquin’s support.

This means that this saint coming up from the wilderness has walked a journey of life, as described in 2 Peter 1:5-8: “But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Through diligent service, he has borne beautiful fruit, making God’s nature the support of the palanquin.

“Its seat of purple”: purple is the color of royalty. In ancient times, the chemical industry was undeveloped, and purple dye came from natural sources. Along the eastern Mediterranean coast near Tyre and Sidon, a type of sea snail called murex produced a gland that secreted purple mucus, the source of ancient Tyrian purple. It’s said that over two thousand murex snails were needed to collect about one gram of purple mucus. The collection process was extremely complex, making purple dye three times more expensive than gold. Only royalty and nobility could afford it, so purple became the color of royalty.

The seat is where the Lord sits comfortably as the palanquin moves, and it is purple to match the Lord’s kingly status. This saint coming up from the wilderness, in the second stage, experienced multiple cycles of drawing near to the Lord, losing Him, seeking Him, and finding Him. In these repeated experiences, he underwent the work of the cross many times, experienced the Spirit’s supply and abundance, and received the Lord’s higher calling in resurrection. Through this process, the Lord’s royalty dyed him into a purple seat, making him worthy of the Lord’s resting.

Dear brothers and sisters, the purple in us is crafted by the Lord. If we are to reign with the Lord in the future, we must experience the lessons of the cross and the Lord's calling in resurrection today. Our obedience today enables us to reign with the Lord in the future. The Lord not only sits on a purple seat, but the seat is also covered with a blanket, which is "inlaid with love by the daughters of Jerusalem."

When the Lord rests at night, this saint coming up from the wilderness is joined to sixty warriors, guarding against nighttime disturbances. When the Lord moves in the day, he is not only the Lord's seat but is also joined to the daughters of Jerusalem—ordinary saints in the church. Seeing his wholehearted love for the Lord, they are deeply inspired and rise with him to love the Lord. In 1:4, we read: "Draw me away! We will run after you. The king has brought me into his chambers. We will be glad and rejoice in you. We will remember your love more than wine." He is not alone; he is always joined to the saints, and because of his love for the Lord, a group of saints around him rises to love the Lord together. As the Lord's palanquin moves forward, the Lord sits on the purple seat, covered with the love of the brothers and sisters in the church for the Lord. When the Lord moves, we see a palanquin filled with love.

Dear brothers and sisters, this saint coming up from the wilderness, shaped like pillars of smoke, prompts two descriptions from mature saints in the church: at night, he is the Lord's bed, providing rest; in the day, he is the Lord's palanquin, enabling movement. May our churches have such saints, serving as the Lord's bed and palanquin.

Let us pray together: Lord, reading the descriptions in the Song of Songs, how we long to fully surrender ourselves to Your gracious hands, allowing You to freely shape us. Make us Your bed and Your palanquin, enabling You to rest at night and move with You in the day. Not only does the church need a bed and a palanquin, but also sixty warriors to guard it and ordinary saints to rise and love You. Bless my church with such a sweet scene. I pray in the holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ.