

(6:8-9) - THERE ARE THREESCORE QUEENS, AND FOURSORE CONCUBINES, AND VIRGINS WITHOUT NUMBER. MY DOVE, MY UNDEFILED IS BUT ONE; SHE IS THE ONLY ONE OF HER MOTHER, SHE IS THE CHOICE ONE OF HER THAT BARE HER. THE DAUGHTERS SAW HER, AND BLESSED HER; YEA, THE QUEENS AND THE CONCUBINES, AND THEY PRAISED HER. -

There are kings on earth with their queens. Many of these kings have many concubines and take unto themselves virgins without number. In that ancient culture, many viewed this as a symbol of greatness and riches, but it is to their shame. No king could focus his love and attention to that many companions. Their loyalties would always be divided. But our Bridegroom focuses all of His love and attention on one wife - His church. His people are the love of His life, and His whole purpose of salvation and eternal blessedness is singly upon His bride. He came to this earth and assumed sinless human nature with a single eye aimed toward the glory of His Father in the salvation of His bride - God's chosen people who had been given to Him. He focused His eyes singly upon the cross to work out a perfect righteousness for His bride through His death as her Surety, Substitute, and Redeemer (*John 13:1*).

(6:10) - WHO IS SHE THAT LOOKETH FORTH AS THE MORNING, FAIR AS THE MOON, CLEAR AS THE SUN, AND TERRIBLE AS AN ARMY WITH BANNERS? - This is another great description of the true church of the living God as viewed in the grace, goodness, and power of Christ. She looks forward to the morning light, which is walking by faith in Christ and living by His Word in anticipation of His return. "*Fair as the moon*" because she lives in the reflected light of the "*sun of righteousness*" (*Mal. 4:2*), which is Christ the Lord. Just as an army is under the banner of its king and nation, the church is under the banner of Christ. She is an invincible army because of His grace, goodness, power, and love.

(6:11) - I WENT DOWN INTO THE GARDEN OF NUTS TO SEE THE FRUITS OF THE VALLEY, AND TO SEE WHETHER THE VINE FLOURISHED, AND THE POMEGRANATES BUDDED. - Many interpreters claim that this "*garden of nuts*" is a garden or grove of walnut trees. Here is a picture of Christ watching over His garden, His church. He does not come down to find out if she is flourishing. He knows and sees all things. He comes down by His Spirit to make certain that she is flourishing (*Psa. 1; John 15:1-11*). As His dear children, saved and preserved by His grace, He never leaves us to ourselves. He always abides with us to keep us flourishing in the great salvation that He has freely and fully provided and given to us.

(6:12) - OR EVER I WAS AWARE, MY SOUL MADE ME LIKE THE CHARIOTS OF AMMINADIB. - This is not to say that Christ did not know the state of His bride, but that even though He had withdrawn His comforting presence for a while, her state had not changed. So, He takes up His church as "*the chariots of Amminadib*." This is a Hebrew word that combines two words - "ammi," which means "my people," and "nadib," which means willing and princely. This verse could read, "Before I perceived, my soul made me as a chariot to my willing or princely people." This is a description of the subjects of God's grace who have been made willing in the day of His power and whose name is "Israel" (princes who have prevailed with God through Christ) (*Psa. 110:3*).

(6:13) - RETURN, RETURN, O SHULAMITE; RETURN, RETURN, THAT WE MAY LOOK UPON THEE. WHAT WILL YE SEE IN THE SHULAMITE? AS IT WERE THE COMPANY OF TWO ARMIES. - The daughters of Jerusalem, after witnessing such a glorious sight, plead for the

"Shulamite" to return. The name "Shulamite" is the feminine form of the name "Solomon," which means peace. The bride has the same name as her husband. Christ and His church are one in the eyes of God's law and justice. Under divine inspiration, the prophet Jeremiah identified Christ as *"the Lord our righteousness"* (Jer. 23:6), and then identified the church by the same name, *"the Lord our righteousness"* (Jer. 33:16). So, the daughters of Jerusalem cry out for the Shulamite to return, and her response is a question and an answer - *"What will you see in the Shulamite? as it were a company of two armies."* The answer the church gives to the question is a proof of grace and an illustration of the humility of every believer's soul.

What is this *"company of two armies"*? Biblical students differ here. Some say it is simply an expression of a then common practice in the appearance of an army made at the appearance of their king or prince. At the reception of their prince, the army would divide into two bands to show greater respect, honor, and majesty towards their leader. In this sense we could look at it from the viewpoint of the Old and the New Testaments. Both believers in the Old Testament and believers in the New Testament respect, honor, and give all glory to Christ, our King, our Prince, our Great High Priest.

Some Bible scholars say that the *"company of two armies"* refers to believers in their current state on earth as having within themselves both the Spirit of God and the flesh. All true believers are perfectly righteous in Christ, based on His righteousness imputed to them. They have a perfect STANDING before God that can never change. It is their justification before God, and they cannot be charged with their sins (Rom. 4:6-8; 8:33-34). But as to their STATE here on earth, all true believers have within themselves the Holy Spirit Who has given them spiritual life from the dead, and Who has given them a new heart to believe in Christ and cling to Him forever for all salvation. All true believers also have the remaining presence, corruption, and contamination of sinful flesh. There is a warfare within every believer. The conflict between the Spirit and the flesh could be represented by TWO ARMIES -

"For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5:17).

"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me" (Rom. 7:18-20).

Every child of God is keenly aware of this warfare that we are actively engaged in every day of our lives. We know that it is a warfare that will not end until we die and are changed in glory. But in spite of the knowledge of this constant conflict, we are still Christ's "Shulamite." And as we travel through this veil of tears, knowing our warfare will soon end, we can take great comfort in the fact there is no doubt concerning the outcome because Christ is our victory - *"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin" (Rom. 7:24-25).* We are *"made more than conquerors through Him that loved us"* and nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ (Rom. 8:35-39).