

Song of Solomon 1: 17; "The Beams of our House", Sermon # 18 in the series - "I am My Beloved's", Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on October 25th, 2009, in the Afternoon Worship Service.

The way to best interpret the word pictures of the Bible is by comparing Scripture with Scripture. It is to take and to compare how words are used in one portion of God's Word, with the passage that you are looking at in another portion of God's Word. In this way the interpretation itself becomes clear without any forced imposition upon what God intends by the word picture conveyed. We will be doing quite a bit of that very thing here in this sermon. Last week we were looking at how the Bride and the Bridegroom (The Church and Christ) complimented each other by declaring to one another how fair and how handsome they were to each other. This is what every believer, who is spiritually a part of the body and Bride of Christ ought to do. They ought to often be praising their King; our Lord Jesus. They ought to be declaring what He means to them in terms of His intrinsic beauty; the beauty of His blessed and holy nature which is perfect. And the ought, also, to be setting forth to Him their remembrance of His wonderful works; all the great and glorious work of His perfect obedience which He worked out in righteousness; and His dying love in going to the cross. Now this afternoon we are looking at the Church's further commendation of the house, or palace, which Christ dwells in, and which she has come to dwell in, by her marriage to Him. Her relationship with Christ is pleasant, their bed is green, and the house that they live in, is strong and beautiful also. So this afternoon I want to open up this truth; that all believers everywhere have every reason to admire the beauty and glory of the House which Christ has built. It is portrayed for us here, specifically, in terms of the beams and the rafters. So, first of all, we will look at this house as the house that Christ built, and then we will look at the meaning of its cedar beams. And then we will conclude with a look at the rafters of fir. Let us hold in high esteem, the One who has designed this house and has brought us into it, because of His great love for us.

1st- Christ is bringing all true believers into the house that is heavenly.

"The beams of our house are of cedar." The Bride calls it, "our house". It is the house where her Savior-Shepherd-King has brought her to dwell with Him. The house that Christ built for His bride is a place and it is a people. It is a spiritual house in the here and now; and it is a more literal spiritual house also in the hereafter. Concerning the hereafter, King David says in Psalm 23, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Concerning the house here, David says in Psalm 27, verse 4, "One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple." "For in the day of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; in the secret place of His tabernacle." Let's think about the house not made with hands first;

the house in which we will dwell with Christ forever. Turn with me to John Chapter 13, verse 36. "Simon Peter said to Jesus, 'Lord, where are You going?' "Jesus answered him, 'Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward.'" "Peter said to Him, 'Lord, why can I not follow You now?' "I will lay down my life for Your sake." "Jesus answered him, 'Will you lay down your life for My sake?' "Most assuredly, I say to you, the rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times." "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me." "In My Father's house are many mansions (many dwelling places); if it were not so, I would have told you." "I go to prepare a place for you." "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also." When we think about the confusion and fear that must have existed in the disciple's minds at this point, as they thought about what it would mean for Jesus to leave them and go to the death of the cross; and especially Peter who had just received word that his best intentions to protect his Master were not only going to be of no avail, but that he was going to deny Him three times; you can appreciate much more, can't you, the words of verse 1 of Chapter 14. "Let not your heart be troubled." "You believe in God, believe also in Me." Peter wanted to follow his Master, wherever He went, whether it was the death on the cross or whether it was going on to heaven. Peter sincerely loved his Lord. But he thought that laying down his life for the Lord Jesus was something that he could say, and then that he could do it, because he willing. But it is not always true that just because a person is willing to do something for Christ, that he is able to do it. Sometimes we presume too much. Matthew Henry says, "The most secure (those persons who think themselves most secure) are commonly the least safe; and those most shamefully betray their own weakness that most confidently presume upon their own strength."

But even though Peter had this grave weakness of too much self-confidence, Jesus addressed him with the words that followed, to him, just as much as He addressed them to the other 10 disciples. "Let not your heart be troubled; neither let it be afraid." "You believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions." The Lord Jesus wanted His disciples to know that even though men were conspiring to take away His life from him, that when He went away; that eventually, they would again be with Him; where He was; that is in heaven. I hope that each one of us will receive this blessed truth today; that Christ has not only died in order that we might enter into a spiritual house here, during the time of our stay, here upon the earth; but He died so that He might enter into heaven itself, on our behalf, and there prepare a place where we might be with Him forever. Dear believer; the Lord Jesus has not forgotten you; and He has not left you to be here forever. There is a better place that He is bringing you to. You may be losing your confidence completely, in terms of your seeing yourself as being able to be faithful in the many difficult situations which come to you in these days; but will you not see that Christ has a place where He will someday bring you; so that you will be with Him forever. And He does not want your heart to be

troubled and fretful while you are waiting to be brought to this glorious eternal house. He wants you to trust in Him, even as you trust in God the Father. It is God the Father's house that you will be brought into. But in that eternal house; Christ is doing a work of preparation; preparing a place which will just suit you for all of eternity.

Turn with me over to 2 Corinthians Chapter 4, verse 16. The Apostle Paul knew that sometimes the saints at Corinth were tempted to lose heart because of the afflictions which they saw that he went through for their sakes. He gives them here his reasons why he did not lose heart, and why they should not either. "Therefore we do not lose heart, even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day." "For our light affliction which is for a moment (or momentary light affliction; that is what he called the persecutions that he and Silas and Timothy were passing through), is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." "For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal." "For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." "For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked." My friend are you today looking at the things which are seen, or the things which are unseen? The things which you see around you now, are just temporary. The world is passing away. The afflictions that you experience here whether trials, or difficulties, or persecutions, are all allowed by God for your good. They are to wean you from this world so that you will have your eyes on the next. When you die, dear saint, you will not only be in a new house, but eventually you will also have a new habitation; a resurrection body which your soul will dwell in forever. Paul was looking at what was coming; all that the Lord was bringing him into; a new house with a new body.

2ndly - Christ brings all true believers into a spiritual house here upon the earth, with cedar beams in it.

There are a number of verses which will confirm this truth and open up the meaning of the beams of cedar. Turn with me to 1 Timothy 3: 15. Having just spoken to Timothy about the qualifications for elders and deacons in the church, Paul says, "...but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." The house which believers spiritually dwell in while here upon the earth is the Church of Jesus Christ. And that house not the literal physical building; it is the people which God has saved and added to His Church. 1 Peter 2: 5 says, "You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." So, we see here, that the house which Christ brings true believers into is a spiritual house. In the Church gathered is the place where Christ dwells. He dwells in their hearts by faith, and together they are known to Him as a

"habitation of God in the Spirit." Ephesians 2: 19 shows us this truth. "Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit."

You will recall that when the temple was constructed in the days of Solomon, that many large and strong cedar beams were used in the construction. Turn with me to 1 Kings Chapter 5, verse 5. Solomon has sent to Hiram king of Tyre and says to him, "And behold, I propose to build a house for the name of the Lord my God, as the Lord spoke to my father David, saying, 'Your son, whom I will set on your throne in your place, he shall build the house for My name.'" "Now therefore, command that they cut down dears for me from Lebanon...." Verse 10 says, "Then Hiram gave Solomon cedar and cypress logs according to all his desire." Now look over at Chapter 6, verse 9. "So he built the temple and finished it, and he paneled the temple with beams and boards of cedar." "And he built side chambers against the entire temple, each five cubits high; they were attached to the temple with cedar beams." "Concerning this temple which you are building, if you walk in My statutes, execute My judgments, keep all My commandments, and walk in them, then I will perform My word to you, which I spoke to your father David, and I will dwell among the children of Israel and will not forsake My people Israel." So the building of the temple was done using considerable numbers of cedar trees, and you will find if you were to read of his building of the House of the Forrest of Lebanon, that it was built with even more. John Bunyan in his treatise on the House of the Forrest of Lebanon says, I will therefore take it for granted that the house of the Forrest of Lebanon significant thing, yea, a figure of the church, as the temple at Jerusalem was, though not under the same consideration." "The temple was a figure of the church under the gospel, as she relates to worship; but the house of the Forrest of Lebanon was a figure of that church as she is assaulted for her worship, as she is persecuted for the same." I can't take the time to go into all that at this time, but I want to show you that in both of the houses built by Solomon which are typical of the Church of Jesus Christ; in both cedar beams were extensively used.

The cedar beams are meant to be representative of those believers in the Church, both pastors and others, who hold up the roof of this house which is composed of truth spoken in love. In 1 Timothy 3: 15, Paul calls the church the "Pillar of the truth". And we can find him giving an illustration of this, in a corresponding usage of the word pillar; speaking of it as a beam, and using it in reference to the Apostles in Galatians 3: 9, where it says, "And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised." The words for pillar and pillars are stulos and stuloi. They mean a support or column; in other words a

beam for holding something up. And I am trying to say to you that what is being held up by the church is the truth of the word concerning Christ. She does this out of love for Him, His cause and His kingdom. The fact that cedars are a word picture for believers is found if we turn to Psalm 92, verse 12. "The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon." "Those who are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God." "They shall still bear fruit in old age; they shall be fresh and flourishing, to declare that the Lord is upright; He is my rock and there is no unrighteousness in Him." You see, the saints who are zealous for the truth concerning Christ; those who are attempting out of love to Christ to spread the truth of Christ; these are like cedar trees in Lebanon. Because of Christ's love for them, and their love for Christ; their relationship flourishes and grows in the house of the Lord. That is what is being pictured for us in this verse in Song of Solomon.

3rdly - What about the Rafters of Fir? What do they represent?

If the beams of cedar are the greater and more important and bulkier pieces of wood that hold up the roof, the rafters must be those smaller and more slender pieces which are joined to them and compliment them in the holding up the weight of the roof of the building. You remember that verse that I quoted earlier in the sermon from Ephesians 2: 19? "Now therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit." The Church of Jesus Christ is being fitted together; those who are seemingly more important and those who are seemingly less important. But really they are all important to the strength of the building. What makes each of the beams strong and the rafters strong to hold up the roof of truth; to demonstrate to a watching world the love of Jesus Christ? The Lord Jesus; the heavenly Bridegroom knows that each and every believer has an important role to play in holding up the cause of truth and righteousness. They are all important to the demonstration of the love that exists between Christ and the Church. Because you see; God the Father is dwelling there in the Church; and Christ is manifesting His life and presence there; and the Spirit is filling each one in this living temple with joy and peace and grace as they believe in Jesus and as they work for Jesus. Isaiah 55: 12 says, "For you shall go out with joy, and be led out with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing before you, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands." "Instead of the thorn shall be the cypress tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree; for it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." The fir tree and the cypress are the same tree; sometimes called by the one name and sometimes by the other. The Lord Jesus Christ calls Himself a green cypress tree in Hosea 14: 8. He says, "Your fruit comes from Me." The fir tree is a shelter against the sun and the rain. Matthew Henry says, "God will be to all true converts

both a delight and a defense; under His protection and influence they shall both dwell in safety and dwell at ease." The Lord Jesus Christ is the One who makes both the beams of Cedar and the rafters of Fir stand strong and be useful in His Church. The Church is built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. But she is built by Jesus Christ. And it is because the Church God is a dwelling place where each of Christ's saints might find all the love, and the grace, and the strength that they will need to sustain them in their earthly journey; they come to know that they will be able to make it all the way to the Celestial City; to the Father's house; the dwelling place made without hands. "The Eternal God is a dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms," it says in Deuteronomy 33: 26 and 27. "There is no one like the God of Jeshurun, who rides the heavens to your help, and through the skies in His majesty." "The eternal God is dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms." (NAS translation) That is; undergirding these precious truths that the Church holds up; that God is our dwelling place, a place where God's people can find refuge, love, and help; are the outstretched arms of our Lord Jesus Christ.
