

(3:1) - BY NIGHT ON MY BED I SOUGHT HIM WHOM MY SOUL LOVETH: I SOUGHT HIM, BUT I FOUND HIM NOT. - By this point, we know that the bride (the church) knows her Bridegroom (Christ). By God's grace, she has sought and found Him. He has called her and brought her to Himself. This is the promise of God to every sinner who is brought by His grace and power to seek the Lord (*Isa. 45:19; 51:1; 55:6; Jer. 29:11-14; Amos 5:4; Rom. 10:13*). This is the work of the Lord, because we by nature will not, of our own choice, seek Him (*Psalms 14:1-3; 53:1-3; John 6:44-45; Rom. 3:10-12; 1 Cor. 2:14*). The *Song of Solomon*, as well as the whole of God's Word, makes it clear that all who have found the Lord have been found by Him. They can never be forsaken or lost (*John 10:27-30; 2 Tim. 1:12; Heb. 7:25; Jude 24-25*).

But here the bride seeks her Bridegroom Whom she loves but finds "Him not." Why? Christ has promised that He would never leave nor forsake us (*Heb. 13:5; cf. John 6:31-40*). Notice the words, "by night on MY bed." This is quite different from the words in other sections of the *Song of Solomon* - "OUR bed" (*Song 1:16*), "HIS bed" (*Song 3:7*). Both imply that the bride was in or shared the bed of her beloved. But in our text, she is alone "by night" in her own bed. The "night" symbolizes our journey on earth (*Rom. 13:11-14*). Christ is the "bright Morning Star" Who gives light to His people (*Rev. 22:16*).

While on earth, even as saints, we will experience times of darkness and loneliness. We are attacked from all sides by the devil, our own sinful flesh, and the world. The Lord has ordained a time for everything we experience for His glory and our eternal good (*Eccl. 3:1-12*). If God determines to withdraw His comforting presence for a time, it is not that He has forsaken us. It is to teach us even more how much we need Him, His grace, power, goodness, His comforting presence. It is to cause us to seek Him always. It is to work within us patience (enduring faith), knowing that we are totally dependent upon His grace, power, and righteousness at all times (*James 1:2-4*). The bride's continually seeking Him is proof that He loves her with an everlasting love (*Heb. 12:1-3; 1 Pet. 2:1-7*). If it were not for His preserving grace and power, we would stop seeking Him and forsake Him.

(3:2) - I WILL RISE NOW, AND GO ABOUT THE CITY IN THE STREETS, AND IN THE BROAD WAYS I WILL SEEK HIM WHOM MY SOUL LOVETH: I SOUGHT HIM, BUT I FOUND HIM NOT. - Notice how the bride sought the Bridegroom on her own bed, but "now" she rises and seeks Him in "the city in the streets, and in the broad ways." But she still "found Him not." Some see this city as representing the spiritual and eternal city which is the habitation God's people. I disagree with this, mainly due to the fact whatever these symbols represent, the Bridegroom was not there. Christ Himself said, "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (*Matt. 18:20*). I believe the city and the broad ways represent man's works and false religion wherein the true Christ is not to be found. In the Bible cities are usually places of great evil and represent man's efforts to preserve and protect himself. Broad ways are, obviously, ways that lead to destruction (*Matt. 7:13*). The question may be asked, "Why would the bride go into the city and broad ways of false religion to seek her Bridegroom?" The answer is that it is not that she returns to, or even believes she can find Christ in, false religion. But, being surrounded by false religion while in this dark world, this is an ever-present reminder that her Bridegroom is nowhere to be found where false religion and false gospels pervade. I believe the next verse supports this view.

(3:3) - THE WATCHMEN THAT GO ABOUT THE CITY FOUND ME: TO WHOM I SAID, SAW YE HIM WHOM MY SOUL LOVETH? - Just as the prophets of the Old Testament were called "watchmen" (*Isa. 52:8; 62:6; Ezek. 33:7*), the "watchmen" represent God's preachers and

God's witnesses who are said to be shining lights in this dark world (*Matt. 5:16; Php. 2:15*). As we walk in this sinful world, surrounded by false preachers and false believers, our only hope of finding our loving Savior is to hear the Gospel of His free and sovereign grace and to live in the fellowship of light and love with His people (His bride). Christ resides within each of us individually by His Spirit and His Word, but we also need to seek and find Him in the preaching of the Gospel wherein He is revealed as the Lord our Righteousness (*Rom. 10:13-17*). We need to seek and find Him in the sweet fellowship of our brethren in Christ (*1 John 1:1-7; 3:11-18*). Notice how these watchmen found the bride. She did not find them. This is another testimony to God's sovereign grace, not only to save us, but to keep us in that great salvation He has given us. If left to our own power and wisdom, we would never find Him, but He always finds us. He will never lose His bride. She asks, "Have you seen the One Whom my soul loveth?" This is the same as asking, "Do you know Christ?" True preachers preach what or whom they know. Those who preach Christ know Him savingly as their whole salvation and only righteousness before God. Others preach the law, the works of man, and the ways sin.

(3:4) - IT WAS BUT A LITTLE THAT I PASSED FROM THEM, BUT I FOUND HIM WHOM MY SOUL LOVETH: I HELD HIM, AND WOULD NOT LET HIM GO, UNTIL I HAD BROUGHT HIM INTO MY MOTHER'S HOUSE, AND INTO THE CHAMBER OF HER THAT CONCEIVED ME. - When sinners are brought by God to seek the Lord with the whole heart, they will find Him (*John 6:37; Rom. 10:13*). Notice how the bride "passed from" (crossed over) the watchmen. This is the desire of every true preacher of the Gospel. We desire that sinners find Christ and hold onto Him, never letting Him go, for all salvation (*John 1:29-34; 3:26-30*). The true preacher's goal is not that people would come to him and hold onto him, but that they would come to Christ and hold onto Christ. Like Jacob of old who wrestled with and would not let go of the man (Who was Christ) until He blessed him (*Gen. 32-24-30*), every sinner whom God calls to Christ will find Him and never let go. Christ will not let go of His bride (*John 10:27-30; Rom. 8:35-39*), and, because of His preserving grace and power, she will not let go of Him (*Heb. 10:38-39; 1 John 3:9*).

Dr. John Gill wrote that "my mother's house" and "the chamber of her that conceived me" could very well be an allusion to the tents that women had in former times, distinct from their husbands (*Gen. 24:67; 31:33*). He wrote that all tis may be understood either of the church as identified as "the heavenly Jerusalem" (*Heb. 12:22-24*), which is "the mother of us all" (*Gal. 4:26*), in the following sense. The Lord God uses the Gospel witness of the church (and individual believers who are members of His church) on earth to bring His people unto Himself under the Gospel message where they are born again by His grace and power.

(3:5) - I CHARGE YOU, O YE DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM, BY THE ROES, AND BY THE HINDS OF THE FIELD, THAT YE STIR NOT UP, NOR AWAKE MY LOVE, TILL HE PLEASE. - This is the same refrain as found in *Song 2:7*, and the meaning is the same. The "roe" is a gazelle, and the "hind" is a deer. This describes creatures who are easily preyed upon. This is what we are while on their earth, and, so, we must continually recognize that we are totally dependent upon the Lord for salvation and security. We must also wait upon Him and not provoke Him or dishonor Him in any way. Christ will never leave or forsake us, and we can never leave or forsake Him because He keeps us by His Spirit and His Word (*1 John 3:9*). We are to rest in Him and submit to HIS will in HIS good time when it pleases HIM to work in our lives.