

An Attempt To Listen To God On

The Beauties of the Lord

By

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Meditations on The Beauties of The Lord

Introduction

As with every aspect of our Lord, the theme is so lofty and the ground so sacred that one is conscious of personal inability to commit to paper the poverty of ones meditations. In the Song of Solomon, the lady speaks of her beloved as “him” 19 times. There is no reason to name him. Everyone knows who she means for she is enraptured with him. How immeasurable is that which we miss in not “knowing” Him. Paul wrote: “But for the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord for whom I have suffered the loss of all things . . . that I may know Him”. (Phil. 3:8-10)

When considering the beauties and perfections of the Lord it must be observed that there is a distinction between beauty and perfection. It is an impossibility for a thing to be truly beautiful if it is not perfect, but it is possible for a thing to be perfect and not beautiful. Against the background of man’s depravity and distortion, the Lord stands as a beaming light of beauty and perfection, the only human who is both beautiful and perfect in the evaluation of God the righteous Judge.

In other associated writings, meditations on His perfections are dealt with. This paper will deal with the introductory meditations on His beauties.

For something to be beautiful and perfect to any individual, two qualifications are needed:

- 1) A judicial ability to evaluate without bias.
- 2) To be an expert on the subject.

When the subject is the beauties of the Lord then only God has the judicial ability to perfectly evaluate and only He has the expertise on what is beautiful. Understanding that beauty to God is perfect conformity to Himself, then since God is:

- 1) Righteous, only a person who is perfectly and perpetually righteous can be beautiful to Him.
- 2) Light, only a person who is perfectly and perpetually light can be beautiful to Him.
- 3) Love, only a person who is perfectly and perpetually love can be beautiful to Him.

It is only as the Holy Spirit graciously reveals the beauties of the Lord that any human can enter into them. However, man has a responsibility to determine to learn the loveliness of Christ, and be willing to be taught. I say “determine” because the degree in which Christ is beautiful to me is dictated by the degree of my separation in spirit from the world, and of my alignment with God and His holiness.

God’s Revelations Of The Lord

Many years ago A. M. Hodgkin wrote a book called: “Christ in all the scriptures”. In that masterful exposition he takes the truth of the Lord revealing things concerning Himself: “from Moses and the prophets” (Lk. 24:27). Brother Hodgkin goes right into the New Testament and shows that the Lord is in all the scriptures. John wrote: “And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written” (Jn. 21:25). With such a vast theme, the following is a microscopic view of God’s thoughts of Christ. Thoughts through the unveiling of His positions, thoughts reveal through His speech and activity:

- 1) Some were prophetic, as when the holy men wrote:
 - a) “I have set my King upon my holy hill.” (Psa. 2:6)
 - b) “Thou art a priest forever.” (Psa. 110:4)
 - c) “He is the governor among the nations.” (Psa. 22:28)
- 2) Three were verbal:
 - a) At the Lord’s baptism. (Matt. 3:17)
 - b) Transfiguration. (Matt. 17:5)
 - c) When He prayed that God would glorify His name. (Jn. 12:28)

Meditations on The Beauties of The Lord

3) Two were activities when:

- a) God raised Him from the dead (Acts 13:30) and exalted Him to His own right hand (Acts 5:31).
- b) And the recognition of His worthiness by God letting Him take the book from His right hand. (Rev. 5:1)

The Wafers Of The Meal Offering

It is very hard for us to appreciate the beauty of the Lord. Indeed so glorious is Christ that God gave many pictures in the Old Testament to reveal His beauties to us. No one type is sufficient, but all are needed to convey His multi hued perfections, and even then, they fall far short. Christ is more perfect than the types could ever convey. His whole being was totally impervious to sin and impenetrable by it. He saw the ravages of sin but was never defiled, He heard sinful talk, knew man's sinful thoughts, but such is His impeccability He was completely undefiled and untainted.

When God gave instructions for the Meal Offering in Lev. 2, the Israelites were told they could present it as raw ingredients, baked like a loaf or wafers (Lev. 2:4). These wafers were thin slices of bread and as such, they prefigured the thin slices of the life of the Lord given to us (Jn. 20:30; 21:25). Our Lord's sojourn here was approximately thirty-three years or twelve thousand days, and yet for thousands of those days we know nothing at all. However, there are little glimpses of His movements,¹ incidents in His life² and God's comments concerning Him.

Three of these little "wafers" are given by God and one by man.³ Three were written and two spoken. The three written are:

- 1) "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon Him." (Lk. 2:40)
- 2) "Was subject unto them." (His parents) (Lk. 2:51)
- 3) "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." (Lk. 2:52)

The two spoken are:

- 1) "Is not this the carpenter's son?" (Mk. 6:3)
- 2) "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased". (Matt. 3:17)

The three written tell of the Lord's perfection in natural development, the second of His attitude to those given governorship over Him. In the teenage years and twenties He grew physically, intellectually, socially and spiritually.

The Written Comments

While almost nothing is known about the private life of the Lord from His journey back from Egypt until He was twelve years old, yet in the one statement given there are immeasurable depths. "The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon Him" (Lk. 2:40). The intervening years, until John Baptist's public ministry began, God gave one comment, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man (Lk. 2:52). That which makes this magnificent is this was the manner of His life in years when young men and ladies stretch their own wings learning their independence. It includes the twenties when so many mistakes are made. Now a man of about "thirty years of age" (Lk. 3:23), God having observed the intervening hours and days of those years He says, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased".

¹ He was brought from Bethlehem to Jerusalem for circumcision. To Egypt, to Nazareth.

² The comments of Simeon and Anna when He was taken to the temple for circumcision, His being in the temple when He was twelve.

³ While it was man who wrote the comments, it was the Holy Spirit who caused them to be written.

Meditations on The Beauties of The Lord

Several years later God again spoke concerning Christ when He was on the mount of transfiguration. The Lord had previously revealed to His disciples the imminence of His death and resurrection, and of the twelve disciples, three are privileged to be with Him on the holy mount (Matt. 17:1-8). It was an awesome sight when the shekinah glory of God was present in the cloud. From that cloud God made a distinguishing comment concerning His Son that cannot be equalled. His commendation was, "This is my beloved Son, hear Him". Every other voice was to be silent, every other voice was of no consequence and He alone had the voice of authority, without peer and without deterioration. This declaration by God was not to be wondered at because God had already spoken concerning Christ saying: "Behold my servant in whom is all my delight" (Isa. 42:1). Christ was beautiful to God, not only because He was His Son, but because of His minuteness in doing that which the Father had shown Him (Jn. 5:19, 30), and the totality of His dependence on God (Isa. 42:1). All His works were done, and His words were spoken by the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:2, 10:38). He was a man "approved of God" (Acts 2:22), for God dwelt in Him, "He doeth the works" (Jn. 14:10). His life was beautiful to God.

The Spoken Comments

The two spoken statements are in stark contrast to each other.

Is not this the carpenters Son?	This is My beloved Son.
Spoken by man on earth	Spoken by God from Heaven
Emphasizes His humanity	Emphasizes His deity
The voice of amazement	The voice of affirmation

In that word of verification, God declared unmistakably the perfections of His beloved Son, thus affirming all He had been and done in those intervening years had been perfect before Him.

The Contrast Between The Beauty Of The Lord And Men

The word "beauty" can be used in a variety of contexts. The beauty of a woman's face, a fragrance, a verdant meadow with a stream and mountains; but when speaking of the beauty of the Lord, it is not just the beauty of appearance but the beauty of His character.

The beauty of the Lord is in contrast to:

- 1) Moses who was a "proper child" (Heb. 11:23), "a goodly child" (Ex. 2:2) and yet had the heart of a murderer (Ex. 2:12) and spoke rashly (Num. 20:10).
- 2) David, as a teenager, was "fair" (1 Sam. 16:12; 17:42), yet had a heart that responded to the promptings of Satan in his sin with Bathsheba and numbering the people (2 Sam. 11:2-4; 1 Chron. 21:1).
- 3) Joseph was spoiled and a very proud young man⁴.
- 4) Solomon, so very wise, yet behaved so foolishly in later years. (2 Chron. 1:11; 1 Kgs 11:1)
- 5) Peter, so profound in speech yet so carnal in speech. (Matt. 16:16; Matt. 26:74)

⁴ It has been suggested that Joseph had no sin marked against him but his pride was manifested in his second dream. The first dream, concerning the sheaves of wheat bowing to His sheaf came from God because it came to pass (Gen. 37:6-8; Gen. 42:6). The second dream never came from God because in the dream he dreamt that his father and mother (Rachel died Gen. 35:19) bowed down to him, his mother never came into Egypt and therefore never bowed to him (Gen. 37: 9-10).

Meditations on The Beauties of The Lord

No matter how these men looked outwardly, their temperament and attitude was repulsive at times. Their beauty was external and undoubtedly in some measure, also their character. Like every other human, the better we get to know them the more their imperfections are seen. Christ was not like Moses, David or any of us, for the more His motives, goals, activity and words are pondered, the more His beauty shines forth. When His beauties are appreciated, there rises from the heart not just words, but adoring worship reechoing the words and sentiments: “He is altogether lovely, the chiefest among ten thousand” (Song of Sol. 5:16; 5:10), and “Thou art fairer than the children of men (Psa. 45:2).

He Is The “Altogether Lovely The Fairest”

In Hebrew, “Altogether lovely” is one word and indicates delightfulness. The word “Fairer” (Psa. 45:2), is a double adjective, He is beautiful, beautiful. Uniting these clauses it can be said: “He is gloriously delightful in beauty unsurpassable”.

His is true beauty and perfection that is unchangeable, for any change would automatically result in a defect. The most beautiful and enduring things of earth have inherent weaknesses that make them subject to corrosion, etc. In contrast, there was no sin, hereditary weakness or tendency to sin in our Lord. In Him there was no “law of sin and death” (Rom. 8:2), nor “The old man” (Rom. 6:6; Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:9). In Christ there was never the urge of the flesh to respond to sin in any way, thus His beauty was, and is, permanent. Furthermore, nothing external could ever tarnish or defile Him for, although He lived in the midst of a perverted sinful people, His purity remained unblemished. In a world of coarseness, His life was one of finesse. Surrounded by self-centeredness, He lived for others. This beautiful man began His day in spotless purity and ended it as it had begun.

How Does Anyone Describe The Moral Beauties/Glories Of The Lord?

With such an inexhaustible theme, the best that can be done is for each individual to share with others what the beauties of the Lord has meant to them. In reality, our Lord is not a subject to be studied but a person to be meditated upon.

When a priest in the Old Testament was handling the sacrifices (“which were figures of the true” Heb. 9:24), he had to wash his hands (Ex. 30:20), it was an external cleansing. How much greater is the cleansing needed when considering the Son of His Love who was the true sacrifice? The cleansing needed now is that of the flesh and spirit (2 Cor. 7:1). This is one of the reasons we are instructed to “examine ourselves” before partaking of the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor. 11:28).

Thankfully, there were times when the personal glory of the Lord was unveiled, for instance, on the Mount of Transfiguration. From the record of this event, we learn that the beholding of the beauty and glory of Christ does not come from intellectualism, but by being brought upward into that privileged place. Prior to this event the Lord told Peter: “Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which (who) is in Heaven” (Matt. 16:17). The enlightenment of the glory of Christ, the hearing of God’s thoughts concerning Him and the understanding of who He is, is all the result of divine revelation.

Had there been found in Christ, not by man but by God the righteous Judge, any infraction of the law in anything He did, or the tiniest iota of distortion in any word spoken, He would have immediately been unable to be the supreme sacrifice for sin.

Many years ago when going for music lessons I was given a piece to learn, “The Minute Waltz”. For some reason I found it difficult, constantly playing the wrong notes. One day my aunt, who was an accomplished pianist, came over and played it. Her expertise showed up my many mistakes. It is the same when we consider our Lord, for the more we see His perfections the more we see our imperfections and therein His beauties will be magnified.

Meditations on The Beauties of The Lord

What Were Some Of His Beauties?

The following table is a cursory consideration of some of His beauties

Beautiful in His	Scripture	Ref.
Accuracy of His teaching	“When ye shall see Jerusalem surrounded”	Lk. 21:20
Actions	“I do always those things that please Him”	Jn. 8:29
Approachability	“A leper came beseeching Him”	Mk. 1:40
Attitude to God	“The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.”	Isa. 50:5-6
Authority	“He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes”	Matt. 7:29
Censuring	“Woe unto thee, Chorazin”	Matt 11:21
Changing intensity of His prayers	“And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly”	Lk. 22:44
Clarity of His teaching	The parables, i.e. “The good Samaritan”	Lk. 10:30-35
Compassion	“When He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion”	Matt. 9:36
Compliance with the scriptures	“The Son of man goeth as it is written of him”	Matt. 26:24
Composure	“And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives”	Mk. 14:26
Condescension	“He riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments; and took a towel, and girded Himself”	Jn. 13:4
Consideration	“And Jesus, when He came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd”	Mk. 6:34
Corrections	“There shall not be left here one stone upon another” Correcting the disciples evaluation	Matt. 24:2
Countenance	“The fashion of His countenance was altered”	Lk. 9:29
Dependence on God	“Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit”	Lk. 23:46
Deportment	“When he was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not”	1 Pet. 2:23

Meditations on The Beauties of The Lord

Beautiful in His	Scripture	Ref.
Disfigurements	“His visage marred more than any man and His form more than the sons of men”	Isa. 52:14
Faith	“The Author and Finisher of our faith”	Heb. 12:2
Fidelity	“Wherefore, holy brethren. . . consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; Who was faithful to Him that appointed Him”	Heb. 3:1-2
Forgiveness	“Father forgive them; for they know not what they do”	Lk. 23:34
Forgiving helpfulness	“Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more”	Jn. 8:11
Fortitude	“He set his face to go to Jerusalem”	Lk. 9:51
Freedom from nationalistic bias	“How it is that Thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans”	Jn. 4:9
Gentleness	“Then were there brought unto Him little children, that he should put His hands on them”	Matt. 19:13
Godly fear	“was heard in that He feared” (eulabeia, reverence, piety)	Heb. 5:7
Grace	“Grow in (the) grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ”	2 Pet. 3:18
Gracious speech	“Wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth”	Lk. 4:22
His sovereignty in His teaching	“Ye have heard it said. . . But I say unto you”	Matt. 5: 27-28; 33-34; 38-39; 43-44
Honesty	“Thou sayest it”	Mk. 15:2 Lk. 23:3
How He spoke to the weary	“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”	Matt. 11:28
Humility	“I am among you as he that serveth”	Lk. 22:27
Hurtful statements	“Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?”	Jn. 1:46
Ignoring	“Rabbi, when camest Thou hither?” The Lord never answers that question	Jn. 6:25
Joys	“In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit”	Lk. 10:21
Justice	“Let Him without sin cast the first stone”	Jn. 8:7

Meditations on The Beauties of The Lord

Beautiful in His	Scripture	Ref.
Loathings	“Them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate”	Rev. 2:15
Love for His own	“Behold how He loved him” “Never man spake like this man”	Jn. 11:36 Jn. 7:46
Love for souls	“The good Shepherd layeth down His life for the sheep”	Jn. 10
Love for the father	“But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.”	Jn. 14:31
Meekness	“ Besought Him to depart from them. . . and he went up into the ship, and returned back again”	Lk. 8:37
Mercy	“Thou son of David, have mercy on us”	Matt. 9:27
Movements	“Must needs go through Samaria”	Jn. 4:4
Openness	“In secret have I said nothing”	Jn. 18:20
Peace	“My peace I give unto you”	Jn. 14:27
Presentation of the truth	When the Lord began to tell of His death	Matt. 17:22
Profoundness of His teaching	“This is life eternal, that they may know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent”	Jn. 17:3
Natural development	“And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man”	Lk. 2:52
Resoluteness	“ When the time was come that he should be received up, He stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem”	Lk. 9:51
Righteousness	“Thou hast loved righteousness”	Heb. 1:9
Sensitiveness	“He came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up”	Mk. 1:31
Sighs	“And He sighed deeply in His spirit”	Mk. 8:12
Silence	“As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth”	Isa. 53:7
Sorrows	“A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief”	Isa. 53:3
Supporting care	“And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me”	Mk. 14:6
Sympathetic warnings	“Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee”	Lk.22:31-32
Tears	“Jesus wept”	Jn. 11:35

Meditations on The Beauties of The Lord

Beautiful in His	Scripture	Ref.
The proclamations and tone of His voice	He said (epo) "A loud voice" (aphiemi megas phone)	Jn. 19:30 Mk. 15:37
Thoughtfulness	"Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while"	Mk. 6:31
Unwasteful	"Gather up the fragments that remain"	Jn. 6:12
Weakness	"Though He was crucified through weakness"	2 Cor. 13:4
Weariness	"Jesus therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat"	Jn. 4:6
When he said things	After His resurrection He said, "My God, and your God"	Jn. 20:17
Wisdom where He taught	"He entered into one of the ships. . . And prayed him that He would thrust out a little from the land"	Lk. 5:3
Wording of His prayers	"Father", "O Father", "Holy Father", "Righteous Father"	Jn. 17:1, 5,11, 25.
Words of comfort	"Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; Go in peace"	Lk. 8:48
Zeal	"The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up"	Jn. 2:17

How Can A Deeper Appreciation Of The Beauties Of The Lord Be Developed?

It is a sad fact that many of us go through life with an intellectual, rather than a heart appreciation of the Lord. One can come to the autumn years of life and then question if they missed the real purpose of life? That distinction between life consisting of nothing other than chronological years and earthly gain, and one of joyful readiness to be released from the shackles of earth, depends on the level of ones spirituality, appreciation of Christ and their laying hold on eternal life (1 Tim. 6:12, 19). This level of heart appreciation can be very evident at remembrance meetings when very often the same facts are replayed week after week, much like the a CD being played repeatedly. God longs for fresh appreciations of His Son. Ofttimes if it was not for hymns and non worship of the Lord, but thanks for bringing us together to remember the Lord, precious little time would account for worship.

Since eternal life is knowing (ginosko) God and Christ (Jn. 17:3), it is evidently more than living forever. Even for Adam, after he had sinned, that was a possibility (Gen. 3:22). The longing of the heart of Paul was to know (ginosko) Him (Phil. 3:10). John will tell us that we know (ginosko) Him that is true (1 Jn. 5:20), and Peter will encourage the saints to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18). This "knowing" (ginosko) is not intuitive, it is knowledge gained by experience, to become acquainted with. It is possible to know and speak of the beauties of the Lord and it be all intellectual, but to know (ginosko) them, is heart appreciation.

Therefore, What Are The Qualifications Needed?

For anyone to enter into God's thoughts and appreciation of the richness of the Lord then there must be the losing of my own life, being free from all my assessments and decisions, and when that happens one begins to experience the wresting of God as He did with Jacob.

Meditations on The Beauties of The Lord

Our knowing God can be similar to an individual who is totally deaf, yet goes to a concert where a splendid piece of music is played with great skill and feeling. However, this particular individual has not heard a single note, but when they all stand afterward speaking of how well the symphony was played, he will bluff his way and say: "That was beautiful". He is only saying that which others who have appreciation and hearing will say, but personally, he has no idea what they are talking about. It is easy to say: "He is beautiful beyond description", "His words were words of grace", "he revealed God in perfection", yet, when pressed as to what is meant and to give illustrations, the response can be just the repetition of that which another has said, just like the deaf man.

How wonderful if the words of the Psalmist came from our hearts: "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord" (Psa. 27:4).

Anna saw His beauty when she was in the temple seeing Him as the Redeemer of His people (Lk. 1:68). As the Redeemer, what thoughts could have flooded her mind as she looked at the baby.

- 1) The beauty of the pledge of His righteous redemption. "Jehovah, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel". (Isa. 41:14)
- 2) The beauty of His glorious superiority as, "Jehovah, King of Israel, Redeemer and the Lord of Hosts". (Isa. 44:6)
- 3) The pledge of His helpfulness. "Jehovah, King of Israel, and Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts". (Isa. 41:14)
- 4) The Overcomer of all opposition that threatens us. "Thy Saviour and Thy Redeemer". (Isa. 49:26)
- 5) The words of Job. "I know that my Redeemer liveth". (Job 19:25)

Simeon saw His beauty and to the old saintly man it gave:

- 1) Quietness for the moment of death. "Lettest thou thy servant depart in peace". (Lk. 2:29)
- 2) Fulfillment to all he had believed. "Mine eyes have seen thy salvation". (Lk. 2:30)
- 3) Understanding of the purposes of God for the future. "A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel". (Lk. 2:31-32)

There is a beauty in the Lord that Christless eyes cannot see. Is Christ really precious to me, and if so, is it because of what He is in Himself, or is it because of the magnificence of the work He has accomplished for the greater glory of God? One fact remains, no matter how or in what degree Christ is beautiful to me, He is unspeakably more beautiful to God.

**May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.
John 16:13**

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