

Swan Song

Recently, I shared a vision called 'Save the last dance for Me' and the Lord has continued to dwell on the theme of the last dance or the 'grand finale'. Last week, I visited a wine estate in our area called Webersburg. When I heard this name, the Spirit reminded me that a Weber is a barbecue kettle with a domed lid; in effect, an oven and He took me immediately to the scripture that says '*the day comes that shall burn like an oven*' (Malachi 4:1). He also brought to mind a number of scriptures mentioning fire in connection with Zion, which formed the undergirding for the message He was forming in my heart. The second half of the Estate name 'burg' means 'city'. This is a prophetic picture of a city that is an oven with a fire burning in its heart. The estate was very beautiful with rolling green lawns, huge ancient oak trees and a restaurant and wine cellar overlooking a tranquil lake:

Isa 4:5 And the Lord will create over the whole site, over every dwelling place of Mount Zion and over her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory shall be a canopy (a defence of divine love and protection).

For those safely anchored on Mount Zion, there will be green pastures and still waters and, more importantly in these difficult days ahead, divine protection and illumination. The flaming fire of the Lord is found in Zion, to provide light in the darkest night:

Isa 31:9 ...says the Lord, Whose fire is in Zion and Whose furnace is in Jerusalem.

God has a furnace in Jerusalem and the fire that heats it is found in Zion. In the natural Jerusalem, mount Zion is the place where the city of David is located and where King David had his palace. It is in this place, where those of the house of David are anchored, that the everlasting burnings are situated, described in Isaiah 33:

Isa 33:14 The sinners in Zion are afraid; trembling seizes the godless ones. [They cry] Who among us can dwell with that devouring fire? Who among us can dwell with those everlasting burnings? Isa 33:15 He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, who despises gain from fraud and from oppression, who shakes his hand free from the taking of bribes, who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed and shuts his eyes to avoid looking upon evil.

So it seems that living righteously enables one to dwell in the presence of the everlasting burnings. Sinners know that the fire has come to deal with their ungodly ways. Malachi 3 speaks of the coming of the Refiner's Fire to the Church, resulting in the revealing of His jewels and the consuming of the lawless, so they have neither root nor branch. Daniel described vividly the scene he saw of the throne of God and fire featured prominently:

Dan 7:9 ...His throne was like the fiery flame; its wheels were burning fire. Dan 7:10 A stream of fire come forth from before Him...

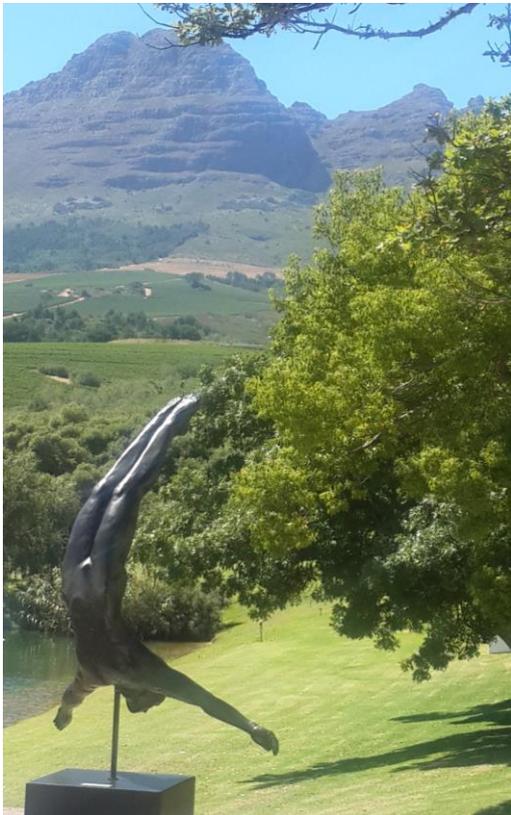
We are entering the day that burns like an oven, Beloved, and those who have not allowed the refiner's fire to work within their hearts in the previous season, will be facing severe dealings in these days. Our God is a consuming fire.

What really captured my attention in this beautiful place with the name of a city with a furnace within was the large bronze statues scattered round on the emerald lawns. There were leopards in many poses; running, leaping, lying on logs. They brought to mind the scripture in Song of Songs:

Son 4:8 Come away with me from Lebanon, my bride, come with me from Lebanon. Depart from the top of Amana, from the peak of Senir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards.

This verse depicts the start of a new journey, a place of launching. Armana means 'covenant' and Hermon means 'to consecrate'. From the place of covenant and consecration, the bride and the Bridegroom are coming forth. Here we see a depiction of a married couple leaving the place where they have covenanted together in marriage. A bride consecrates and sets herself apart for her husband and comes forth from the heights of revelation of Christ won through intimacy, in order to minister with her Groom bearing His Name and authority in the earth.

It is no coincidence that this venue is often used for wedding receptions, due to the beauty of the surroundings. As I sat and worshipped the Lord in my heart while I gazed at the mountains and rolling lawns, my attention was drawn by a huge sculpture of a figure diving. It was held aloft in perfect balance by an iron rod upon which the heart of the figure rested. There was such grace and alignment in the arrangement of its limbs and I recognised the diving position as a 'swallow dive'.



It struck me that in this position there were no hands out to brace for the impact and to protect the head from injury. Instead there was perfect focus depicted - a profound way of showing surrender and trust in the power of the rod to hold it up. And how fitting that the rod connects to the heart of the figure and not its head. The Holy Spirit ministered to me so powerfully that this is the time to be in full alignment with Heaven's purpose for us and to get ready to launch with our whole heart trusting in the rod of His Word.

He is coming to rule the nations with a rod of iron. It was the rod of God that accompanied Moses as he confronted Pharaoh. It was the rod of God that opened the Red sea and struck the rock so water could flow out. For those who overcome in the area of tolerating Jezebel, there is an award of a place of rule and authority:

Rev 2:26 And he who overcomes (is victorious) and who obeys My commands to the [very] end [doing the works that please Me], I will give him authority and power over the nations:

Rev 2:27 And he shall rule them with a sceptre (rod) of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, and [his power over them shall be] like that which I Myself have received from My Father;

Psa 2:8 Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations as Your inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth as Your possession. Psa 2:9 You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them in pieces like potters' ware.

A sound Released from the Altar

John was given a reed like a rod to measure the sanctuary and the altar of incense and record those who worship there (Rev 11:1). The Hebrew word for rod also means 'a sceptre or staff; a stick for fighting, writing or ruling'. It is from the centre of Zion that the sceptre of God is extended to rule in the midst of our enemies. So those who are getting ready to launch in perfect alignment with Heaven will be releasing decrees and books that cause massive change in the earth and bring alignment with the Kingdom of Heaven in their chosen areas of influence. They will be led by surrendered hearts and not by their own understanding; providing a breathtaking display of perfect oneness with their Creator for those who observe them.

They are those who have, like the swallow, made their nest or dwelling place at the altar of God, as psalm 84 describes. The golden altar is the altar of incense just in front of the veil. It is from this place that an angel takes coals and adds much incense and casts it on the earth, releasing an outbreak of Heavenly power and sound:

Rev 8:3 And another angel came and stood over the altar. He had a golden censer, and he was given very much incense (fragrant spices and gums which exhale perfume when burned), that he might mingle it with the prayers of all the people of God (the saints) upon the golden altar before the throne. Rev 8:4 And the smoke of the incense (the perfume) arose in the presence of God, with the prayers of the people of God (the saints), from the hand of the angel. Rev 8:5 So the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and cast it upon the earth. Then there followed peals of thunder and loud rumblings and blasts and noises, and flashes of lightning and an earthquake.

There will be a release of heavenly sounds, revelation and the voice of God resounding through these perfectly aligned vessels, released as burning coals of fire from the censor to minister a message that shakes the earth. They usher in the sounding of the seven trumpets.

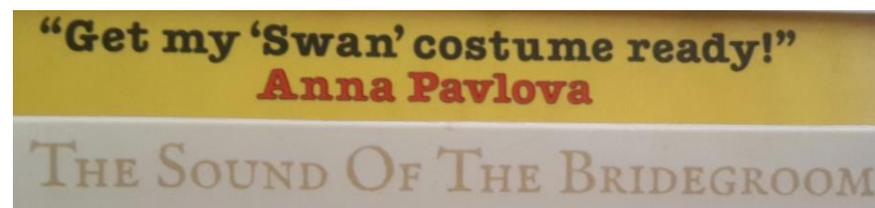
As I left, I went closer to the statue to read the plaque on its base and was surprised to discover the name of it was not 'Swallow' but 'Swan'! How interesting - swallow dives that are swan-songs! In other words, these bond-slaves of the Lamb have put all their strength into their final dive. A swan-song is defined as 'a final performance, one which brings to a life to completion before death'. These ones have come to the place of being fully conformed to the death of Christ and know that the final stretch of the relay race is before them. They press on to win the prize for which Christ is calling them upward.

From within, they find the store of resurrection power reserved for this day and hour and they run this leg of the race with all their heart and soul and mind and strength because the finish line is in sight. They are dead to this world; dead to personal ambition, dead to the praises of men. They take this final plunge for Heaven's pleasure, seeking only to gain the approval of the audience of One for whom they leave the safety of the diving board. This is what they have been trained for in the furnace of affliction; this is what they were born for; they have come to the Kingdom for such a time as this and they have nothing left to lose. They are not their own, they are bought with a price and for them to live is Christ and to die is gain.

I was reading a book recently which contained a record of people's last words upon their deathbeds. Anna Pavlova, the prima ballerina who danced in Swan Lake, was heard to say, "Get my swan costume ready" as she breathed her last. What powerful statement and one which we should all be getting ready to say as in the dispensation of the fullness of times, Heaven and earth work together to bring 'all things together in Christ' as Ephesians 1 describes:

Eph 1:9 having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, Eph 1:10 for an administration of the fullness of times, to head up all things in Christ, both the things in Heaven, and the things on earth, even in Him,

So, Beloved of the Lord dwelling at the altar of incense, are you ready for your swan costume? Can you hear the sound of the Bridegroom as He approaches. In this day that burns like an oven, are you saying with the Spirit, "Come, Lord, come"? Are you ready to throw your whole strength and heart into taking the plunge and aligning perfectly with that



which the Father purposed for you to do in the earth; to play your part in helping bring all things to completion in Him? It's the final leg of the relay race

for the cause of Christ; the final harvest will now be reaped amidst much shaking and dense darkness upon the peoples. But His light will arise upon you and your swan-song will draw those around you to Him as you focus only upon bringing delight to the heart of the Bridegroom. Just as He said, "save the last dance for Me," so too He is asking you to get ready for your swan-song; the grand finale spurt that all your seasons of difficult preparation have shaped and readied you for. All those gruelling training sessions alone with the Spirit, wrestling as the Refiner's fire burned every ounce of dross from your heart, will all prove worth it! Launch yourself forth in full trust and faith as His Rod upholds you in perfect balance, with the glory of God upon you.

Selah

(statue by Lydia Da Silva)