

# The Song Of Songs- Some Observations

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The Song of Songs is a beautiful story of a girl who has fallen in love with one whom she describes as “My Beloved”. Her Beloved, it is submitted, is *not* Solomon, but rather, an unnamed person for whom she pines. As a result of unknown circumstances, she finds herself in Solomon’s palace, in the company of his wives and concubines.

While Solomon is a picture of Christ in many ways, I suggest that the Beloved is not Solomon for at least two reasons: –

(i) Her Beloved is a shepherd. (1.7). Solomon never was, although, of course, his father David was. Solomon was a prince and a king.

(ii) The imagery is of a Bridegroom and His Bride, seen fully in the New Testament as Christ and His Church. The oneness and unity that exists is markedly absent in Solomon's behaviour with his plurality of wives - an evidence of his rebellion against God's specific instructions.

There are three main or leading characters in the book. First, Solomon, (1.1); then the Shulamite girl, as she is designated, in 6.13; thirdly, the "daughters of Jerusalem", seen as the wives of Solomon. We are viewing the Shulamite as a picture of believers, Christ's church. She is seen in a strange land, not of her own choosing, by reason of circumstances outwith her control. Likewise, we are also in an alien land. As she sighs and pines for her beloved, so we dear saints should be found seeking and longing for Him whom our souls love. Solomon's wives, the "daughters of Jerusalem" who speak to the girl, often with disdain (5.9), (Her replies also suggest this, 1.6, 8.4) are a picture of this world in its wisdom and sophistication, who know not our Beloved, but who prefer the wordly-wise Solomon.

## Chapter 1

### **v. 1 gives the author or composer**

- "which is Solomon's". Unique among many he wrote, this is the "Song of Songs". Written under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, it is similar to Esther in that the name of God is not mentioned. There is no reason to believe, however, that it is not of Divine origin. The Person of Christ is undoubtedly in view; the unity of Bride and Bridegroom accord with scripture; prophetic lessons are certainly presented, as are moral and typical teachings, vv. 2-4. Affection is the chief thought. This sets the pattern for the whole book "Let him *kiss* me."

Obedience out of love must supercede all. (1 Sam. 15.22). We have received, (i) the kiss of Salvation, Ps. 2.12. (ii) the kiss of Reconciliation. Luke 15.20. (iii) the outcome of 4:his is the kiss of affection for one another. Rom.

16.16. Our hearts ought to be drawn to Him supremely, (v. 4). May God save us from the "Judas" kiss - the kiss of betrayal - the mark of apostasy.

v. 7. Presents a positive drawing- force - "Tell me, where thou makest thy flocks to rest". May we be found as those whose hearts the Lord has touched, has captivated! Daily drawn to Him! "As the heart panteth

after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, oh God". If the heart is set upon Him (v. 7) then the footsteps will be right (v. 8) - "footsteps of the flock".

v. 12. "While the king sitteth at *his* table, *my* spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof". Notice, "*his* table", "*my* spikenard". The believer's first duty is to worship - worship promoted by being near the king! Alas! Our tragic failure here is. accounted for by the fact thaty too often we are at a distance from the table where He sits. Witness can only be effective, if preceded by worship.

v. 17. Gives the outcome - a good house is built "beams ... of cedar, rafters of fir". Our minds go to 1 Pet. 2.5. "Ye also are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices .. ."

## Chapter 2

vv. 1-6. Scene of rejoicing. The maiden rejoices in his love; so ought we. All creation will rejoice in a future day (Isa. 35.1 and 2) at Christ's millennial reign. Trees, fruit, food, wine and His embrace (v. 6). Every blessing is through Christ, v. 1-2 is the result of 3-6. As she is a rose and a lily, so are the believers. The beauty and fragrance of the rose. The Church is the most beautiful thing on earth to Christ, the nearest thing to Deity, without being it.

Think of the beauty of brethren dwelling together in unity, of the beauty of dependence upon God - what fragrance in all this! We have no beauty apart from Christ. Let us cherish our inheritance!

v. 8. "Behold, he cometh leaping ..." . The presence of her beloved. The coming to His own of the blessed Lord. He came in Grace at our *conversion*. Luke 15.7. He came in Grace at His first advent, "for the joy that was set before Him . ." Heb. 12.2. Only the believer can sit and enjoy His presence. The ungodly can't: they are like the troubled sea. Satan can't - he restlessly goes to and fro on the earth. The blinded Jew can't. True, they sat before Him at the cross, and "watched Him there", but they've never sat since! They have wandered and the whole world with them! Oh! the peace that our salvation brings!

vv. 8-13. His two-fold call.

Twice in the passage he calls her (v. 10 and 13). Are *we* awake to His voice? Peter, on the Transfiguration mount, was asleep and almost missed the voice. He almost missed the point by foolish speaking. Let us neither sleep nor speak but be awake and alert, for we know not when our Lord may come, seeking communion with us. What grace! May our hearts be attuned to hear His voice v. 9, "Shewing himself through the lattice", may suggest the girl had difficulty in this respect. Alas! We often experience the same difficulty in identifying the Lord. Walls, windows and lattice hinder. We see Him through the lattice-work of scripture. We've never seen Him in the flesh. We love One

we've never seen. Ours has been the lattice-work of types and shadows. So often we do not understand when He calls - like the disciples, we say, "Not so, Lord", or like Peter, we are tempted to build three tabernacles. Yes, presently our eyes are veiled, we "see through a glass darkly". As v. 15 indicates, the foxes spoil the vines.

v. 17. "Until the day break, and the shadows flee away ... be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether". Here we have the great promise of our Beloved's return, Bether means separation. The day is not far distant when all that separates now shall be removed by His actual presence. The hills of separation He'll conquer when He comes for His Bride-elect.

### Chapters 3

vv. 1-4. The Shulamite is dreaming upon her bed. Dreams have a prominent place in Scripture. Here, the picture is one of separation. Slothfulness, the bed of ease, dulls spiritual sensibilities. She senses, and feels keenly, his lack of communion. Four times in these verses she declares, "I sought him", while twice she states, "I found him not". Four times she protests her love, "Him whom my soul loveth". Eleven times the pronoun "him" is used by her. Oh, the intensity of her desires as she feels her lack of him. What lessons for us all!

Would that we, His Bride-elect might feel our need of Him. We've

never sought Him as He sought us! Let us be drawn closer to Him as we think of the love that sought us, of the blood that bought us, of the wondrous grace that brought us to the fold. Where is the fervency of spirit that once marked us, and that made our fathers great? May we be like her who found him, held him, (v. 4) and would not let him go until they *both* occupied a place of rest - "into my mother's house".

vv. 6-11. A description of Solomon. "Who is this (or, what is this commotion) that cometh out of the wilderness?". He comes with all the pomp and dignity of this world. How unlike Christ! He came in His incarnation unheralded to the world at large, lived in obscurity for thirty years. No earth-born sentiment, no fleshy zeal marked the Lord. He came to a moral wilderness while Solomon comes from it.

The myrrh and frankincense, when related to our Lord, speaks volumes! (The preciousness of His life, and suffering in death). How completely out of place it seems when associated with Solomon. Solomon, unhappily, "went not fully after the Lord and did evil in the sight of the Lord". 1 Kings 9.4-7.

v. 7. "Behold his bed, which is Solomon's". This is a condemnation of Solomon's lifestyle. He spent much time upon his bed - not to his credit. In contrast, the Son of man had nowhere to lay His head. Matt. 8.20. Solomon boasted sixty valiant men to garrison his bed. The believer should prefer the Peace of God to garrison his heart and mind. Phil. 4.7. Sixty is a multiple of six, which is man's number. The

weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was 666 talents. 1 Kings 10.14. Six is the number of Antichrist. Poor Solomon! His heart was weaned away by earthly things. He succumbed to the bogus dignity of earth. Surrounded by pomp and wealth, his soul became impoverished and shrivelled.

Oh, let us heed the warning, "Shun the world, cleave to the Lord". The more one sees of this earth, the less one wants to have to do with it.

v. 8. "Every man hath his sword upon his thigh Solomon's retinue was well turned out, "because of fear in the night". Trained in self-defence and in defence of their sovereign. The philosophy of our Blessed Lord was the antithesis of all this. He forbade the use of the sword in the garden. He forbade physical violence before Pilate on the part of His disciples. His kingdom was not of this world. Had Solomon forgotten that it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man? Does not our memory fail us also, sometime? See David's words in Psalm 63.6-11.





## Chapter 4

w. 1-7. Seven features of the Shulamite bride as described by her “Beloved”. We have here a lovely picture of the Church. It ends as it begins, by commenting on her fairness, her loveliness, v. 1 “Behold, thou art fair” gives the *fact* - a fact he repeats in the verse, v. 7. “Thou art *all* fair, my love, there is no spot in thee”. Fair, as in v. 1: Completely fair as in v. 7. The greatest, most glorious, loveliest thing to God on earth is the Church. In this regard, how appropriate are the words of Psalm 48. “Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth ----- God is known in her palaces”. In the light of all this, let us preserve the beauty of our gatherings.

Seven times the shepherd uses the expression - “Thou art fair, my love” - seven being the number of completeness, of perfection. Rev. 1.4,11.

v. 1. “Doves’ eyes –”. What are our eyes resting upon? “For eye of man is never satisfied” Prov. 27.20. How re-assuring to the repentant Israelite will be the words of Isa. 33.17 in a coming day of restoration. “Thine eye shall see the King in His beauty! they shall behold the land that is (now) very far off’. What a sight for redeemed eyes in that day!

v. 1 and 2. Bring together eyes, hair and teeth, all of which are easily seen. One’s state of health can be easily detected in these three things.

Do our eyes see the lost in their peril? Note the number of occasions in the gospels where our Lord “lifted up His eyes”.

He views her teeth (v. 2) as evenly set, none missing, for the proper chewing of the food. Are *we* eating of the bread that God has provided? Every kingdom this world has seen has been based on “bread alone”. That is why they have all failed! They have refused the True Bread. God Himself feeds upon Christ, “My Bread my offering”. The assembly is the “House of Bread”. Do *we* feed upon Christ? God has nothing else for us. Surely Christ *does* satisfy me?

“Thy lips” says v. 3 “are like a thread of scarlet”. See Prov. 10.21. Do we *praise* with our lips, Ps. 63.3, or are we silent? Do we *Testify* with our lips? Prov. 15.7. Or, can I ask, do we give occasion to the ungodly to speak against us? Psalm 121.6. The lips of Christ spake only “wonderful words of life”. Let’s talk about Jesus!

“Thy neck” says v. 4 “is like the tower of David, builded for an armoury”. Here is introduced the need for defence. A tower that proves to be a bulwark. What a contrast as we read the words of God to Israel, Deut. 9.6 - “a stiffnecked people”, or Stephen’s indictment of the same people, Acts 7.51, “stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart”. Let us be near Christ for true safety.

In v. 3 he refers to her temples, in v. 5 to her breasts. The idea is of head and heart - a good combination. Head to learn of him,

hearts to love Him, One without the other is dangerous. Let us be balanced. May head and heart unite in His glad service.

v. 8-15. The description continues with emphasis on what this beauty and comeliness means to her beloved. See vv. 9 and 10. Observe too v. 12. She is to *him* “a garden closed”, “a spring shut up”, “a fountain sealed”, v. 16 is a delightful picture. He is in his garden *with* her, he to enjoy the fragrance, she to enjoy his pleasant fruits.

## Chapter 5

In this chapter the Shulamite damsel is recounting a dream in which her Beloved seeks and calls her, but she is asleep. When she stirs from her slumber, he is gone! Sleep in the New Testament is a figure of death, ( 1 Cor. 15.20) but in the Old Testament it often denotes an excess of rest (Prov. 6.10; 24-33). There are two kinds of rest. First, the rest of Activity. To engage in the Lord’s service is to many who pursue a secular calling, a rest from the normal week-day avenue of toil. Then, the rest of Sloth. If the first we should follow after, the second we should shun. It is in *this* rest that danger lies. The rest of Sloth is a stupor which paralyses many of God’s saints. We recall that it was while men slept that the enemy sowed tares (Matt. 13).

Are we like this maiden? Is the Lord calling us to a particular service but by the time we are awake, it is too late and our Beloved is

gone? While the believer is not afraid to meet his Lord, he could be ashamed to meet Him at His coming. Let us observe the fourfold description he employs as he calls her in verse two:

- i) 'My Sister' – Relationship. *We* are in His family. He is pleased to call us 'brethren'. Despite this He is *never*, as some say, our 'Elder Brother'!
- ii) 'My Love' – Affection. How He loves us! How do we love Him? Faintly or fully? Let us remember the warning to Simon Magus, 'thy heart is not right' (Acts 8.) Christ loves His church. Is it unrequited love, dear saint, or is it reciprocated?
- iii) 'My Dove' – Character. Can we remember the Lord's exhortation to His disciples, 'harmless as doves'? (Matt. 10.16). Are we living harmless, blameless lives? Oh, may the gentleness of Christ mark you and me more and more! The dove is emblematic of the Holy Spirit. Let the fruit of the Spirit be seen in our lives.
- iv) 'My undefiled' – Condition. This is what we are through grace. Have we really left the fields of prodigality, or are we hungering after the taste of the 'leeks, onions and garlic'? Remember that sin *never* dies to us. We must die to sin.

He goes on to speak of 'my head,' 'my feet.' The extremities. The head of Christ would associate with His Deity, as His feet would with

His Humanity, those blessed feet made beautiful in His mission of peace and salvation on a polluted earth. Thank God for a whole Christ! It was a whole Christ that Mary anointed (Matt. 26 and Mark 14). Compare, too, John 12. The false cults know nothing of a complete Christ. They would divide, deny and destroy. Observe too, in v. 2, the voice of her beloved; in v. 4, the hand of her beloved; in v. 6, the absence of her beloved. 'I sought him but I could not find him.' These speak volumes! Portrait of our Beloved; v. 10-16.

v. 10. 'My Beloved is white and ruddy'. Of David it was said in 1 Sam, 17. 'He was ruddy and of a beautiful countenance and goodly to look at'. Samuel was told, 'Arise and anoint him for this is he'. What is our response to Him who longs for our affection and contemplation? Do we anoint him daily or are we content with a brief hour on a Lord's Day morning? See Psalm 45.2.

v. 11. 'Head as most fine gold. Locks bushy and black as a raven'. The gold would again bring His Deity before us. God in the likeness of men. With Him there is neither decay nor old age. Compare Ephraim in Hosea 7. We rejoice that the young man who died in the freshness and vigour of youth at Calvary, will return to the skies resplendent still in perennial youth.

v. 12. 'His eyes ... as doves .. Eyes convey emotion. In Mark 5.32 He looks with pity. At His denial His eyes rested on Peter – how much

that look conveyed to beloved Peter! 'The eyes of the Lord run to and fro in the earth'. He sees all His saints – always. Then, 'rivers of waters' – Refreshment. 'Washed with milk' – Nourishment. A basic food, next, 'fitly set' – Perfect vision, true assessment. Regular reading of the word provides us with all three.

v. 13. 'Cheeks as a bed of spices, etc.' Remind us of our testimony. (Matt. 5.39). Did they not smite Israel's King with a rod, on the cheek? (Isaiah 50.6.). 'Lips like lilies ...'. What beautiful, wonderful words of life fell from His lips; truly lips 'dropping sweet smelling myrrh'. Note the order:- Much prayer, much blessing, lilies for beauty, myrrh for suffering.

v. 14. 'His hands'. Seen, as Israel's Deliverer, Isaiah 40. As the Preserver of the Saints, Deut. 33. Eternal security. Then His hand in ours (Mark 1.31) will impart power. Trace in the gospels how often the hands of the Master touched people. One day we shall see those hands with the wounds of Calvary eternally preserved. Then in the same v. 14 'His belly'. The idea is that of compassion. It adds, 'as bright ivory' thus obtained through His death. Then, 'overlaid with sapphires' – the heavenly colour. In all this, the sufferings of the Cross in view. The love and compassion, the sighs and tears of a man that is divine yet truly human.

v. 15. 'His legs'. His lovely walk before God and man, 'like marble', – marble has its own brightness. There is no dulness. It never requires

polishing. Christ is the brightness of God's glory (Heb. 1.3). The sockets of gold would again direct our thoughts to His Deity. He is the fine gold that never dims; His glory is unfading and unchanging. Marble has its own pattern, it has no duplicate – its own pre-eminence. Christ has His own inherent pattern. He is present in every sphere of the universe.

What of *our* legs? Are they taking us nearer Himself or toward earthly things? Possibly the last reference to the legs of Christ is that in John 19, 'they brake not His legs'. Why? He was dead already, v. 37. The ungodly were not allowed to touch the legs of the most sacred body on earth after He died. Only His own took Him from that cross.

v. 16. 'His countenance and His mouth'. His face He set steadfastly to go to Jerusalem. He hid it not from shame and spitting. The face that never wore a needless frown bore the blows of godless man. His lips, or mouth spake as never man spake.

*'Like man He walked. Like God He talked.*

*His words were oracles. His works were miracles.*

*Of man the first specimen. Of God the true expression.*

*Full orb'd Humanity. Clothed with Deity.*

*No trace of iniquity. No trace of infirmity.*

*Behold the Man! Behold thy God!*

## Chapter 6

Our final article begins in ch. 6 with 'Beauties of the Bride'. In ch. 5.9 the question is asked, 'What is thy beloved more than another?' Here in 6.1 the question is, 'Where is thy beloved?' Oh that men would ask of you and me, 'What is He?' and 'Where is He?' Thank God for a whole Christ, human and divine, thank Him for a coming Christ! The answer to v. 1 in our passage is in v. 2 and takes us to John 4 and Eph. 5.26, the activity of Christ now sanctifying and cleansing His Church that *we* might be like a fruitful garden.

V. 4. A threefold description. Tirzah and Jerusalem were the two capital cities in the reign of Solomon. Tirzah means grace, or beauty, while Jerusalem means peace. How often in the New Testament, grace and peace are multiplied to us. Grace is the power to act right, peace is the power to feel right, twin characteristics of God's people. The bride is declared to be as awe-inspiring as a bannered army. His Church is the true army of salvation (men would reverse the expression and make a sect). For the beauty of God's assembly, read Ps. 48. It is unique! Are we good soldiers, marching in step in a disorderly world, dressed in beauteous garments undefiled? Compare Rev. 19.7-9 and ch. 21 with the false bride of chs. 17 and 18.

Vs. 5-7. Fourfold description of the bride. Four is the number of dependence. Let us cleave to Him. The Bridegroom is ever above our station. First, 'Hair as a flock of goats'. The picture of the Day of



Atonement. 'He bore the sins of many'. Second, Her eyes. Are our eyes toward Him? 'The bride eyes not her garment but her dear bridegroom's face'. What a sight for anointed eyes then! Third, Her teeth. Let us feed upon Him 'Now ye are clean through the word' (John 15.3). Are our souls satisfied with Christ? Fourth, Thy Temples. They speak of the mind, intellect and will. Let us beware of a pseudo-intellectualism and an unbridled will. These can wrought havoc in a believer. Oh for a mind at perfect peace with God. 'Let this mind be in you which is in Christ Jesus', Phil. 2.5; 3.15-19.

V. 13 'Return, return, oh Shulamite ... that we might look upon thee'. Four times in the song is this request made of her. What bride prefers the company of her friends to that of her bridegroom? The world bids us 'come'; our Lord has commanded, 'Go'. The staff in our hand, shoes on our feet, we cannot, we dare not, return morally or ecclesiastically. We must not jeopardise our position. (Observe our fourfold position in v. 10).

## Chapter 7

A further description of the bride (from feet to head). We noted that the description of the *bridegroom* in ch. 5 is from head to feet. V. 1 of our chapter. 'Feet with shoes' – preparedness. Ch. 5.3 shows the bride with unshod feet – a sign of shame. The prodigal received shoes for his feet. Are we wearing our shoes? Let us follow the path of obedience

properly dressed. A tidy appearance bespeaks an ordered mind, while slovenliness in spiritual affairs is unbecoming. Eyes, v. 4, bespeak affection and intelligence. How He longs for the single eye! The nose, 4b, 'as a tower – toward Damascus'. Damascus was the heart of Israel's enemies. Oh! the need for spiritual discernment that recognises this world as a garbage-heap. Let us be wise in perception.

V. 8. The palm tree. Its fruitfulness increases with age, rather than decreases. What a lesson in fruitbearing (John 15). The lesson is limitless likeness to Christ. Fruitbearing is godliness rather than gift, v. 10, 11. 'I am my beloved's and his desire is towards me'. What tender affection! Christ loves His church; does His church love Him? Four times he states in verses 11 and 12, 'let us'. How He desires our affection and company!

V. 12. The vine. Israel was the vine in the Old Testament. It is now Christ who is such, with you and me associated with Him – as the branches.

## Chapter 8

Affection displayed, v. 1-3. Here, the bride longs to demonstrate her affection. Oh to be with Him and to know Him, to love Him, not just for what He has done, but for who and what He is, so that His Person and His *worth* captivate me! *This* is true intimacy and communion. Now v. 4, a plea for undisturbed fellowship. How can the pomp of kings' and

queens' daughters occupy hearts that have been weaned away by Him? The world never dies to us – we must die to it. She is hastening to her marriage. Her longings are all anticipatory. The day of the consummation of her joy is at hand. God help us to realise it and walk in the light of it. Next, v. 5,1 The place of her birth'. 2 The tree. How can we forget Calvary? Let it burn into our souls. Many have left their first love. (Rev. 2.4).

Vs. 6 and 7. See Rom. 8.35-39. Love strong as death. The Lord claims full devotion from His own. He guards love jealously; love and jealousy – potent forces of the heart. Observe too, fire and water, two of the most powerful forces in the natural world. May they destroy the dross in our lives and leave only the pure graces of the spirit. The heart speaks of affection, the arm of protection. Do we know anything of the heart that burns within as He talks with us by the way?

V. 8. A sad picture of lack of development and loss of affection.

V.9. A door or a wall, the first, to allow access, the second, to prohibit it. The wall in our verse supports a palace of silver. What kind of place have *we* made for the King to dwell in? Is He at home there? Compare the home He has made for us (Rev. 21.21). It's the street (singular), not many places but one place. As God is One, the Bride is one, and her dwelling place is one.

Vs. 11-14. The two vineyards. The world has its vinery and of its own making. The believer has Christ. Let us enjoy the fragrance of His loveliness. As she contemplates His love she cannot be a servant to

silence, thus she cries, 'Make haste'. Are we longing for Him? is our prayer 'Haste the day?'

*'Earth needs Thee as her King, and Jewish exiles cry,  
Come, David's Son to David's throne and reign eternally,  
the Church, amid her tears, throughout the weary night,  
Looks forth to catch the quivering ray of morning's dawning light.'*



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