

## LESSON 1 - CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH      *Song of Solomon 1:1*

**(1:1) - THE SONG OF SONGS, WHICH IS SOLOMON'S.** - God the Holy Spirit inspired Solomon, the prophet/king of Israel (David's son), to write this song of love. It is sometimes called *The Song of Songs* as it is the chief of all the songs (poems) that Solomon wrote (*cf. 1 Kings 4:32*). The Song of Solomon is one of the poetical (wisdom) books of the Bible. The purpose of this song is to show through types and metaphors the greatness and power of THE ETERNAL, SPIRITUAL LOVE OF CHRIST (THE BRIDEGROOM) FOR HIS CHURCH (HIS BRIDE) and THE CHURCH'S LOVE FOR HIM. This is altogether a book about fellowship and communion with Christ. It is not in any sense to be interpreted literally. It is spiritual. It is an allegory, a spiritual dialogue between Christ our heavenly Bridegroom and the church His Bride. So, like all books of the Bible, this is a Book full of Christ. Here, Christ is presented not only as our God, Redeemer, Savior, and King, but also in the most intimate character and personal relationship imaginable, our Bridegroom and Beloved! Here we see the Son of God in marriage union with His elect who are justified by His righteousness imputed and who are redeemed by the blood of His cross.

The love of Christ for His church and the church for Him is here portrayed through the love of a man for his wife and of the wife for her husband. The Song of Solomon is intimate, even passionate, because it is all about the love life of Christ and his church. This love of a man for his wife is set before us throughout the Scriptures as a type and picture of Christ's love for His church: Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Jacob and Rachel, Boaz and Ruth, Hosea and Gomer. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "*I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ*" (2 Cor. 11:2). The Lord Jesus Christ loves His bride everlastingly, immutably, purely, and unconditionally. And all who are born of God, all who know His Son, love Him. To know Him is to love Him. We do not love Him perfectly as we should. We do not love Him as we desire and as we will in glory when freed from the sins of remaining flesh. But by God's grace and power we do love Him (1 Cor. 16:22; 1 John 4:19). It is His love for us (His bride) that saves us, keeps us, and will bring us to glory. This is a love song of the perfect, sinless Bridegroom to an unworthy, sinful bride. Although unworthy and sinful, she is the object of His love. Christ is presented here as a Bridegroom Who does everything necessary to secure the salvation of His bride and to draw out her love to Him. Consider:

(1) IT IS A MARRIAGE OF SOVEREIGN, UNCONDITIONAL ELECTING GRACE. Christ, God the Son, was appointed by God the Father to be the bridegroom, and His bride was chosen by the Father in Him and betrothed to Him before the foundation of the world (*John 6:37-40; Eph. 1:1-11; 2 Tim. 1:9-10*). He loves His betrothed with an everlasting and unconditional love, mercy, and grace. But the bride that the Father chose for the Son was not a worthy bride. She was not qualified in any way. In fact, she was disqualified because of sin as she fell in Adam, was born dead in trespasses and sins, and as she prostituted herself out to other lovers. We see an illustration of this in the life of the prophet Hosea who married a prostitute named Gomer (*Hos. 1:1-2*). In order for the Son to marry His bride, two things had to be true:

(1) She had to be LEGALLY free to marry. She could not be married to anyone else, and if she was, only death could free her to marry another (*Rom. 7:1-4*). This had to be a JUST and RIGHTEOUS marriage. (2) She had to be SPIRITUALLY drawn or wooed to the Son, else she would never come to Him (*John 6:37-45; 12:32; 2 Cor. 5:14*).

(2) IT IS A MARRIAGE OF SOVEREIGN, EFFECTUAL REDEMPTION. The bride that was chosen for the Bridegroom and loved by Him was an unworthy, an unlovely, bride. She had no worthiness or qualification by which to draw out His love for her. She had no dowry, nothing

to give Him to cause Him to join Himself to her. She was sold into the slave market of sin and death because of her sin. So, it was necessary that the Bridegroom come in time and redeem her, pay the ransom price.

(3) IT IS A MARRIAGE OF SOVEREIGN JUSTICE. His bride was bound to the law because of her sin. If married to the law, she could not justly be married to any other. The Bridegroom had to come and pay her penalty of sin to the law and establish the only ground upon which God could justify her and set her free to marry another (*Rom. 7:4; 1 John 4:10; cf. Hos. 2:19*). As His bride deserved to be condemned to eternal death under the law, the Bridegroom took her place under the law and established perfect righteousness for her. This is her wedding garment (*Rev. 19:6-9*).

(4) IT IS A FRUITFUL MARRIAGE OF LOVE, JOY, AND PEACE. By revealing His unconditional love towards His bride, the Lord imparts and draws out her love to Him (*Rom. 5:1-5; 7:4-6; Gal. 5:22; Eph. 1:12-13; 3:16-19; Titus 3:5*). By His love and power towards His bride, the Lord keeps her and preserves her unto glory (*Isa. 61:10-11; 2 Cor. 11:2; Hos. 2:20*).

The language of this love song is very, very intimate. For example, ***“Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth: for Thy love is better than wine” (Song 1:2)***. Although the language is intimate, even passionate, this love song is not a manual for erotic, sexual love between a man and a woman. The Bible speaks of the intimacy of physical, erotic love between a man and a woman within the sanctity of marriage. Outside of marriage, it is fornication and adultery. But within the God-ordained institution of marriage between ONE MAN and ONE WOMAN, it is ordained and sanctioned by God (*Heb. 13:4; cf. 1 Cor. 7:1-19*). In fact, Biblical marriage between a man and a woman is a beautiful picture of the spiritual and eternal union of Christ and His church (*Eph. 5:22-33; cf. Rom. 7:4-6*). The *Song of Solomon* is a book describing the spiritual courtship, marriage, and growth in marriage of Christ and His church.

So, remember that this book is an allegory, not to be taken literally. It is a spiritual conversation between Christ, the heavenly Bridegroom and the church, all God's elect in every generation, His spiritual bride. Some claim this is God's love song to the nation Israel. And although God had established a temporal and temporary union with the nation Israel under the terms of the Old Covenant, that union was never intended by God to be spiritual or eternal. It was conditioned on a sinful people and doomed to fail to save them and keep them united with God (*cf. Deut. 28*). It was given to show Israel the impossibility of eternal salvation and an eternal union with God based on the terms of the law - “Do and live; disobey and die.” It was given to show them their sinfulness and depravity and to show them their need of salvation by God's grace in and by the promised Messiah. In fact, the Lord, through Jeremiah, spoke of the backsliding and adultery of Israel, and pronounced that He ***“had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce” (Jer. 3:8; cf. Isa. 50:1)***. Judah also backslid and committed spiritual adultery against God, but God suffered longer with Judah because it was His purpose to bring the Messiah into the world later on through the nation Judah. Eventually, however, He put away and divorced Judah. Under the New Covenant that God has made with SPIRITUAL ISRAEL, all conditioned on Christ, there is, and can be, no bill of divorce. God will remember their sins no more (*Heb. 10:17; cf. Jer. 31:31-34; Rom. 8:33-34; Heb. 13:5; John 6:37-40; 10:27-30*). Christ's love for and marriage to His bride (the church) is eternal and can never be broken because He has promised that He will NEVER leave nor forsake His bride.

**(1:1) – THE SONG OF SONGS, WHICH IS SOLOMON’S.** – As stated in the introduction, this book is an allegorical poem describing both Christ’s love for His church and the His church’s love for Him. The church is made up of sinners saved by God’s grace through Christ. Christ is portrayed as Bridegroom and Husband of the church which is portrayed as the bride and wife of Christ. Christ, the Bridegroom, is the Surety, Substitute, Redeemer, and Preserver of the church, His bride. He is the worthy, powerful, loving, and willing Savior of His bride. She is the unworthy, sinful, and adulterous object of His unconditional love. He is shown to be the one who chose His bride and takes responsibility for her complete salvation. As her Surety, all her sins were imputed to Him. He willingly took her debt as His own. As her Redeemer, He came to where she was in her sin and depravity, and in her name and nature, yet without sin, took her place under the law and died to redeem her. He provides her with the wedding garment of His righteousness imputed to her and gives her everything necessary for her full salvation. He sends His Spirit unto her and reveals Himself as the one who loves her unconditionally and, thereby, draws her to Himself with cords of love. The next verse begins with His bride, after having been drawn to Him, desiring to see and know more of Him and His love for her. All true believers (members of His bride) know that Christ’s love for them is the greatest love of all and longs to see and know more of Him and His love for them.

**(1:2) – LET HIM KISS ME WITH THE KISSES OF HIS MOUTH: FOR THY LOVE IS BETTER THAN WINE.** – Unto all who know and believe in Christ, “HE IS PRECIOUS” (1 Pet. 2:7). This is the God-given and sincere desire of one who has been saved by the grace of God in Christ. She longs to see more of her Savior’s love for her. It is HIS love for her that created and filled her with love for Him. In her natural, sinful, unbelieving state, she did not know Him, nor did she love Him at all. In fact, she was His enemy, but she has been reconciled unto Him by the revelation of His love for her in that He died for her sins (Col. 1:21). And when He revealed Himself to her, the love of God welled up within her to draw her to Him. How did He reveal His love to her? “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:9–10). This love of Christ for His bride is the effectual, redeeming love that insured her salvation unto final glory. It is love that brought Him to die for her and satisfy the justice of God by taking upon Himself the full wrath of God against her sins (Rom. 5:5–10; John 13:1; 2 Cor. 5:21).

So, “Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth” expresses her passionate desire to see and know more of Him and His love to her. Though she loves Him, she does not boast of her love for Him. She realizes that it is His love for her that saves, protects, and preserves her unto glory. A kiss from the Savior’s mouth is an expression of His deep, abiding love for her. It is an evidence of complete pardon, forgiveness, and acceptance based on the righteousness that He worked out only for her. This is not like the empty love of false Christianity that declares a counterfeit Christ who tries to save his loved ones but either does not or cannot insure their salvation and eternal glory. No one perishes who is the object of the Bridegroom’s love described here (Rom. 8:28–39). Christ will never let the objects of His love perish (John 10:6:37–45; 27–30; Heb. 7:25).

She realizes that His “love is better than wine.” In the Bible, wine can symbolize the blood of Christ shed for us to purge away our sins. It is also a symbol of joy given by the Holy Spirit Who brings us to rejoice in Christ Jesus (Psa. 104:15). Wine rejoices the heart, revives the spirit, and soothes the nerves of man. But the love of Christ is far better than the best wine. When the love of Christ is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, it is like drinking some heavenly, spiritual

wine. We become consumed with Him, His truth, and His love. It brings us joy and peace in believing (Rom. 14:17; 15:13).

**(1:3) – BECAUSE OF THE SAVOUR OF THY GOOD OINTMENTS THY NAME IS AS OINTMENT POURED FORTH, THEREFORE DO THE VIRGINS LOVE THEE.** – This refers to the healing, soothing, and comforting balm of His glorious character and presence. There is no attribute of His nature that is repugnant or rejected by His bride. By the grace and power of God, she is brought to love everything about her Bridegroom. The people of God love Christ as He is revealed in the Scriptures (Psa. 45:1–9; Rev. 1:10–20), because they see in Him every attribute of God engaged to save, protect, and preserve them. They love His holiness and goodness, His justice and mercy, His righteousness and grace, His power and tenderness, His immutability and compassion, His wisdom and sympathy, His wrath and love, His judgment and salvation. They love His sovereignty in all things. They do not deny His sovereign mercy and grace in electing a people and giving them to Christ. Every aspect of His nature brings His bride joy, peace, and comfort. In the eyes of others our adorable Savior has no form nor comeliness for which they desire Him (Isa. 53:1–3). But in the eyes of His bride, He is the beauty of holiness (Psa. 27:1–4; 73:25; Isa. 61:3). To His bride He is fairer than ten thousand, the Rose of Sharon, the Lily of the valley.

Who exactly are these “virgins”? They are His people, sinners saved by the grace of God, and made spiritually and eternally pure by the washing of His blood and the water of His Word. Legally, they are washed clean from all their sins in their redemption by the blood of Christ (Rev. 1:5; 7:14). This is their justification before God whereby their sins are forgiven, and they are declared legally righteous in God’s sight based on Christ’s righteousness imputed to them. Their sins cannot be charged to them, and they cannot be condemned because they are in Christ (Rom. 8:1; 33–34). Spiritually, they are washed by the water of the Word of God (Eph. 5:26; cf. Psa. 119:9). Having been married to Christ by God-given faith through the Word of the Gospel in the power of the Spirit, sinners are brought to faith in Christ and repentance of dead works. Although they are still plagued with the remaining presence, influence, and even contamination of the sins of the flesh, they are espoused to ONE HUSBAND that they may be presented as chaste virgins to Christ (2 Cor. 11:2). Not only does she love His name (His glory), as His willing bride, she is brought by God to take His name unto herself (Jer. 23:5–6; 33:15–16). This is the case of all sinners saved by the grace of God in Christ.

**(1:4) – DRAW ME, WE WILL RUN AFTER THEE: THE KING HATH BROUGHT ME INTO HIS CHAMBERS: WE WILL BE GLAD AND REJOICE IN THEE, WE WILL REMEMBER THY LOVE MORE THAN WINE: THE UPRIGHT LOVE THEE.** – Notice how the bride expresses her total dependence upon the power, will, and love of her Bridegroom. Salvation is not by the works or the wills of men. It is ALL of grace through the power and will of God and based on the righteousness of Christ. If we are to be saved, we must be legally justified in God’s sight, and we must be spiritually drawn to Him. By nature, the members of the bride of Christ are so depraved and sinful that none will come to Him of their own wills (**John 1:11–13; 6:44–45; Rom. 3:10–12; 1 Cor. 2:10–14**). They have to be drawn with cords of love as revealed in the Gospel of God’s free and sovereign grace in Christ. They have to be brought into His bedchamber. They must be changed by God to be glad and to rejoice in Christ. They must be made willing in the day of His power. They must be preserved to remember His love. The “upright” describes justified sinners who have been drawn to Christ by God’s power and grace. They believe, rest in, and love Christ as He is their whole salvation. They have seen and know HIS love as the greatest love of all.

**(1:5) - I AM BLACK, BUT COMELY, O YE DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM, AS THE TENTS OF KEDAR, AS THE CURTAINS OF SOLOMON.** - THE BRIDE CONFESSES HER SIN AND HER RIGHTEOUSNESS. She addresses the “daughters of Jerusalem,” probably the same ones described as “virgins” and “upright.” These are sinners saved by grace. She addresses them as they too are members of Christ’s bride, His church - sinners saved by grace and brought into the kingdom of God’s grace through Christ. “Jerusalem” means “peace” or “peaceful” - Peace with God through Christ. Fellowship within the bride of Christ begins with this Gospel confession - “BLACK” with sin, darkness, and no light.

“As the tents of Kedar” - Kedar was one of Ishmael’s son, the son of the bondwoman. “Kedar” means dark and so describes the sinfulness that we have within ourselves (*Rom. 7:14-25*). “But comely” - Beautiful and pleasing unto God “as the curtains of Solomon.” Could this be a metaphor for the temple of Solomon, the place of sacrifice and worship where God dwelt with His people above the mercy-seat? YES, and Christ is our only mercy-seat! HOW IS THIS POSSIBLE? How can one who is “black” (sinful within) be considered “comely” (beautiful) in the sight of the Lord? Is this real, or is it fictional? Is Christ pretending that His bride is not what she really is? ABSOLUTELY NOT! The reality of all things is not proven by what sinful creature like us see with our physical eyes. The reality of all things is proven by what God sees (*Job 15:15; 25:5; Rom. 3:19-20; Heb. 4:12-13*). If Christ sees His bride as righteous, rest assured that His bride is righteous. This issue is the heart of the Gospel of God’s grace in Christ. Those who believe God’s Gospel, members of His bride, confess their own sinfulness (as dark as “the tents of Kedar”), and that the only righteousness (beauty) they have before God is the imputed righteousness of Christ (as beautiful as the “curtains of Solomon”). CHRIST’S BRIDE HAS BEEN WASHED IN HIS BLOOD AND CLOTHED IN HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS IMPUTED (*John 16:10*).

THE BRIDE OF CHRIST SEES THE BEAUTY OF CHRIST WHICH SHE DID NOT SEE BEFORE - *Isa 53:2 - For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.* Before we were born again, we looked upon the true Christ with contempt, but after the we are born again, we see His beauty and our own ugliness. We see that His beauty is our beauty, A BEAUTY NOT OF OUR OWN MAKING BUT OF HIS WORK (*Php. 3:9; Isa. 54*).

**(1:6) - LOOK NOT UPON ME, BECAUSE I AM BLACK, BECAUSE THE SUN HATH LOOKED UPON ME: MY MOTHER’S CHILDREN WERE ANGRY WITH ME; THEY MADE ME THE KEEPER OF THE VINEYARDS; BUT MINE OWN VINEYARD HAVE I NOT KEPT.** - The bride seeks to turn the eyes of others away from herself because of her sinfulness and her failures. The keeping of the vineyards and vineyard could be a reference to our fall in Adam who, in the Garden of Eden, disobeyed God and plunged the whole human race into a state of sin and death (*Rom. 5:12*). It could also refer to our own personal sins and failures to keep the law and work out a righteousness before God. We do not desire that others look to us for salvation. LOOK TO CHRIST, FOR HE IS THE ONLY WAY OF SALVATION AND RIGHTEOUSNESS BEFORE GOD (*Isa. 45:21-25; John 14:6; Rom. 10:4*). We know that if we are truly saved, we are witnesses on this earth for the Lord. We also know that people will see us and make their judgments concerning matters of salvation and right relationship with God. For that reason, we should be careful to strive to be able witnesses for Christ and good stewards of the grace of God. But our desire is that sinners not look to us but to Christ and glorify God in salvation (*Matt. 5:16*).

**(1:7) - TELL ME, O THOU WHOM MY SOUL LOVETH, WHERE THOU FEEDEST, WHERE THOU MAKEST THY FLOCK TO REST AT NOON: FOR WHY SHOULD I BE AS ONE THAT TURNETH ASIDE BY THE FLOCKS OF THY COMPANIONS?** - The bride now looks upon her Husband as the Shepherd of the sheep (*Heb. 13:20-22*). Just as in the case of Christ as the Husband who has taken full responsibility for the complete salvation and eternal well-being of His wife (the church), as the Shepherd of the sheep, Christ has taken full responsibility to redeem and save His sheep (*John 10:11, 14, 27-30*). The bride here expresses her God-given desire to be with her Bridegroom, her Shepherd, to feed in green pastures and drink from the fountain of life (*Psa. 23*). She wants to be where His Word, His Gospel, soothes, feeds, and encourages her, and in the fellowship of His church, His sheepfold.

**(1:8) - IF THOU KNOW NOT, O THOU FAIREST AMONG WOMEN, GO THY WAY FORTH BY THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE FLOCK, AND FEED THY KIDS BESIDE THE SHEPHERDS' TENTS.** - This the Bridegroom's response to His bride's request. When it comes to matters of salvation, the Bridegroom ALWAYS gives His bride what she desires (*1 John 5:14*). He ALWAYS gives her what she needs according to His will. In His answer, He recognizes her beauty - "*o thou fairest among women.*" Again, this is the beauty that He gave unto her - His own beauty by His own righteousness imputed to her and the beauty of spiritual and eternal life within that causes her to look to and love Him. This is how He truly sees His bride. This is no legal fiction. It is real. The Lord will not impute sin to His people. He will remember their sins no more (*Rom. 8:33-34; Heb. 8:12; 10:17*).

"*If thou know not ... go thy way ... shepherds' tents*" - Notice how the word "*shepherds*" here is plural. There is only one true Shepherd of the sheep, and that is Christ, the Bridegroom of the church. But there are man UNDER-shepherds who are His ministers whom He calls forth and equips to preach His Word to His people. He tells His bride to follow the people of God to the place where His people are fed by the under-shepherds (faithful witnesses and pastors). This is where God's Word and His Gospel is preached - His churches. Christ's bride needs to be where the Bridegroom is worshipped and honored.

-- **(1:9) - I HAVE COMPARED THEE, O MY LOVE, TO A COMPANY OF HORSES IN PHARAOH'S CHARIOTS.** - The description here is not anything related to pharaoh himself. He was an evil, unbelieving man. The Bridegroom compares his bride's beauty to pharaoh's horses. Christ's church can be compared to horses for their strength, majesty, and comeliness. They are strong in Christ, and in His grace, and are very comely and beautiful in their trappings, clothed with the righteousness of Christ and the graces of His Spirit. They are well fed and well cared for by their Master. They are not like wild horses galloping on their own and in different directions. They are trained and bridled horses pulling together the chariot of God's glory and guided by Christ in His Word. They cost a great price, the blood of Christ; are well fed with the finest of the wheat; and are under the care both of angels and Gospel ministers.

-- **(1:10-11) - THY CHEEKS ARE COMELY WITH ROWS OF JEWELS, THY NECK WITH CHAINS OF GOLD. WE WILL MAKE THEE BORDERS OF GOLD WITH STUDS OF SILVER.** - Christ's bride is adorned with the robe of His righteousness for her justification, but also adorned with the jewels and the precious metals of the graces and gifts of the Holy Spirit (*Gal. 5:22-26*). IT IS ALL THE WORK OF GOD BY HIS POWER AND GRACE IN CHRIST - ***Eph. 2:10***

**(1:12) - WHILE THE KING SITTETH AT HIS TABLE, MY SPIKENARD SENDETH FORTH THE SMELL THEREOF.** - This shows Christ's bride feasting at His table. Notice that not only is Christ the Bridegroom of the church, He is also her King. This is the position He earned by redeeming her with His own blood (**Acts 2:36; Php. 2:5-11; Rev. 17:14**). As God the Son He has always been king and lord. But as Godman and as the one Mediator between God and men, He earned the right to be the King of His church. Not only are believers members of His bride, they are also His subjects and citizens in the kingdom of God.

His "*table*" represents all the gifts and blessings of salvation and eternal life which He earned by His obedience unto death as the Surety, Substitute, and Redeemer of His people. He paid the debt for all our sins imputed to Him, and He gives us the blessings of His righteousness imputed to us. Even though the word "*sitteth*" is not in the original manuscripts, it is certainly implied, as it shows that all the work required to furnish this table was finished by the King, the Bridegroom. The table of the Lord is full, and all who sit at His table bring nothing of their own to that table. It is fully furnished by the King. Salvation is FULL and FREE to all of His bride (**Eph. 1:3; 2 Pet. 1:1-4**). It is all of grace that reigns through His righteousness. For sinners to bring their own dishes (their works) to this table and expect to sit with the King is an insult to Him. Sitting and feasting at the King's table shows us how sinners saved by grace rest in Christ, enjoy the closest fellowship, and eat the meal that He has provided (**Heb. 4:1-11**).

The "*spikenard*" plant, when processed, produces an ointment that is both costly and greatly desired for its aroma and therapeutic qualities (**cf. Mark 14:3-5; John 12:3**). This is a picture of those whom Christ has redeemed by His precious blood. As stated in *Song 1:3*, His bride enjoys the sweet-smelling savor of His glory - His Person and finished work. Before she was born again and called into the kingdom, His smell was offensive to her. But, having been washed thoroughly clean from her sins by His blood, having been clothed in the white garment of His righteousness imputed to her, and having been born again and her spiritual senses created in her by Him, and having been called to Him out of the world, not only does she enjoy His sweet aroma, she emits a sweet-smelling savor to Him (**2 Cor. 2:14-17; Eph. 5:1-2**). Sinners who judge themselves righteous by their works and who approach God in their own self-righteousness are a "*stink*" and "*smoke*" in the nostrils of God (**Isa. 3:24; 65:1-5**).

**(1:13) - A BUNDLE OF MYRRH IS MY WELLBELOVED UNTO ME; HE SHALL LIE ALL NIGHT BETWIXT MY BREASTS.** - "*Myrrh*" is intended to convey to our minds the infinite riches of the glorious Person and finished work of Christ for His people (His bride) and the fact that EVERYTHING necessary for eternal life is abundant and freely provided in and by Him. In the Scriptures, myrrh was known as a rich spice. Recall that the wise men brought it as a gift to the Lord (**Matt. 2:11**). It was the main ingredient in the holy ointment used to anoint the tabernacle (**Exo.30:23-26**). It could be a picture of the Holy Spirit's anointing Christ's church as she is seen in *Song 3:6* as being perfumed with this holy ointment when she is coming up out of the wilderness. There is no doubt that the Person and sacrifice of Christ is as precious ointment to the believing sinner's soul.

Myrrh also is emblematic of the suffering of Christ for His people. "*Wine mingled with myrrh*" was given to the Lord on the cross (**Mark 15:23**). The Lord described His suffering as drinking the cup of God's wrath for His people (**Matt. 26:38-39**). And so we can view this myrrh as the precious ointment of our Lord's healing that was made through the suffering He endured for us. In enduring this suffering, He proved His love for His people (**John 13:1**). Therefore, "*He shall lie all night betwixt my breasts*" - When we consider what our Lord

suffered unto death for our salvation, we become keenly aware of His love for us and His comfort of us (*1 John 4:10*). This statement expresses the bride's continual desire for a close and intimate fellowship and communion with Christ (her Bridegroom). Because He has revealed His love toward us in the Gospel message of His grace that reigns through righteousness, we are assured that we are in His heart. Because of this powerful revelation, He is in our hearts to comfort us with the assurances of His love (*1 John 4:17-20*).

**(1:14) - MY BELOVED IS UNTO ME AS A CLUSTER OF CAMPHIRE IN THE VINEYARDS OF ENGEDI.** - The word "camphire" in the original is the word "kopher." Some versions translate it as "henna," but it is the same word translated "pitch" in *Genesis 6:14* describing how Noah's ark was to be covered on the outside and inside and, thus, made waterproof. Figuratively, it pictures the redemption price, which is the blood of Christ. It is translated "ransom" in *Job 33:24* - "*Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom.*" What a wonderful beauty that Christ is to His people! "Engedi" was a lush, lovely oasis district of gardens and vineyards located below a plateau just west of and overlooking the Dead Sea. It is the wayfarer's delight to come into this beautiful scenery. So, just as pharaoh's horses in *Song 1:9* represented the best of the best because of God's grace through Christ, the camphire from the vineyards of Engedi represent the best of the best. This is the beauty of the fullness of God's love, truth, and grace in Christ (*John 1:16-17; 2 Cor. 4:6; Col. 2:9-10*).

**(1:15) - BEHOLD, THOU ART FAIR, MY LOVE; BEHOLD, THOU ART FAIR; THOU HAST DOVES' EYES.** - Now, the Bridegroom speaks to and of His bride whom He has made lovely by His power, grace, and love. Christ looks upon His church, His bride, His people as being "fair" - beautiful, comely. Considering that we are sinners, how can this be? The only way is by God's saving grace that washes us clean from all our sins in the blood of Christ and that clothes us in the white robe of His righteousness imputed to us. In Christ, no sin is charged against us. In Christ, there is no condemnation. In Christ, the love of God abides forever. And, although we are sinful in ourselves, we stand before God in His beauty. He addresses her as "My love." The word means "my companion, my friend, my intimate." Christ is our companion in that He is our Surety, our Substitute, and our Redeemer. He is our friend in that He will never leave or forsake us. He is our intimate in that He loves us as His bride and will do everything necessary to save us to the uttermost and comfort us with His glorious presence.

"Doves' eyes" refers to the work of the Holy Spirit in our new birth that brings us to see what we did not see before - the beauty of Christ, the peace that He worked out for us and brought us to see (*John 3:3-7; Col. 1:19-21*). The dove is a bird of peace, very gentle and meek, unlike birds of prey. This is the graces and gifts of the Spirit to bring God's elect to submit and follow Him as willing, loving, bondservants of Christ (*Isa. 26:3*).

**(1:16) - BEHOLD, THOU ART FAIR, MY BELOVED, YEA, PLEASANT: ALSO OUR BED IS GREEN.** - He speaks of her beauty and His love for her. He speaks of her as "pleasant" or delightful. She is His delight because the Lord delights to show mercy (*Mic. 7:18*) and His mercy endures forever (*Psa. 106:1*). "Our bed is green" shows that the union of Christ and His church is a union that brings for life (*John 15:1-11*).

**(1:17) - THE BEAMS OF OUR HOUSE ARE CEDAR, AND OUR RAFTERS OF FIR.** - He speaks of the strength and security of the house (church, family) that HE built by His power, grace, and love (*Matt. 16:18*). Sinners who fail to stand upon the Rock Christ Jesus will fall with all their house. But those who stand upon Christ can never fall (*Matt. 7:24-27*).



## LESSON 5 - CHRIST, OUR PRESERVER

### *Song of Solomon 2:1-7*

**(2:1) - I AM THE ROSE OF SHARON, AND THE LILY OF THE VALLEYS.** - Christ speaks again and declares Himself to His bride in terms that glorify and honor His character. He speaks as the great *"I AM,"* the sovereign, eternal, self-existent God. And to think of this God as being one who could love sinners like us, redeem us, and give us the very best of all that He has is overwhelming to us. He describes Himself to His bride as *"the Rose of Sharon, and the Lily of the valleys."* He speaks of His own beauty and glory as He has revealed (and continues to reveal) Himself to her. This is no boast with Christ. If a mere man or woman would speak of him/herself in this way, we would consider it a proudful boasting. But it is essential that our Lord speak of Himself to us because HE IS OUR SALVATION (*John 14:6*). CHRIST IS OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, and WE ARE RIGHTEOUS ONLY IN HIM (*Jer. 23:5-6; 33:15-16*). HE IS OUR LIFE (*John 11:25; 1 John 5:11-13*). *"Sharon"* was a very fertile land (*Isa. 35:2; 65:10*). Christ chose this fruitful and luscious place to describe Himself, because He is the one who creates and gives the beauty of eternal life and glory to His people. The red color of many roses can certainly refer to the blood of Christ that covers our sins and brings forth the only righteousness by which we are justified before God (*Isa. 1:18; Heb. 9:14; 1 Pet. 1:18-19; 1 John 1:7-9*). Roses are usually the pride of the garden, and Christ is the pride of His people (*1 Cor. 1:29-31; Gal. 6:14; Php. 3:3*).

Roses are usually planted, and in a sense, our Lord was planted as sent of the Father into this world. He is the seed of woman (*Gen. 3:15*), conceived in the womb the virgin. He was sent to grow and accomplish the work of redemption for the objects of His love (*Psa. 85:10-13; John 5:30-37; 6:39-44; 10:36; Gal. 4:4-6*). The lily grows wild and is abundant, even without being touched by man (*Matt. 6:28-29*). The common phrase *"lily white"* describes one beyond reproach, and this describes our Bridegroom who is sinless within Himself, but who was made sin by the imputation of our sins to Him (*2 Cor. 5:21*). The valley could symbolize the depths of His humiliation, the *"valley of the shadow of death"* (*Psa. 23:4*) through which He walked to put away our sins and establish righteousness for us (*Php. 2:5-9*).

**(2:2) - AS THE LILY AMONG THORNS, SO IS MY LOVE AMONG THE DAUGHTERS.** - Here is a testimony to God's amazing grace. Christ, the Bridegroom, describes His bride (unworthy sinners saved by grace) in the same way - *"the lily among thorns."* How can this be? We are so sinful and *"black"* (*Song 1:5*). Our Bridegroom has created for us a lily-white robe of righteousness wherein we stand before Him without sin imputed to us (*Rom. 4:6-8; 8:33-34; 2 Cor. 5:21*). This is no fiction or pretense. IT IS REAL! How do we know it is real? It is because our Bridegroom states it! All who are married to Christ, all who believe the Gospel of His grace, are considered by Him to be lilies *"among thorns."* Thorns symbolizes the fallen, unregenerate world of unbelieving sinners. When Adam fell, he brought this world under God's curse (*Gen. 3:17-19*), and he brought the whole human race into a state of sin and death. But before Adam fell, God chose His people in sovereign, electing love in Christ - *"so is My love among the daughters"* (sinners saved by grace). He set His love upon those whom the Father gave to Him. He was made their Surety to bear the debt of all their sins and to work out righteousness for them to be justified before God. He gives to them spiritual and eternal life to live as lilies among thorns, shining lights of His glory and grace in a dark world.

**(2:3) - AS THE APPLE TREE AMONG THE TREES OF THE WOOD, SO IS MY BELOVED AMONG THE SONS. I SAT DOWN UNDER HIS SHADOW WITH GREAT DELIGHT, AND HIS FRUIT WAS SWEET TO MY TASTE.** - Apple trees are very special and loved for their fruit. The bride expresses how special Christ is to her. He is so unique and fruitful in the salvation of His

people. He is identified in the Bible as the Son of God, and He stands among all the sons of God. But He alone is THE only begotten Son of God. All believers are the fruit of His death (*John 12:24,31-33*). All believers are brought by God the Holy Spirit to sit “*down under His shadow with great delight*” and feed upon the sweetness of His presence and His Word. They look upon Him as their life and their light. They submit to Him as the Lord their righteousness and submit to His Word of grace.

**(2:4) - HE BROUGHT ME TO THE BANQUETING HOUSE, AND HIS BANNER OVER ME WAS LOVE. -**

Again, we see the salvation by God’s grace in Christ typified as sitting down in His house as full-fledged members of His family and feasting on the banquet at the table He has prepared for us. He gives His bride “*all things that pertain to life and godliness*” (*2 Pet. 1:3*), “*all spiritual blessings in heavenly places*” (*Eph. 1:3*). Notice how “*He BROUGHT*” her to this place. She did not come on her own or of her own “free-will.” He brought by His will, power, and grace. He drew her with cords of love. By nature, she had no heart to come to Him or be with Him, but He gave her a new heart and new will that caused her to long for Him and come to Him for salvation (*Jer. 31:3; John 1:11-13; 6:44-45*).

He spread “*His banner*” of love over His bride. This is that godly, redemptive love that He expressed in His death for her sins (*1 John 4:10*). This is that godly love that secures her whole salvation and eternal glory by virtue of the merits of His obedience unto death as her Surety, Substitute, and Redeemer. This is that godly love from which they cannot be separated (*Rom. 8:33-39*). The Lord Jesus Christ is the Banner of His people. One of His names is “*Jehovah- Nissi*” which means “*the Lord is my banner*” (*Exod. 17:15*). The Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior, is Jehovah-Nissi, the Lord our Banner. In the majesty of His person, in the power of His redemptive work, in the merit of His blood, in the perfection of His righteousness, in the certainty of His victory, and in the glory of His second coming, Christ is the Banner of His Church. Under this Banner we fight. Under this Banner we prevail.

**(2:5) - STAY ME WITH FLAGONS, COMFORT ME WITH APPLES: FOR I AM SICK OF LOVE. -**

The bride asks her Bridegroom to preserve, keep, settle her in peace by His Spirit and His Word as pictured in “*flagons*” of wine. She asks for the luscious “*apples*” of His word of judgment and guidance, “*a word fitly spoken*” (*Prov. 25:11*). By His Spirit and His Word, the Lord causes us to be “*sick of love*,” which means to long for more revelation of His love that He keeps our minds focused on Him (*Isa. 26:3*).

**(2:6) - HIS LEFT HAND IS UNDER MY HEAD, AND HIS RIGHT HAND DOTHT EMBRACE ME. -**

Christ not only saves us from sin, but He also preserves us by His grace and power. HE WILL NOT LET US GO (*John 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Heb. 7:25*). He saves all for whom He died, and He preserves all whom He saves.

**(2:7) - 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. -**

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 eternal well-being. 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.

**(2:8) - THE VOICE OF MY BELOVED! BEHOLD, HE COMETH LEAPING UPON THE MOUNTAINS, SKIPPING UPON THE HILLS.**

- Salvation is of the Lord, and the Lord Himself is the first cause, the prime mover, in the salvation of His chosen people. Before we can be saved, Christ must come to us, and He must bring us to Himself. If left to our own choice in our natural state, we will not come to Him. The command of the Gospel is “*come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*” (Matt. 11:27). But none of us by nature will come to Him on our own. If left up to us, we will always, sinfully, rebelliously, and willfully, reject Christ and God’s way of salvation by Him. The command of the Gospel is “*believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved*” (Acts 16:31). But, again, by nature, we will not seek Him or believe on Him as He is revealed in God’s Word (Rom. 3:1-12; 1 Cor. 2:14). How, then, are any of us saved? It is by the Lord Himself choosing, seeking, and finding us, coming to us in grace, mercy, and redeeming and regenerating power and love.

First, we must hear His voice in the preaching of the Gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit Who gives us spiritual life from Christ (John 3:3-7; Rom. 1:16-17; 10:13-17). Our Beloved must come to us in the power and sweet voice of His love, draw to Himself, and make us willing to receive and come to Him. In the new birth, He gives us ears to hear His voice, not in wrath, but as our Surety, Substitute, and Redeemer Who suffered our wrath in our place. He reveals Himself to us as our Beloved. He gives us eyes to see His beauty and power and ears to hear His sweet voice in the Gospel (Matt. 13:10-16). He brings His righteousness near and places salvation in Zion (His church, His bride) (Isa. 46:12-13). He gives us faith to believe in Him and rest in His glorious Person and finished work of redemption for us. In bringing to hear His voice, He brings us to seek after and long for Him (John 10:27-30)

The Bridegroom comes “*leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills*” - These are obstacles that we could not climb - the mountain of God’s law which we cannot keep; the mountain of sins which we cannot overcome; the hills of spiritual death and depravity which we cannot cure. But Christ comes joyfully, leaping and skipping, to overcome all that stands between us as sinners and a holy and just God. This is not to say that our Lord did not sorrow, suffer, and agonize in the fulfilling of His work. He suffered unto death like no man has ever suffered unto death. But He did have joy set before Him in this great work (Heb. 12:1-3). It was the joy of the glory of God in the salvation of His beloved. He brought all the mountains and hills low by His obedience unto death and finished them (Dan. 9:24).

**(2:9) - MY BELOVED IS LIKE A ROE OR A YOUNG HART: BEHOLD, HE STANDISH BEHIND OUR WALL, HE LOCKET FORTH AT THE WINDOWS, SHEWING HIMSELF THROUGH THE LATTICE.**

- Christ’s strength was like a gazelle or a young deer. It was not an easy work. Consider His agony in Gethsemane and on the cross. But it was never in doubt that He was able and willing to do this great work! Christ standing “*behind our wall,*” looking through the windows, showing Himself through the lattice, could refer to the gradual revelation of Himself throughout the Old Testament until He came in the full revelation of His glory. Another wrote that this refers to His watchful eye over His bride, protecting her and directing all things for His glory and her good, even when her view of Him is hindered. We see only through a glass darkly (1 Cor. 13:12; 1 John 3:1-2).

**(2:10) - MY BELOVED SPOKE, AND SAID UNTO ME, RISE UP, MY LOVE, MY FAIR ONE, AND COME AWAY.** - Here, the Bridegroom calls the bride unto Himself. This is the effectual calling of our Lord by His Spirit in the preaching of the Gospel that gives us life from the dead. Just as the Lord called unto Lazarus, “*Lazarus, come forth, and he that was dead came*

forth" (*John 11:43-45*), He calls forth His bride, and she comes forth unto Him. This quickening and effectual calling comes to all of God's chosen people, whom He has justified by the blood of Christ (*Eph. 2:1-4*). They are robed in His righteousness imputed to them, so He sees them and addresses them as His love, His fair one. His love is never earned or deserved by them. This is His love in redemption that is given to them freely and unconditionally as to their condition. His love brought Him to fulfill all the conditions to insure their salvation and eternal life (*1 John 4:10*). If we ask, "Does God love me?" False preachers answer, "Yes, he loves everybody equally. Now you must do your part." God's preachers answer with questions - "Do you hear His voice in the Gospel calling you to Himself? Do you believe in Him and rest in Him for all salvation?"

His bride is fair, beautiful, made so by His grace and power based on His righteousness imputed to her. She stands before Him, not having her own righteousness which is the law, but that which is through the faithfulness of Christ, Her Bridegroom (*Php. 3:9*). So, He calls on her to come to Him and to "come away" from sin, self, and the world. He calls her to faith in Him and repentance of dead works and idolatry. A sinner cannot truly come to Christ for salvation without coming away from all else that he thought, in his works, efforts, and experiences, recommended him unto God (*Php. 3:7-10*).

**(2:11) - FOR, LO, THE WINTER IS PAST, THE RAIN IS OVER AND GONE;** - The "winter" speaks of decay and death and is symbolic of our natural, spiritual sin and death. In that state of sin and death, all we could bring forth is fruit unto death (*Rom. 7:5*). "The rain" here is the cold, icy rain of winter that beats upon us and chills us to the bone. This coldness and darkness is totally gone as to our salvation and our right relationship with God. We will go through times and trials that seem cold and dark as winter, but there is no possibility of condemnation and eternal death for those whom Christ justified, redeemed, regenerates, and calls unto Himself (*Rom. 8:1,33-39*).

**(2:12) - THE FLOWERS APPEAR ON THE EARTH; THE TIME OF THE SINGING OF BIRDS IS COME, AND THE VOICE OF THE TURTLE IS HEARD IN OUR LAND;** - This symbolizes the coming of the Holy Spirit which, like Spring after Winter, is the time of life and fruitfulness. Our new birth in Christ by the Holy Spirit gives us new life, a new heart, and a new spirit of faith, repentance, love, joy, and peace. Whereas before we sang the song of sin and death (even though we were unaware of this), now, like the birds in Spring, we sing the song of righteousness and life to the praise of the glory of God's grace in Christ our Bridegroom. Whereas before, we were enemies of God in our minds by wicked works, now, like the turtledove which symbolizes peace, we have peace with God by the blood of Christ.

**(2:13) - THE FIG TREE PUTTETH FORTH HER GREEN FIGS, AND THE VINES WITH THE TENDER GRAPE GIVE A GOOD SMELL. ARISE, MY LOVE, MY FAIR ONE, AND COME AWAY.** - This speaks of the fruit of God's grace in our union with Christ. When the bride is married to the Bridegroom, which is by God-given faith in Christ, she bears the fruit of His grace, power, and love (*Rom. 7:4,6*). This is the fruit that Christ produces within us as He is the true Vine, and we are the branches (*John 15:1-11*). Because of Him, His continual intercessory work for us, we are a sweet-smelling savor unto the Lord. Having given His bride spiritual life, having brought her to faith in Him and repentance of dead works, and having brought her to Himself in grace and in love, He continually calls her to cling to Him and come away with Him from the world. True believers do not simply believe and come to Christ one time when they "walk an aisle and give their hearts to Jesus." We are kept by His grace and come to Him continually as He is precious in our sight. (*1 Pet. 2:1-9*).

**(2:14) - O MY DOVE, THAT ART IN THE CLEFTS OF THE ROCK, IN THE SECRET PLACES OF THE STAIRS, LET ME SEE THY COUNTENANCE, LET ME HEAR THY VOICE; FOR SWEET IS THY VOICE, AND THY COUNTENANCE IS COMELY.** - These verses speak of the sweet communion and the abiding comfort and assurance that Christ, as the Bridegroom, shares and gives to His bride, the church. Remember, His bride consists of all sinners saved by the grace of God. They are all who have been justified freely by His grace based on His righteousness imputed to them. They are all who have been born again by the Holy Spirit and brought to Christ by God-given faith and true repentance. They are all who abide in Him continually by His power and grace because He keeps them under His gracious, loving, and sovereign care to bring them unto final glory.

Again, the Lord compares His bride to a dove for her beauty which is the beauty Christ has created and given to her - His righteousness imputed and the gift of life and graces of the Spirit in which she is adorned (*Isa. 61:10*). He compares her to a dove for its innocence and meekness as opposed to birds of prey. Her innocence is not of her, for she is a sinful bride, but she is innocent because no sin can be charged to her. She is not guilty because Christ has taken her sins and her guilt upon Himself and has died to satisfy God's justice for her (*Rom. 4:6-8; 8:33-34; 2 Cor. 5:19-21*). By His Spirit He has brought her to bow humbly to Him and be obedient to Him in faith and repentance (*Matt. 5:3-10*). As the dove is a symbol of peace, Christ is at peace with His people, and they are at peace with Him, all based on the blood of His cross (*Col. 1:19-23*). His bride, the church, is His dove. He owns her and delights in her. She can find no rest except in him. No matter what she experiences or where she goes, like Noah's dove, she must always return to Christ, her ark, because He will not let her go.

Her safety and security is symbolized here by the fact that she is hidden in the "*clefts of the rock*." A cleft is a rift, a fissure, a break. This speaks of the wounds that Christ obtained in His suffering unto death leading up to and upon the cross where He died for our sins. He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities. When Moses was told to strike the Rock in the wilderness, we were given a beautiful type of Christ in His bearing for His people the crushing blow of God's wrath. Remember, God hid Moses in the "cleft of the rock" (that ROCK was Christ) when He showed Moses His glory (*Exo. 33:22*). This does not mean we escape the storms (or tribulations) of this life. Christ told us that we have trouble in this world, but He also said, "*be of good cheer; I have overcome the world*" (*John 16:33*). Just like Noah and his family felt every rock of the ark and heard the thunder and driving rain while they were in the ark, which was and is Christ, they were completely dry and safe.

"*in the secret places of the stairs*" - Christ is the stairway (or steps) by which believers ascend up to God, have access to and communion with Him. We can think of Jacob's ladder (*Gen. 28:10-15*) where, in a dream, the Lord revealed Himself as the only way to God for a sinner (*cf. John 14:6; 1 Tim. 2:5*). This way is the way of God's grace in Christ. John Gill wrote, "The secret places may have respect to the justifying righteousness of Christ, and reconciliation unto God by Him, hidden from physical view but revealed to all His people (*Rom. 1:16-17*)." When in distress, or under attack from the world, the flesh, or the devil, we look unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, and take shelter in Him. In Him the bride dwells in safety.

Christ, the Bridegroom, longs to hear the voice of His bride, her sweet voice singing praises unto Him, expressing thanksgiving unto Him, worshipping and serving Him. Because of Him (His glory, His grace, His righteousness), her countenance (her face) is beautiful.

**(2:15) - TAKE US THE FOXES, THE LITTLE FOXES, THAT SPOIL THE VINES: FOR OUR VINES HAVE TENDER GRAPES.** - Foxes are sly and cunning. They always seek to ruin and destroy

their enemies. They feed upon their prey. They spoil the vines, but our Vine, which is Christ, cannot be destroyed, and neither can His bride (His church) be destroyed (*Matt. 16:18*). The exhortation here is to expose and catch these foxes and keep them from attacking the tender grapes. This is all symbolic of false preachers who seek to infiltrate the church and use cunning to upset God's children, especially those who are young and yet unskillful in the word of righteousness so as to discern good and evil (*Heb. 5:12-14*). There is much said of such false teachers in God's Word (*Isa. 8:20; Jer. 6:14; 8:11; Rom. 16:17-18; 2 Cor. 11:3-4, 14-15; Gal. 1:6-9; 1 John 2:26; 2 John 9-11*).

**(2:16) - MY BELOVED IS MINE, AND I AM HIS: HE FEEDETH AMONG THE LILIES.** - This is the language of a marriage covenant (*Jer. 31:33*). The Bridegroom has the bride, and the bride has the Bridegroom. He feeds His people among the lilies. This is the assurance of faith that Christ gives to His people through His Word upon which they are fed spiritually. The bride rests in the reality that she is one with her Bridegroom in the view of God's law and justice and in spirit as she been given assurances of His love and care for her. Christ is everything to His people (*Gal. 3:26-29; Col. 3:1-11*). The "lilies" symbolizes each member of the true church feeding upon the Word of God as Christ reveals more and more of Himself and the blessing of salvation to them.

**(2:17) - UNTIL THE DAY BREAK, AND THE SHADOWS FLEE AWAY, TURN, MY BELOVED, AND BE THOU LIKE A ROE OR A YOUNG HART UPON THE MOUNTAINS OF BETHER.** - The bride is totally dependent upon the Bridegroom to save her and preserve through all the shadows of night, even the valley of the shadow of death. This was the desire of every Old Testament saint, and it is equally the desire of every New Testament saint - "*Looking for that blessed hope, the glorious appearing of our Great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*" (*Tit. 2:13, 14*). Notice how that Christ's strength and determination to save His bride to the uttermost never fades or gives way to anyone or anything that would harm her (*Rom. 7:24-25; 8:35-39; 2 Tim. 1:12; Heb. 7:25; Jude 24-25*). Solomon was inspired by the Holy Spirit once again to make reference to the roe (gazelle) and the young hart (deer) to describe the youth, strength, and swiftness of our Savior to be our help in time of need (*Heb. 4:14-16*). The "day break" speaks of the time of His return to gather His church unto Himself and to judge the wicked. Until then, He protects and keeps us like a dove hidden in the cleft of the Rock.

## LESSON 8 - FINDING CHRIST AND BEING FOUND

### *Song of Solomon 3:1-5*

**(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.



**(3:6) - WHO IS THIS THAT COMETH OUT OF THE WILDERNESS LIKE PILLARS OF SMOKE, PERFUMED WITH MYRRH AND FRANKINCENSE, WITH ALL POWDERS OF THE MERCHANT? -**

Sometimes it is a little difficult to pin-point exactly who is speaking in this song. Some say the daughters of Jerusalem, and others say this is Christ the Bridegroom speaking of His bride, the church. I believe this is Christ speaking of His church as He sees her and as she appears in Him. She is seen as coming “*out of the wilderness.*” This is a good description of the church in her sojourn in the world (*cf. Rev. 12:7,14*). Like Israel of old, she wanders in this sinful world, but she is protected and fed by God (*John 6:49-51*). She is seen here as coming out of the wilderness in the strength and the righteousness of Christ as symbolized by “*pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powers of the merchant.*” The “*pillars of smoke*” symbolize her sufferings while in the wilderness which are soothed by her sense of God’s grace in the blood and righteousness of Christ as symbolized by the perfume of “*myrrh and frankincense*” (*cf. Heb. 12*). Both myrrh and frankincense were used in the ancient world for their healing qualities.

The “*powders*” could symbolize the life-giving work of Christ by the Holy Spirit in the new birth. Christ is the “*merchant*” as in *Matthew 13:45-46*, the parable of the pearl of great price. Christ bought her with His own blood, gave His life (all that He had) for her, and she is under His protection. When the devil attacks with his accusations, she pleads His blood (His righteousness) and turns his accusations away (*Rev. 12:9-11; cf. Rom. 8:33-34*). So, the church is seen coming up out of the wilderness in the strength and righteousness of Christ, the goodly merchant man. Isaiah wrote, “*Surely, shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: even to Him shall men come; and all that are incensed against Him shall be ashamed. In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory*” (*Isa. 45:24-25*).

**(3:7) - BEHOLD HIS BED, WHICH IS SOLOMON’S; THREESCORE VALIANT MEN ARE ABOUT IT, OF THE VALIANT OF ISRAEL. -**

The bride speaks again, calling on everyone that will hear to “*behold*” (look intently on) “*Solomon*” and His “*bed.*” “*Solomon*” was a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is one “*greater than Solomon*” (*Matt. 12:42; Luke 11:31*). In his wisdom and wealth, in the magnitude and peacefulness of his kingdom, Solomon was a type of Christ. The name “*Solomon*” means “*peace.*” Recall how that King David, Solomon’s father, wanted to build a temple to the Lord, but the Lord did not allow David to build because David had been “*a man of war*” and had “*shed blood*” (*1 Chron. 28:2-3*). David typified Christ the warrior fighting our sins and defeating them finally on Calvary. God told David that Solomon, his son, would sit on the throne and build the Lord’s house (*1 Chron. 28:5-6*), because Solomon was a “*man of rest*” whose reign would be marked with peace (*1 Chron. 22:9-10*). Solomon typified Christ the Victor who finished the work of war against our sins and reigns in peace and prosperity. God is at peace with His people, and His people are brought to be at peace with Him through the victorious finished work of Christ, His blood and righteousness imputed (*Psa. 85:8-13; 2 Cor. 5:19-21*). We also see a parallel in Solomon’s first marriage as he married Pharaoh’s daughter (*1 Kings 3:1*), a woman of idolatry. Christ’s bride, His church, by nature was a woman of sin and idolatry, and He made her His bride, satisfied her debt, and cleaned her up for His own bed. His “*bed*” refers to spiritual rest, peace, and satisfaction which His bride (all true believers) find in Him, based on His righteousness imputed to them and received by God-given faith in Him. This bed upon which we rest is Christ Himself, and His finished work of redeeming us from our sins - the glorious rest we have in Christ.

The “*valiant men*” are His warriors, which are His ministers and watchmen on the walls of Zion, who are sent forth, clothed in the whole armor of God (*Eph. 6:10-18*), wielding

the sword of the Spirit (the Word of God), preaching the Gospel and ministering to God's people. The fact that their number is "*threescore*" (60) does not mean a particular number. It means that Christ (our greater Solomon) always provides as many valiant men as we need for our safety, protection, and spiritual health.

**(3:8) - THEY ALL HOLD SWORDS, BEING EXPERT IN WAR: EVERY MAN HATH HIS SWORD UPON HIS THIGH BECAUSE OF FEAR IN THE NIGHT.** - As stated, these are the ministers of Christ who hold the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God (*Eph. 6:17; 2 Cor. 10:1-5*). The word "*expert*" means one who is "*learned*." It describes a true minister who has been taught of God and is skillful in the word of righteousness, the Scriptures. No true child of God would claim to be an "*expert*" in God's Word as if to say he claimed to know all there is to know. But every true minister knows Christ and His Gospel and is a student of the Word (*2 Tim. 2:15*). We all should be continual learners of His Word, but, by God's grace and power in Christ, we DO learn and grow. The swords "*upon his thigh because of fear in the night*" indicates the Word of God in a place where it is easily wielded against the darkness of sin and idolatry, ready to defend against all attacks (*1 Pet. 3:15; 2 Tim. 4:1-5*).

**(3:9-10) - KING SOLOMON MADE HIMSELF A CHARIOT OF THE WOOD OF LEBANON. HE MADE THE PILLARS THEREOF OF SILVER, THE BOTTOM THEREOF OF GOLD, THE COVERING OF IT OF PURPLE, THE MIDST THEREOF BEING PAVED WITH LOVE, FOR THE DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM.** - This is the royal "*chariot*" of our salvation by which Christ bears us up and carries us away from this wilderness world. The "*wood*" could represent His holy humanity in which He, as God manifest in the flesh, kept the law and bore our sins away. The pillars of "*silver*" could represent His redemptive work upon which all of our salvation stands and is made sure. He took our sins upon Himself and washed them away in His precious blood. As long as we are in this chariot, so to speak, we are safe. Our sins cannot be charged to us. We rest in His righteousness alone. The bottom of "*gold*" could represent His deity and glory which gave all that He did in His suffering unto death for us the value and worth that it took to insure our salvation. The covering of "*purple*" could represent His royal majesty and power to give eternal life and bring unto glory all whom the Father had given before the foundation of the world. It is all "*paved with love*." This is Christ's love for His people which brought Him into the world to finish His great work for the objects of His love (*John 13:1; Rom. 10:4*). This is love from which we cannot be separated (*Rom. 8:35-39*). It is based upon law and justice satisfied by Christ (*1 John 4:10*).

**(3:11) - GO FORTH, O YE DAUGHTERS OF ZION, AND BEHOLD KING SOLOMON WITH THE CROWN WHEREWITH HIS MOTHER CROWNED HIM IN THE DAY OF HIS ESPOUSALS, AND IN THE DAY OF THE GLADNESS OF HIS HEART.** - Here is a gracious call to the entire church to go forth and behold one greater than Solomon, or Lord and King Christ Jesus. Our Lord Jesus Christ came forth from the hall of Pilate crowned with thorns, testifying that He and the work He would do was made perfect through suffering (*Heb. 2:9-10*). After Christ's ascension and return to glory, He was crowned by God to testify of His kingly power over all (*Php. 2:5-11*). The coronation spoken of here takes place when all whom He has redeemed by His blood, all whom God has justified by His righteousness imputed, are espoused to Him as they are united to Him spiritually by their new birth unto spiritual life and faith. This is when born-again sinners are brought by God to bow to King Jesus as the Lord their righteousness. This is when the Lord imparts to us "*the gladness of His heart*" (*cf. Psalms 4; 122; Isaiah 35:10; Jeremiah 33:11*).

**(4:1) - BEHOLD, THOU ART FAIR, MY LOVE; BEHOLD, THOU ART FAIR; THOU HAST DOVES' EYES WITHIN THY LOCKS: THY HAIR IS AS A FLOCK OF GOATS, THAT APPEAR FROM MOUNT GILEAD.**

- Here, Christ, the Bridegroom, speaks to His church, the bride, and describes the reality of how He sees her because of her union with Him. She is beautiful in His sight, not because any natural beauty, for naturally speaking she is the unworthy, sinful bride. It is not by any works that she has done, is doing, or will do, for all her works are as filthy rags when compared to Christ's work for her (*Psa. 130:3; Isa. 64:6*). Her beauty is not due to any goodness or cleanness within herself, but her beauty is that which HE has freely given her by washing her clean in the blood of redemption, and by giving her a righteousness that He alone worked out on the cross - the very righteousness of God, the imputed righteousness of Christ. We who are saved must be continually reminded of this fact, lest we be lifted up in our own pride and forget that our whole salvation is by God's free and sovereign grace based upon the merits of the obedience unto death of our Savior. We must also be continually reminded of this word of assurance from Christ to be encouraged in the obedience of faith motivated by grace, love, and gratitude.

This beauty can be attributed to the bride of Christ as the church collectively and to the individuals who make up the bride of Christ. Some believe that the following phrases can be attributed to the true church as the body of Christ as the apostle Paul described the church as one body with many members (*1 Cor. 12:12-14*). But I believe that if we view these metaphors in the Gospel light, we can see how each one can be attributed to each individual member of Christ's church. Having said of all this, we also need to recognize that there is an inward beauty in the bride, which is the grace of God giving her, by the new birth, a new heart, new life, spiritual eyes and ears, faith in Christ, true repentance, and all the fruit of the Spirit (*Gal. 5:22-23*). None of these inward graces equal the righteousness of Christ which God has imputed to His people, and which is the only ground of her salvation. But they are "*the inward man*" (*Rom. 7:22*) who delights in the law of God because he sees it fulfilled for him by Christ (*Rom. 10:4*), and "*the hidden man of the heart*" (*1 Pet. 3:4*). This is beautiful in that they keep the bride looking to and clinging to Christ as her only righteousness before God.

"*Doves eyes within thy locks*" (literally, "*behind thy veil*") - This describes the brides spiritual eyes given to her by the Lord to see God's glory in Him (*Matt. 13:11-16; 2 Cor. 4:3-6; Heb. 2:9; 12:2*). Like blind Bartimaeus, she has received her sight (*Mark 10:52*). Like the blind man in *John 9:25*, she can say, "*I was blind, now I see.*" Her sight here on earth is not yet perfect, but she does see the beauty of Christ and that His beauty is her beauty. She will one day see Him perfectly (*1 Cor. 13:12; 1 John 3:1-2*).

"*Thy hair is as a flock of goats, that appear from Mount Gilead*" - The idea is not that her hair is like the hair of a goat, but it is that her hair beautifully flows down her head like a black-haired flock of goats, flowing down from Mount Gilead. Again, the Bridegroom speaks of His bride's beauty.

**(4:2) - THY TEETH ARE LIKE A FLOCK OF SHEEP THAT ARE EVEN SHORN, WHICH CAME UP FROM THE WASHING;**

-- I believe this is metaphor for the mouth through which the heart speaks (*Matt. 12:34*). The testimony of the bride is the pure Word of God in the Gospel. Even our words are washed clean in the blood of Christ. We are perfect legally in Christ, but we are not yet perfect within ourselves. However, our Gospel, the Word of truth, is the perfect Word of God which points sinners to our perfect Savior and the perfect way that He has made for us to come to God (*Psa. 18:30; John 14:6*). "*Even shorn*" can mean "*newly shorn*" which describes the newness and freshness of the Word of truth. It never grows old to God's people.

**WHEREOF EVERY ONE BEAR TWINS, AND NONE IS BARREN AMONG THEM.** - This speaks of the fruitfulness of God's Word which will always accomplish the purpose for which God sends it (*Isa. 55:10-13; Heb. 4:12-13*). Christ said that all whom the Father gave Him will come to Him, and they will all, by the power of God, hear and believe the same Gospel truth wherein Christ, as the very righteousness of God, is revealed (*John 6:37-45; Rom. 1:16-17*).

**(4:3) - THY LIPS ARE LIKE A THREAD OF SCARLET, AND THY SPEECH IS COMELY: THY TEMPLES ARE LIKE A PIECE OF A POMEGRANATE WITHIN THY LOCKS.** - The "lips" and "speech" continue, obviously, to describe the grace of God in Christ which pours forth from her lips. Throughout the Scriptures, the redeemed of the Lord are described as having on their lips the truth of God and praises for God. This is opposed to the lying lips of unbelievers who preach and believe false gospels and who praise and worship idols. The "temples" is a metaphor for the mind. The "pomegranate" symbolizes the fertility of God's promise of salvation and the Biblical concepts of knowledge, learning, and wisdom, qualities that come from the revelation of truth from the understanding of the Scriptures.

**(4:4) - THY NECK IS LIKE THE TOWER OF DAVID BUILT FOR AN ARMOURY, WHEREON THERE HANG A THOUSAND BUCKLERS, ALL SHIELDS OF MIGHTY MEN.** - The "neck" connects to head with the body and hold the head up. The imagery here is of the strength of God's grace in the body of Christ Who is the head of the body. God's grace in Christ connects us to Him and holds us up more than a thousand shields held by a thousand valiant warriors.

**(4:5) - THY TWO BREASTS ARE LIKE TWO YOUNG ROES THAT ARE TWINS, WHICH FEED AMONG THE LILIES.** - The "two breasts" of the church has been given a variety of meanings by various writers. We know that a mother's milk that is created in her by God and flows through her to feed her babies could very well be intended here. We are told to desire the sincere milk of the word that we may grow in grace and in knowledge of Christ (*1 Pet. 2:2-3; 2 Pet. 3:18*).

**(4:6) - UNTIL THE DAY BREAK, AND THE SHADOWS FLEE AWAY, I WILL GET ME TO THE MOUNTAIN OF MYRRH, AND TO THE HILL OF FRANKINCENSE.** - Here, Christ, the Bridegroom, speaks of His going away to do the work necessary for the salvation of His people. The "mountain of myrrh" speaks of His suffering unto death for the salvation of His people. He redeemed His bride with His own precious blood. The "hill of frankincense" speaks of the sweet aroma and satisfaction of His finished work to bring forth a righteousness that satisfies God's justice and enables God to be both a just God and a Savior. His going away to prepare a place for His bride, to watch over and care for her, and to await the day of His return to gather His bride unto Himself (*John 14:1-3; 17:1-3*).

**(4:7) - THOU ART ALL FAIR, MY LOVE; THERE IS NO SPOT IN THEE.** - He emphasizes that as the bride stands in union with Him, washed in His blood and clothed in His righteousness, she is beautiful and without spot or blemish (*Col. 1:19-22; 2:9-10*). And although the bride, under the weight of the remaining sinfulness of her flesh, does not see this in herself, this is the testimony and sure word of her Bridegroom. THIS IS HOW CHRIST LOOKS UPON HIS CHURCH, SINNERS SAVED BY GRACE. It is no pretense or legal fiction. It is the reality of God's grace and mercy towards His people who stand before Him in Christ (*Php. 3:8-10*).

**(4:8) - COME WITH ME FROM LEBANON, MY SPOUSE, WITH ME FROM LEBANON: LOOK FROM THE TOP OF AMANA, FROM THE TOP OF SHENIR AND HERMON, FROM THE LIONS' DENS, FROM THE MOUNTAINS OF THE LEOPARDS.**

- From here on, it is clear that Christ, the Bridegroom, and His church, the bride, are now married. He addresses her now as His "spouse," i.e. the bride to whom He is married. This is the blessed and gracious union of Christ to His church as the apostle described in *Romans 7:4-6* and *Ephesians 5:22-32*. Having been espoused to Him before the foundation of the world, Christ undertook to fulfill all the conditions required for His marriage to her. The title of this message is "The Beauty and Fruitfulness of Christ," but in these verses Christ speaks of the beauty and fruitfulness of His bride. Why, then, have I entitled it as such? It is because the beauty and fruitfulness of His people are HIS beauty and fruitfulness given and applied to them (*Jer. 23:5-6; 33:15-16*). Having her sins imputed to Him, He went to the cross, took her place, and died to pay her sin-debt. He put upon her a robe of righteousness in which there is no legal barrier to hinder His marriage to her. He sent forth His Spirit to cleanse her within with the application of His precious blood to her heart and conscience and, thereby, draw her to Himself with cords of love (*Isa. 61:10; Rev. 19:7-10*). This is a marriage union that can never be dissolved because of the power, grace, and love of Christ for His bride.

Christ calls His bride to come with Him "from Lebanon." Lebanon was highly regarded in the Bible. The name literally means "white mountain." Moses called it the "goodly mountain" (*Deut. 3:25*). It was known for the quality of its cedar trees, and the psalmist compared God's people to the cedars of Lebanon (*Psa. 92:12-14*). "Amana," "Shenir," and "Hermon," are all mountains in Syria. "Lions" and "leopards" were animals that posed a threat to travelers. So, the sense is that Christ calls His people (His spouse) in their heart to leave the world and follow Him. What could be more expressive of divine love than a call from our Lord to dwell with Him under the safety and security of His power, grace, and love? These views of Christ as our Savior, Redeemer, Protector, and Friend are the thoughts that should be the focal point of every justified saint's thoughts.

**(4:9) - THOU HAST RAVISHED MY HEART, MY SISTER, MY SPOUSE; THOU HAST RAVISHED MY HEART WITH ONE OF THINE EYES, WITH ONE CHAIN OF THY NECK.** - Not only is Christ the Husband of the Church (His wife), but He is also her elder brother and calls her "My sister." Christ expresses His great love for His church. She has consumed His heart because of His glory revealed in her salvation (*2 Cor. 4:6; Eph. 1:3-12*). The phrase "ONE of thine eyes" and "ONE chain of thy neck" speak of the singleness of her faith and her love for Him (*2 Cor. 11:2-3*). She has captured His heart, and He alone has captured her heart. He and His bride are joined together and cannot be torn apart.

**(4:10) - HOW FAIR IS THY LOVE, MY SISTER, MY SPOUSE! HOW MUCH BETTER IS THY LOVE THAN WINE! AND THE SMELL OF THINE OINTMENTS THAN ALL SPICES!** - The Lord expresses how much He cherishes His people's love for Him. When we consider our love for Christ, we know that it is very imperfect and pitiful when we compare it to HIS perfect love for us. But we must put this in perspective. Our love for Him is a gift of His grace to us, and it comes from the Holy Spirit revealing and convincing us of His great and perfect love for us in that He gave His life for us (*1 John 4:10*). And even though the remaining corruption and contamination of our flesh hinders us in the exercise of perfect love, we who are saved by God's grace DO love Him. Our love for Him glorifies and honors Him. Our love for Him binds us together in truth and causes us to love one another. Our love for Him motivates us to the obedience of grace, love, and gratitude, and it is a pleasing odor to God as He accepts us in

Christ. Our love for Him grows in knowing that it is HIS love for us that saves us and keeps us (1 John 4:16-19).

**(4:11) - THY LIPS, O MY SPOUSE, DROP AS THE HONEYCOMB: HONEY AND MILK ARE UNDER THY TONGUE; AND THE SMELL OF THY GARMENTS IS LIKE THE SMELL OF LEBANON.** - The lips and the tongue of His people are filled with praises and expressions of love for Him. They are filled with His truth, His Gospel, wherein He is revealed in the glory of His Person and the power of His finished work of redemption. “Honey and milk” are symbols of God’s blessings to His people. The Jews would certainly see in this the land of promise which was called the land of milk and honey. But that physical land was only a type or picture of the eternal blessing of salvation by the mercy and grace of God in Christ, all based on His righteousness imputed to His people. So, her “garments” are the garments of salvation, beginning with the perfect robe of His righteousness imputed to her for her justification before God, her security in His grace, and her spiritual life and preservation (*Isa. 61:10*). The word translated “drop” literally means to prophesy and preach. So, the child of God, regenerated and converted by the Holy Spirit through the preaching of God’s Gospel, will in turn begin to tell others of the glory of His grace. Read the next four verses together -

**(4:12) - A GARDEN INCLOSED IS MY SISTER, MY SPOUSE; A SPRING SHUT UP, A FOUNTAIN SEALED.**

**(4:13) - THY PLANTS ARE AN ORCHARD OF POMEGRANATES, WITH PLEASANT FRUITS; CAMPHIRE, WITH SPIKENARD,**

**(4:14) - SPIKENARD AND SAFFRON; CALAMUS AND CINNAMON, WITH ALL TREES OF FRANKINCENSE; MYRRH AND ALOES, WITH ALL THE CHIEF SPICES:**

**(4:15) - A FOUNTAIN OF GARDENS, A WELL OF LIVING WATERS, AND STREAMS FROM LEBANON.**

All these verses use poetic symbols to describe the spiritual fruitfulness of Christ’s kingdom and His bride. His kingdom will increase and grow as the Gospel goes out into the world in power to save His people from their sins, to give them spiritual life, and to preserve them unto glory as He waters them with His Spirit and His Word. Each member of His bride (the church) will bear fruit unto God and the fruit of the Holy Spirit. None of them will perish. By God’s power and grace, they will all come to the full fruition of eternal life and glory.

**(4:16) - AWAKE, O NORTH WIND; AND COME, THOU SOUTH; BLOW UPON MY GARDEN, THAT THE SPICES THEREOF MAY FLOW OUT. LET MY BELOVED COME INTO HIS GARDEN, AND EAT HIS PLEASANT FRUITS.** - The “north” in the Bible can be a symbol of God’s sovereign throne of judgment. Here, the “north wind” can symbolize the Holy Spirit Who is the Spirit of judgment and truth. Christ calls Him forth to blow upon His garden. By His power He gives life to the garden. This is the new birth of God’s children where He imparts the resurrection life of Christ into their souls (*John 3:3-7*). Under the Gospel, He empowers it to bring them to faith in Christ and true repentance (*John 16:7-11*). It is the garden of His truth and grace where we feed upon His Word and grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ. He is said to feed upon these when He expresses how He is well-pleased with them and accepts them in the merits of His own blood and righteousness.

**(5:1) - I AM COME INTO MY GARDEN, MY SISTER, MY SPOUSE: I HAVE GATHERED MY MYRRH WITH MY SPICE; I HAVE EATEN MY HONEYCOMB WITH MY HONEY; I HAVE DRUNK MY WINE WITH MY MILK: EAT, O FRIENDS; DRINK, YEA, DRINK ABUNDANTLY, O BELOVED. -**

This verse is connected with chapter four. It describes the Lord coming into His garden to commune with His people. “Myrrh with My spice” speaks of the sufferings of Christ, which, though like myrrh, bitter to him, are like spice, of a sweet-smelling savor to God and to His people. The fruits of this is the salvation of His people and delightful to Himself. He provides a feast for Himself and for His people as He enjoys all the glory, and they enjoy all blessings. “Honey” and “honeycomb,” “wine” and “milk,” all stand for the precious Word of God, the Gospel of His grace in Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit who applies these truths to the hearts of God’s people and brings us to joy and assurance of salvation because of what Christ accomplished for us in His death. “Friends” and “beloved” describe all the people of God, sinners saved by grace, all who are washed in the blood of Christ and clothed in His righteousness.

**(5:2) - I SLEEP, BUT MY HEART WAKETH: IT IS THE VOICE OF MY BELOVED THAT KNOCKETH, SAYING, OPEN TO ME, MY SISTER, MY LOVE, MY DOVE, MY UNDEFILED: FOR MY HEAD IS FILLED WITH DEW, AND MY LOCKS WITH THE DROPS OF THE NIGHT. -** We all need sleep for our physical bodies. But sleeping on the job is never good for us. This is the situation here. “I sleep” describes the soul in a state of coldness and indifference. Our lives as believers here on earth are marked with times of fervent joy in serving the Lord but also with times of negligence and carelessness. This is part of our inward warfare of the flesh and the Spirit. What we see here is the bride asleep when she should be awake and ready to hear the voice of Christ. She is asleep but not dead - “but my heart waketh.” A sinner saved by God’s grace can never be totally deaf to the voice of the Savior. Paul dealt with this same condition in Ephesus - “Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light”(Eph.5:14). This sad state of mind may show itself in a neglect of the means of grace. But even in these times of indifference, we who believe have good reason for encouragement. The Bridegroom will not let the bride continue forever in such a sad state. Christ continually calls us to return to our first love. He knocks at the door, not in anger, but out of love and concern for His bride.

Christ still refers to His bride as His sister, His love, His dove, His undefiled. These expressions of His love are to awaken her out of sleep. He revives her, not with legal threats of condemnation or loss of reward, but with expressions of love and grace (cf. Hos. 14:4-5; Deut. 32:1-3). His word is a refreshing wake-up call to His people. It is a light turned on to dispel the darkness of this sleep (Psa. 119:105). He reminds us of the glory of His Person and the power of His finished work to save us from our sins and give us the great treasure of eternal life and blessedness. This is a wake-up call that we need and often.

**(5:3) - I HAVE PUT OFF MY COAT; HOW SHALL I PUT IT ON? I HAVE WASHED MY FEET; HOW SHALL I DEFILE THEM? -** Most commentators claim that these are the words of the bride who has lost sight of the beauty of God’s grace in her salvation. She is so comfortable in her bed of indifference that she makes excuses for not responding to the voice of her Husband in a positive way. She is still the unworthy bride of a worthy Husband. Salvation is ALL OF GRACE!

**(5:4) - MY BELOVED PUT IN HIS HAND BY THE HOLE OF THE DOOR, AND MY BOWELS WERE MOVED FOR HIM. -** When the Lord put His hand in the doorlatch to open it, her heart was

moved for Him. The bowels refer to the emotions (*cf. Php. 2:1*) that stir up love. Just as it took the power of God to call us out of our spiritual death in conversion, the same power calls us to wake up and walk after and follow Him. When God is pleased to call us in this way, He draws us to seek after Him and more of His grace.

**(5:5) - I ROSE UP TO OPEN TO MY BELOVED; AND MY HANDS DROPPED WITH MYRRH, AND MY FINGERS WITH SWEET SMELLING MYRRH, UPON THE HANDLES OF THE LOCK.** - Here we see the sweet effects of God's grace in moving the bride's heart toward Christ, her Beloved. The Holy Spirit sets it before us under the illustration of the figures of hands dropping with myrrh and fingers smelling with the fragrance of myrrh. This is a picture of believers laying hold of Christ as our sin-bearing Who suffered in our place and died for our sins. He brought forth the only righteousness whereby God justifies us and from which we receive spiritual life. Here, the bride's God-given faith and love for her Husband is being actively exercised towards Him.

**(5:6) - I OPENED TO MY BELOVED; BUT MY BELOVED HAD WITHDRAWN HIMSELF, AND WAS GONE: MY SOUL FAILED WHEN HE SPAKE: I SOUGHT HIM, BUT I COULD NOT FIND HIM; I CALLED HIM, BUT HE GAVE ME NO ANSWER.** - Christ has withdrawn Himself from the bride. We know He would never abandon her or write her a bill of divorce, but He will at times withdraw His comforting presence temporarily from His bride. Why would He do this? It is to teach us once again of our great need of and dependence on Him and His Word. It is to show us anew how unworthy and sinful we are and how worthy and gracious He is. Consider King David when he committed adultery and murder. He did not lose his salvation, but he did lose the joy of his salvation (*2 Sam. 12:13; Psa. 51:12*). There are times that God's children must cry out in desperation, "*Hide not Thy face far from me; put not Thy servant away in anger: Thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation*" (*Psa. 27:9; cf. Psa. 69:17; 102:2; 143:7*). We must continually cry, "*O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin*" (*Rom. 7:24-25*).

**(5:7) - THE WATCHMEN THAT WENT ABOUT THE CITY FOUND ME, THEY SMOTE ME, THEY WOUNDED ME; THE KEEPERS OF THE WALLS TOOK AWAY MY VEIL FROM ME.** - We are ALWAYS sure to find the voice of our Lord where God's preachers preach His Word, His Gospel which speaks comfort to us. When His bride searches for Him, He will always find her and bring her back to Himself with loving chastisements. He will always cause His people to realize their utter sinfulness, chastising them to make them realize even more their need of Him and to bring them to cherish even more His righteousness (*Heb. 12:11*). Smiting, wounding, and taking away her veil (bring her to shame) teach us that God's servants do not spare sharpness of speech in dealing with their hearers, but admonish them concerning their indifferent condition, removing any veil or covering of excuse (*Isa. 58:1*). Also, remember that when we seek to recover a brother or sister who has fallen into a bad spiritual condition, we must do so in humility and with grace, reminding them of what the Lord has done for them in Christ (*Gal. 6:1-3*).

**(5:8) - I CHARGE YOU, O DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM, IF YE FIND MY BELOVED, THAT YE TELL HIM, THAT I AM SICK OF LOVE.** - The bride is love-sick for her Husband. She pleads with the "*daughters of Jerusalem*" (brothers and sisters in Christ) to pray to the Savior on her behalf, knowing that He always hears the prayers of His people. This is true Godly sorrow over sin that the Holy Spirit uses to keep bringing us back to Christ (*2 Cor. 7:8-11*).



**(5:9) - WHAT IS THY BELOVED MORE THAN ANOTHER BELOVED, O THOU FAIREST AMONG WOMEN? WHAT IS THY BELOVED MORE THAN ANOTHER BELOVED, THAT THOU DOST SO CHARGE US?** - Here is the response of the daughters of Jerusalem (her brethren) to the charge she gave them in 5:8 - *"if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him, that I am sick of love."* As sinners saved by God's grace in Christ Jesus, we know the glory, beauty, and value of Christ, our Beloved. But this question is posed, not to inform us of what we do not know, but to remind us of the wonderful truth of our precious Savior. What is Christ, our Beloved, more than any other? The Apostle Paul wrote, *"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world"* (Gal. 6:14). The Apostle Peter wrote, *"Unto you therefore which believe He is precious"* (1 Pet. 2:7). The question is this - What think ye of Christ? He is everything to His people, and the answer His people give is detailed in the following verses

**(5:10) - MY BELOVED IS WHITE AND RUDDY, THE CHIEFEST AMONG TEN THOUSAND.** - *"White"* speaks of the spotless purity and the righteousness He worked out for His people by His death on the cross. This includes the righteousness of Christ imputed to His people for their justification before God. *"Ruddy"* is red which speaks of His bloody sacrifice and sufferings unto death as the Surety, Substitute, and Redeemer of His bride. White also speaks of His glory as God, and ruddy speaks of His incarnation as it is the same word used for *"man"* in *Genesis 1:27* (man means *"red earth"*). White speaks of salvation which is all in and by Christ. Red speaks of justice which He satisfied for us on Calvary. *"The chiefest among ten thousand"* describes His preeminence, for His is above and over all for the glory of His Father and the salvation of His people (*Col. 1:16-19*). In His church, He is the Head and the chief cornerstone. Among His brethren He is the Firstborn. Among the resurrected, He is the First-begotten from the dead and the First-fruits of them which believe.

**(5:11) - HIS HEAD IS AS THE MOST FINE GOLD, HIS LOCKS ARE BUSHY, AND BLACK AS A RAVEN.** - *"Gold"* most always in the Scripture, when used of God, speaks of the brilliance and value of deity. Christ is God manifest in the flesh, the Word made flesh to dwell amongst us, and He is *"Immanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us"* (*Matt. 1:13*). Applied to *"His head"* speaks of His absolute sovereignty and authority over all things so that we can be assured that He is able to save us to uttermost in spite of all that would come against us. As we know how *"black"* often refers to the dark sinfulness of a person (*i.e. Song 1:5*), it could not refer to Christ as a sinful person. For though all the sins of God's elect were imputed to Him, He washed that debt completely away by the sacrifice of Himself for His people. He had no sin and knew no sin within Himself, and sin could never be said to have been transferred to Him except by imputation. Here is a description of our Savior in the glory of His finished work wherein even our sins imputed to Him has been completely erased. Here, *"black"* is used in line with His deity. It, therefore, describes the blackness or darkness of a mystery and can apply to Christ in the depth and height of His glory as Godman. Although He has revealed to us much about Himself in the glory of His Person, He is such a great and glorious Person that we can never reach the full depths and heights of all that He is and all that He does in His sovereign providence. *Rom. 11:33-36*

**(5:12) - HIS EYES ARE AS THE EYES OF DOVES BY THE RIVERS OF WATERS, WASHED WITH MILK, AND FITLY SET.** - Our Beloved's eyes are set upon us in peace which provides life and sustenance to our souls for eternal life. His eyes are pure and clean and set upon the glory of His Father and the eternal good of His people. He watches over us to keep and protect us and

never takes His eyes from us. He sees our needs and provides us spiritual water and bread when we thirst and hunger.

**(5:13) - HIS CHEEKS ARE AS A BED OF SPICES, AS SWEET FLOWERS: HIS LIPS LIKE LILIES, DROPPING SWEET SMELLING MYRRH.** - In this verse the church joins together two features of her Beloved in describing Him, namely, His cheeks and His lips. His cheeks describe the beauties of His Person. His lips describe the blessedness of what Christ has delivered to His church in His Word of truth. To those who have seen the King in His beauty and heard the gracious words which proceed out of His mouth, recorded in His Holy Word, nothing can more strikingly set forth the Person, finished work, and mediatorial offices of Christ.

**(5:14) - HIS HANDS ARE AS GOLD RINGS SET WITH THE BERYL: HIS BELLY IS AS BRIGHT IVORY OVERLAID WITH SAPPHIRES.** - The “hands” (and the arms), when attributed to the Lord, speak of His power to save and His power to rule over and work all things for the glory of His Father and the good of His people, the redeemed of the Lord. The word “beryl” is viewed by various translators as one of the stones associated with the breastplate of the high priest and, so, speaks of Christ high priestly work as the one Mediator between God and His people. His “belly” is probably His heart (His compassion) which is towards His people and is as precious stones because of what it brought Him to do for His people (*John 13:1; 1 John 4:10*).

**(5:15) - HIS LEGS ARE AS PILLARS OF MARBLE, SET UPON SOCKETS OF FINE GOLD: HIS COUNTENANCE IS AS LEBANON, EXCELLENT AS THE CEDARS.** - Obviously, these images describe the Lord’s strength and stability. He is a firm foundation, a Rock, for His people upon which they stand invincible because of who He is and what He has done to save them from their sins. He stands upon the strength and power of His deity, and, as God in sinless human flesh, He worked out the sure salvation of His people. His appearance is as beautiful as the cedars of Lebanon. When the bride sees Him in His glory, there is no beauty like His beauty.

**(5:16) - HIS MOUTH IS MOST SWEET: YEA, HE IS ALTOGETHER LOVELY. THIS IS MY BELOVED, AND THIS IS MY FRIEND, O DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM.** - His “mouth” is the sweet fellowship and closeness He has with His bride, and it describes the sweetness of His Word. “*HE IS ALTOGETHER LOVELY.*” There is none like our Lord. There is none even to compare with Him. Everything about Him is perfect and beautiful. There are not enough words to describe the beauty and glory of Christ. We see His beauty now, but when we are broken free from the shackles of this sinful flesh, we will see even more of His beauty and glory (*1 John 3:1-2*). And with all of this beauty and glory that we see in Him, we can also say that He is our Friend. The Lord Jesus Christ was, and is, the friend of sinners. The Pharisees accused Him of this, but they meant it as an insult (*Matt. 11:19*). But He made it clear that He came to seek and to save that which was lost. He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. And all whom He brings to faith in Him and true repentance, He calls them His friend, and they call Him their Friend. The wise man wrote, “*A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity*” (*Prov. 17:17*). Christ is every believer’s friend at all times, and He is every believer’s elder brother born out of His sufferings unto death to put away our sins and work out righteousness by which we are justified, sanctified, and preserved unto glory.

**(6:1) - WHITHER IS THY BELOVED GONE, O THOU FAIREST AMONG WOMEN? WHITHER IS THY BELOVED TURNED ASIDE? THAT WE MAY SEEK HIM WITH THEE.** - In Song 5:9, the daughters of Jerusalem posed a question to the bride - *"What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? what is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us?"* The bride, then, answered with a vivid description of the beauty of the Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ. Here, they pose a question that every sinner who has been awakened by the Holy Spirit to his spiritual condition in sin and death will ask - *"Whither is thy Beloved gone ... that we may seek Him with thee."* There is no question that all sinners need the grace of God in salvation from sin. There is no question that this salvation can only be found in and by the pure grace of God through the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no question that all people should seek the Lord for salvation. But it is also a sad reality that no sinner will, of his own will, seek the Lord (*Rom. 3:10-12; 1 Cor. 2:14*). So, all who truly seek Him do so because the Holy Spirit has brought them under the Gospel truth and convinced them of sin, righteousness, and judgment (*John 16:8-11*). The Lord God is drawing them to Himself, bringing them to seek Christ Whom they will find and in Whom they will believe (*John 6:44-45*).

When a convicted sinner finds the Lord Jesus Christ, he continues to seek after Him and come to Him more and more. Salvation is a continual seeking more of the truth and glory of Christ. This is what the daughters of Jerusalem have in mind as they ask the bride, "Where is your Beloved gone so that we may seek Him with you?" They address her as *"fairest among women"* i.e. one who stands before God in the beauty of Christ, washed clean from all her sins by His blood, clothed in His righteousness imputed, and regenerated by the Holy Spirit and brought to faith in Him and true repentance. This is the glory and power of God's grace in the salvation of His people based on the merits of Christ's obedience unto death as their Surety, Substitute, Redeemer, and Preserver.

**(6:2) - MY BELOVED IS GONE DOWN INTO HIS GARDEN, TO THE BEDS OF SPICES, TO FEED IN THE GARDENS, AND TO GATHER LILIES.** - The bride answers simply by pointing them to Christ. This is what God-given faith and perseverance is about - *"Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith"* (*Heb. 12:2*). His garden is His church which He has planted and which grows by His power and grace. He goes down because this shows the condescension that He experiences to save and preserve His church (*cf. Php. 2:5-9*). He bought His church (God's elect) with His own precious blood. He has built His church upon the Rock of His glorious Person and finished work. He is the Vine and His church is made up of the branches (all who believe in Him). He continues to dwell with and within His people on earth by His Spirit and His Word. The idea here is not that He is feeding but that He feeds His people with His Spirit and His Word. He waters His garden with the water of life, and He gathers them as lilies in the field.

**(6:3) - I AM MY BELOVED'S, AND MY BELOVED IS MINE: HE FEEDETH AMONG THE LILIES.** - This is covenant language that describes a marriage union between Christ and His church (*cf. Heb. 8:10*). This is an eternal union that cannot be broken. Every true believer belongs to Christ as He purchased us with His own blood, and Christ belongs to every true believer as our Lord and our Savior. Every sinner saved by His grace can say with confidence, "Not only is Christ A Savior; He is MY Savior. Not only is He A lord; He is MY Lord." This union binds us together as one body - His bride, His church. Again, the idea of His feeding among the lilies is that He feeds His people with His Word. As He Himself is the lily of the valley, pure and

white, His people are so IN HIM as we are made the righteousness of God IN HIM (2 Cor. 5:21). Christ came down to suffer for our sins imputed to Him and to work out by His death for us a perfect righteousness that is imputed to us. This is the ground of our justification and the source of our new birth in spiritual life and in growth in grace and in knowledge of Christ.

**(6:4) - THOU ART BEAUTIFUL, O MY LOVE, AS TIRZAH, COMELY AS JERUSALEM, TERRIBLE AS AN ARMY WITH BANNERS.** - Now, the bride, having sought her Bridegroom, now finds Him, and He begins to speak to her and of her in the poetic language of grace. She is “*beautiful*,” again, not because of any natural beauty, but because of what she is and what she has in and from Him by His power and grace. As sinners saved by grace, our beauty is HIS beauty. “*Tirzah*” may refer to an ancient city in Canaan that was known for its beauty. “*Jerusalem*” obviously refers to the heavenly Jerusalem which is the church of the living God (*Heb. 12:22-24*), because the physical city of Jerusalem was anything but beautiful in the eyes of the Lord. The true bride, the true church, is beautiful in the eyes of her Bridegroom, but “*terrible as an army with banners*” to her enemies. Her beauty is not to be mistaken for weakness. She is protected, preserved, and she perseveres in the strength of her Husband, in the power of His might. Neither the world, the flesh, nor the devil can defeat her, for Christ is her victory (*cf. Eph. 6:10-18*).

**(6:5) - TURN AWAY THINE EYES FROM ME, FOR THEY HAVE OVERCOME ME: THY HAIR IS AS A FLOCK OF GOATS THAT APPEAR FROM GILEAD.** - This is an expression of intense love, not of dislike or disgust. Christ tells her to turn her eyes away from Him because such love consumes His own heart. He uses the same symbol here that He used in *Song 4:1*. This is not to be taken literally because, as sinners saved by grace, we are never to look away from our Lord and Savior. Our whole life of faith is looking constantly to Him Who is our life and the supreme object of our love. This is a poetic way of expressing the intensity of His love for us. Again, as in *Song 4:1*, when speaking of her hair, the idea is not that her hair is like the hair of a goat, but it is that her hair beautifully flows down her head like a black-haired flock of goats flowing down from Mount Gilead. So, the Bridegroom speaks of His bride’s beauty.

**(6:6-7) - THY TEETH ARE AS A FLOCK OF SHEEP WHICH GO UP FROM THE WASHING, WHEREOF EVERY ONE BEARETH TWINS, AND THERE IS NOT ONE BARREN AMONG THEM. AS A PIECE OF A POMEGRANATE ARE THY TEMPLES WITHIN THY LOCKS.** - Again, we see the same symbols of her beauty as written in *Song 4:1-3*. The reason He repeats these words is because, as sinners saved by grace, we need a constant reminder of our standing before God IN CHRIST - washed in His blood and clothed in His righteousness. We also need to know our state in this world as His true people (His bride) and that, even though we are IN the world, we are not OF the world. As we struggle in our own personal warfare between our flesh and the Spirit, as we struggle against the world and Satan, we have a tendency to forget what we are in Christ by His grace and power and what we can do through Him Who is our life and power (*1 Cor. 15:10; Gal. 2:19-21; Php. 4:13*). So, as stated in *Song 4:1-3*, the teeth being washed is a metaphor for the mouth through which the heart speaks (*Matt. 12:34*). The testimony of the bride is the pure Word of God in the Gospel. Even our words are washed clean in the blood of Christ. The bearing of twins speaks of the fruitfulness of God’s Word which will always accomplish the purpose for which God sends it (*Isa. 55:10-13; Heb. 4:12-13*). The temples refer to the minds of God’s people, and the pomegranate symbolizes the fertility of God’s promise of salvation and the Biblical concepts of knowledge, learning, and wisdom, qualities that come by the revelation of truth from understanding of the Scriptures.

**(6:8-9) - THERE ARE THREESCORE QUEENS, AND FOURSCORE CONCUBINES, AND VIRGINS WITHOUT NUMBER. MY DOVE, MY UNDEFILED IS BUT ONE; SHE IS THE ONLY ONE OF HER MOTHER, SHE IS THE CHOICE ONE OF HER THAT BARE HER. THE DAUGHTERS SAW HER, AND BLESSED HER; YEA, THE QUEENS AND THE CONCUBINES, AND THEY PRAISED HER. -**

There are kings on earth with their queens. Many of these kings have many concubines and take unto themselves virgins without number. In that ancient culture, many viewed this as a symbol of greatness and riches, but it is to their shame. No king could focus his love and attention to that many companions. Their loyalties would always be divided. But our Bridegroom focuses all of His love and attention on one wife - His church. His people are the love of His life, and His whole purpose of salvation and eternal blessedness is singly upon His bride. He came to this earth and assumed sinless human nature with a single eye aimed toward the glory of His Father in the salvation of His bride - God's chosen people who had been given to Him. He focused His eyes singly upon the cross to work out a perfect righteousness for His bride through His death as her Surety, Substitute, and Redeemer (*John 13:1*).

**(6:10) - WHO IS SHE THAT LOOKETH FORTH AS THE MORNING, FAIR AS THE MOON, CLEAR AS THE SUN, AND TERRIBLE AS AN ARMY WITH BANNERS? -** This is another great description of the true church of the living God as viewed in the grace, goodness, and power of Christ. She looks forward to the morning light, which is walking by faith in Christ and living by His Word in anticipation of His return. "*Fair as the moon*" because she lives in the reflected light of the "*sun of righteousness*" (*Mal. 4:2*), which is Christ the Lord. Just as an army is under the banner of its king and nation, the church is under the banner of Christ. She is an invincible army because of His grace, goodness, power, and love.

**(6:11) - I WENT DOWN INTO THE GARDEN OF NUTS TO SEE THE FRUITS OF THE VALLEY, AND TO SEE WHETHER THE VINE FLOURISHED, AND THE POMEGRANATES BUDDED. -** Many interpreters claim that this "*garden of nuts*" is a garden or grove of walnut trees. Here is a picture of Christ watching over His garden, His church. He does not come down to find out if she is flourishing. He knows and sees all things. He comes down by His Spirit to make certain that she is flourishing (*Psa. 1; John 15:1-11*). As His dear children, saved and preserved by His grace, He never leaves us to ourselves. He always abides with us to keep us flourishing in the great salvation that He has freely and fully provided and given to us.

**(6:12) - OR EVER I WAS AWARE, MY SOUL MADE ME LIKE THE CHARIOTS OF AMMINADIB. -** This is not to say that Christ did not know the state of His bride, but that even though He had withdrawn His comforting presence for a while, her state had not changed. So, He takes up His church as "*the chariots of Amminadib*." This is a Hebrew word that combines two words - "ammi," which means "my people," and "nadib," which means willing and princely. This verse could read, "Before I perceived, my soul made me as a chariot to my willing or princely people." This is a description of the subjects of God's grace who have been made willing in the day of His power and whose name is "Israel" (princes who have prevailed with God through Christ) (*Psa. 110:3*).

**(6:13) - RETURN, RETURN, O SHULAMITE; RETURN, RETURN, THAT WE MAY LOOK UPON THEE. WHAT WILL YE SEE IN THE SHULAMITE? AS IT WERE THE COMPANY OF TWO ARMIES. -** The daughters of Jerusalem, after witnessing such a glorious sight, plead for the

"Shulamite" to return. The name "Shulamite" is the feminine form of the name "Solomon," which means peace. The bride has the same name as her husband. Christ and His church are one in the eyes of God's law and justice. Under divine inspiration, the prophet Jeremiah identified Christ as *"the Lord our righteousness"* (Jer. 23:6), and then identified the church by the same name, *"the Lord our righteousness"* (Jer. 33:16). So, the daughters of Jerusalem cry out for the Shulamite to return, and her response is a question and an answer - *"What will you see in the Shulamite? as it were a company of two armies."* The answer the church gives to the question is a proof of grace and an illustration of the humility of every believer's soul.

What is this *"company of two armies"*? Biblical students differ here. Some say it is simply an expression of a then common practice in the appearance of an army made at the appearance of their king or prince. At the reception of their prince, the army would divide into two bands to show greater respect, honor, and majesty towards their leader. In this sense we could look at it from the viewpoint of the Old and the New Testaments. Both believers in the Old Testament and believers in the New Testament respect, honor, and give all glory to Christ, our King, our Prince, our Great High Priest.

Some Bible scholars say that the *"company of two armies"* refers to believers in their current state on earth as having within themselves both the Spirit of God and the flesh. All true believers are perfectly righteous in Christ, based on His righteousness imputed to them. They have a perfect STANDING before God that can never change. It is their justification before God, and they cannot be charged with their sins (Rom. 4:6-8; 8:33-34). But as to their STATE here on earth, all true believers have within themselves the Holy Spirit Who has given them spiritual life from the dead, and Who has given them a new heart to believe in Christ and cling to Him forever for all salvation. All true believers also have the remaining presence, corruption, and contamination of sinful flesh. There is a warfare within every believer. The conflict between the Spirit and the flesh could be represented by TWO ARMIES -

*"For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5:17).*

*"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me" (Rom. 7:18-20).*

Every child of God is keenly aware of this warfare that we are actively engaged in every day of our lives. We know that it is a warfare that will not end until we die and are changed in glory. But in spite of the knowledge of this constant conflict, we are still Christ's "Shulamite." And as we travel through this veil of tears, knowing our warfare will soon end, we can take great comfort in the fact there is no doubt concerning the outcome because Christ is our victory - *"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin" (Rom. 7:24-25).* We are *"made more than conquerors through Him that loved us"* and nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ (Rom. 8:35-39).

**(7:1) - HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THY FEET WITH SHOES** - The Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus concerning the whole armor of God that by God's grace through Christ, we "*stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace*" (Eph. 6:14-15). "*Feet with shoes*" speaks of our walk. Christ has made our feet beautiful by His grace and power to cause us to walk by faith in Him and to walk in His Word, giving glory to Him. In Christ, and based on His righteousness alone, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we who believe in Him, like Enoch of old, walk with God. This means fellowship and security. It also means the beauty of holiness which is the beauty of Christ given to us. **O PRINCE'S DAUGHTER!** - Here is another name Christ gives to His bride. This is one Hebrew word as used in Song 6:12 - "*nadib*," which means inclined or willing. Christ's bride is made willing whenever He gives her a heart and willingness to believe and follow Him and submit to Him as the Lord our Righteousness (Psa. 110:3).

**THE JOINTS OF THY THIGHS ARE LIKE JEWELS**, - The thighs represent the strength by which we stand on our feet. This strength is the power and grace of God in Christ. Paul wrote, "*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might*" (Eph. 6:10). When the Apostle Paul sought the Lord to rid him of his thorn in the flesh, the Lord revealed that HIS grace and power were sufficient - "*And He said unto me, MY grace is sufficient for thee: for MY strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*" (2 Cor. 12:9). He wrote in Philippians, "*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me*" (Php. 4:13). We who are in Christ stand firm on Him Who is our Rock. We shall not be moved.

**THE WORK OF THE HANDS OF A CUNNING WORKMAN**. - True believers are the workmanship of God Who is a skilled and masterful workman. We are "*created in Christ Jesus unto good works*" (Eph. 2:10). We are not self-made. We are sinners saved securely and eternally by God's grace in Christ. We are justified in Him and redeemed by Him. Our spiritual life and faith are His works within us.

**(7:2) - THY NAVEL IS LIKE A ROUND GOBLET, WHICH WANTETH NOT LIQUOR**: - The "*navel*" is the umbilical cord; i.e., that by which a baby is sustained and nourished. Solomon says the navel is like a cup full of wine, refreshing and invigorating. It is well-shaped and full of life, not uncut, bleeding, and loathsome, like it was when He found us (cf. Ezek. 16:4). Solomon wrote in Proverbs 3:8 that the fear of the Lord is said to be "*health to the navel*" (Prov. 3:1-8). The "*goblet*" is the cup of salvation that is full and "*runneth over*" with God's grace, power, and love (Psa. 23:5). The fullness of the Godhead dwells in Christ bodily, and we are complete in Him (Col. 2:9-10). **THY BELLY IS LIKE AN HEAP OF WHEAT SET ABOUT WITH LILIES**. - The "*wheat*" refers to fruitfulness (Gal. 5:22-23). It is connected with the "*belly*" because it feeds our hunger for Christ and righteousness in Him. The "*lilies*" refer to the beauty of righteousness and pleasantness of life.

**(7:3) - THY TWO BREASTS ARE LIKE TWO YOUNG ROES THAT ARE TWINS**. - This refers to the Word of God, the Old and New Testaments. Like twin fawns, full of life as they point us to Christ for all salvation, forgiveness, righteousness, and life, they are in perfect agreement, showing forth the riches, the glory, and the grace of God in Christ (1 Pet. 2:2).

**(7:4) - THY NECK IS AS A TOWER OF IVORY**; - The faith of God's elect, by which we are joined to Christ our Head, is both strong and precious. It guides our way as we walk by faith and look to Christ. **THINE EYES LIKE THE FISHPOOLS IN HESHBON, BY THE GATE OF**

**BATHRABBIM:** - Our eyes are blessed by God to see His glory in Christ. These are eyes of faith that look to Him and eyes of repentance that look away from self and our works. They are eyes blessed with love and devotion, sincerity and truth. The eyes that weep over sin are as beautiful fountains in the eyes of Christ. **THY NOSE IS AS THE TOWER OF LEBANON WHICH LOOKETH TOWARD DAMASCUS.** - This speaks of the boldness and courage of the church in facing her enemies in the cause of Christ.

**(7:5) - THINE HEAD UPON THEE IS LIKE CARMEL,** - Christ our Head is exalted above the earth and reigns as King over all the earth. **AND THE HAIR OF THINE HEAD LIKE PURPLE; THE KING IS HELD IN THE GALLERIES.** - A woman's beauty is in her head, and the hair of her head is her glory. Even so, Christ our Head is our great glory and beauty. We have no beauty except what we have in and from Him. And His greatest beauty is seen in His agony at the cross, when His hair was dyed crimson with blood, and He was robed in purple.

**(7:6) - HOW FAIR AND HOW PLEASANT ART THOU, O LOVE, FOR DELIGHTS!** - As His bride is an object of His mercy, and He delights to show mercy, He loves her in light of that mercy. *"As the Bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you (Isa. 62:5).*

**(7:7) - THIS THY STATURE IS LIKE TO A PALM TREE, AND THY BREASTS TO CLUSTERS OF GRAPES.** - He compares her to the tall and noble palm tree. He has made her a tree of righteousness, *"the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified" (Isa. 61:3).* The *"clusters of grapes"* refers to the fruits of righteousness - spiritual life, faith, repentance, and perseverance unto glory. Christ's righteousness is both the GROUND of salvation (justification) and the SOURCE of spiritual life.

**(7:8) - I SAID, I WILL GO UP TO THE PALM TREE, I WILL TAKE HOLD OF THE BOUGHS THEREOF: NOW ALSO THY BREASTS SHALL BE AS CLUSTERS OF THE VINE, AND THE SMELL OF THY NOSE LIKE APPLES;** -

Christ's ascending the palm tree is expressive of His right to His church. It is HIS church which He has by His Father's gift, His own purchase, and the power of His grace. He is the head of His church and is always present with her. He takes hold of her branches, meaning He keeps, controls, and guides her. Her breast as clusters of grapes expresses His delight in her viewing her stature and fruit which flourishes by His grace and power. Her *"nose"* and the *"apples"* refer to the sweet and fruitful fragrance of His Word upon which she feasts (*Song 2:5*).

**(7:9) - AND THE ROOF OF THY MOUTH LIKE THE BEST WINE FOR MY BELOVED, THAT GOETH DOWN SWEETLY, CAUSING THE LIPS OF THOSE THAT ARE ASLEEP TO SPEAK.** - The *"roof"* of her mouth and the *"best wine"* refer to her taste by which, in the power of Christ, she distinguishes between the truth and a lie. The Word of God goes down sweetly (*Psa. 119:103; Heb. 5:12,14; 1 Pet. 2:2-3*). This is the Gospel and the whole Word of God leading souls directly to Christ - His person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, for peace, pardon, justification, reconciliation, assurance, and motivation for obedience. The Gospel in the power of the Spirit is the wake-up call for spiritually dead sinners who are brought by the Spirit and the Word to come by faith to Christ and repent of dead works. It is also a wake-up call to believers who have fallen asleep and need to be awakened to serve and witness the truth.



There are times when, even as believers, we fall into a condition of sinful doubt and feel as if Christ's gracious presence is no longer with us. But in all of this, He assures us that He has not forsaken us. He is working both *"to will and to do His good pleasure,"* and all of it is for His glory, our good, and the advancement of His kingdom in this world. If we as individual believers, or as a collective church body, will ever experience real revival, it must begin with a clear awareness and knowledge that we are eternally and unchangeably *"in Christ,"* clothed in His righteousness, and therefore accepted of God in Him and loved by Him. We must always realize that *"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins"* (1 John 4:10).

**(7:10) - I AM MY BELOVED'S, AND HIS DESIRE IS TOWARD ME.** - Even in acknowledging her own sinfulness, slothfulness, neglect, and unworthiness, that faith which is *"the gift of God,"* called the *"faith of God's elect,"* and which believes God's Word over our feelings and circumstances, enables God's church to make such a bold statement. These words are the words of Christ's church, expressing a strong assurance of faith that she is in union with Christ, one with Him in the eyes of God's law and justice. This is an assurance from God in Christ that He loves us with an everlasting love, and He will not condemn or forsake us (Rom. 8:33-39). The apostle Paul expressed this same gift of faith and assurance in spite of his sufferings because of preaching the Gospel - *"For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that HE IS ABLE to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day"* (2 Tim. 1:12). The ability to enter into this truth and continue in it is usually the result of a fresh awareness of our Lord's love toward us and His continual presence with us, IN SPITE OF OURSELVES. In a sense, these words are a modest acknowledgement by the church that all we are, and all we possess, are from Him.

This word *"desire"* in the original language conveys the idea of the longings of a man for a woman. The bride is saying that Christ longs FOR HER, and only FOR HER, His wife, His sheep. Consider how long Christ's desire has been toward His church. First, His desire was toward her from eternity past when the Father graciously gave us to Him in the everlasting covenant of grace, and He agreed to be our Surety. Because of His desire toward us, He willingly made Himself of no reputation, becoming incarnate in a sinless humanity in order to suffer, bleed, and die in our place. Secondly, His desire was toward us even before our conversion and our faith in Him when we were enemies of God in our minds by wicked works (Col. 1:19-22). Thirdly, His desire is toward us after our conversion, desiring to fellowship with us and have the graces He gives us exercised towards Him (Rev. 3:20). Finally, His desire toward us will not and cannot be fully satisfied until He brings all He longed for in eternity safely to eternal glory to be with Him forever. This also includes Christ's preservation and care for His bride. He sympathizes with us under all our distresses, protects us from all dangers and enemies, and provides everything necessary for us for time and eternity.

**(7:11-12) - COME, MY BELOVED, LET US GO FORTH INTO THE FIELD; LET US LODGE IN THE VILLAGES. LET US GET UP EARLY TO THE VINEYARDS; LET US SEE IF THE VINE FLOURISH, WHETHER THE TENDER GRAPE APPEAR, AND THE POMEGRANATES BUD FORTH: THERE WILL I GIVE THEE MY LOVES.** - The bride had expressed in verse 10 her desire that her Bridegroom would go with her wherever she goes. This expresses not only our NEED of Christ, but also our LOVE for Christ. We do not want to go anywhere without Him (Exod. 33:11-16). Some interpreters claim *"the field"* refers to the Scriptures. If this is the case, then the bride desires that Christ go with her as she studies God's Word, for without Him, it is

meaningless (*John 5:39-47*). I believe it probably refers to the fields to which Christ directed His disciples which were “*white already to harvest*” (*John 4:35*). This would be His commission for the church to go into all the world and preach the Gospel, seeking His sheep (*Matt. 28:18-20*).

“*Lodge in the villages*” is interpreted by many to be the true churches established by Christ throughout the world. Christ said, “*For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them*” (*Matt. 18:20*). To “*get up early to the vineyards*” has to do with the care of Christ’s church in which He uses His ministers to serve them through His Word and pray for growth in grace and in knowledge of Christ. I heard a man once say in referring to the great need of evangelism that “Christ has called us to be fishers of men, not keepers of the aquarium.” Although the true church is to be zealously and proactively evangelistic in seeking the salvation of the lost, she is also to be zealously and proactively engaged in the edification and care of the saved.

It is in the ministry of the church that we see the flourishing “*vine*,” which is the life of Christ given to His people, the “*tender grape*,” which are young believers, and the “*pomegranates bud forth*,” which are mature believers. As believers, sinners saved by grace, we are to give our love to Christ throughout our lives and in every place. But it is in our fellowship with His people, the church, in public worship as we identify with Him and His people that we express our love to Him in the greatest way (*John 13:35; Heb. 10:24-25; 1 John 3:14-19; 4:7-13*). When I prepare a Gospel message for people to hear in a worship service, I always pray for four things to be realized as I preach God’s Word:

(1) That God be glorified as both a just God and a Savior, the sovereign God Who chose His people in Christ, Who sent Christ into the world to save His people from their sins, Who has justified the ungodly by His grace based on the blood of Christ, His righteousness imputed, and Who gives spiritual life to spiritually dead sinners;

(2) That Christ be exalted in the glory of His Person as God manifest in the flesh, and in the power and success of His finished work by His death on the cross for His people as their Surety, Substitute, and Redeemer, Who was made sin so that they are made the righteousness of God in Him, and Who was raised from the dead and ascended into heaven to be their Intercessor and Lord;

(3) That lost sinners be saved by God’s grace and power in giving them life and bringing them to faith in Christ and repentance of dead works and idolatry; and

(4) That God’s people, sinners saved by grace, be edified, unified, inspired, and guided by the Holy Spirit through God’s Word.

**(7:13) - THE MANDRAKES GIVE A SMELL, AND AT OUR GATES ARE ALL MANNER OF PLEASANT FRUITS, NEW AND OLD, WHICH I HAVE LAID UP FOR THEE, O MY BELOVED.** - A mandrake is a short-stemmed, flowering plant in the nightshade family. They are mentioned here and in one other passage (*Gen. 30:14-17*). It is called a “love apple.” It was considered in the ancient world as an aphrodisiac and eaten as a fertility drug. The idea here is the bride’s desire for sweet and fruitful communion with the Bridegroom. These are God’s people, “*new and old*,” who are the fruits of His Holy Spirit produced in the objects of His love. These are the mandrakes, the lovely flowers produced in His children as they abide in Him (*John 15:1-11*). These fruits are His gifts to us by His purchased redemption. He planted them by sovereign grace at our gates. How blessed we are if we have fruits, even the fruits of faith and love, along with all the gifts and fruit of the Spirit. By God’s grace we should go to our blessed Lord, seeking for Him to lodge or abide with us, and grant us to abide with Him. We can only be fruitful as we are in Him and living by His grace, love, and power.

**(8:1) - O THAT THOU WERT AS MY BROTHER, THAT SUCKED THE BREASTS OF MY MOTHER! WHEN I SHOULD FIND THEE WITHOUT, I WOULD KISS THEE; YEA, I SHOULD NOT BE DESPISED.** -

The bride of Christ continues with the same theme that has woven its way through every chapter of this book, namely, a desire to KNOW Christ more intimately and to be more keenly aware of His ever-abiding presence with her at ALL TIMES. This is every believer's desire and the essence of true growth in grace and in knowledge of Christ (*Php. 3:7-9; 2 Pet. 3:18*). True peace and assurance do not come to a sinner saved by grace by looking within. We do look within, but our self-examination is meant to drive us to look outside ourselves and look more to Christ and His righteousness for our whole justification before Holy God. Here, her request is that Christ be, not only a husband, but also a "BROTHER" to her. This reminds us of the Gospel truth of the kinsman-redeemer where the law required an able and willing near-kinsman to redeem a person out of debt. Christ is the Kinsman-Redeemer of His brethren. His nursing on the breasts of her mother refers to His incarnation in order to do the work of a near-kinsman to redeem His brethren (*Isa. 9:6-7; Heb. 10:10-17*). Believers in the Old testament looked for Messiah to come in the flesh. Being one with Christ by adoption, sharing the same Father (*John 20:17*). From here, we can see seven advantages which we as God's children gain from Christ being our elder brother.

(1) *"When I should find Thee without"* - All whom God has chosen in Christ, all whom Christ has redeemed, WILL seek Him and find Him. But where will we find Him? We will find Him outside the confines of sinful human religion, culture, and philosophy - *"Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. (Heb. 13:12-13)*. After Christ came into this world, He was hated, despised, and rejected by the Jews - *"He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (John 1:11)*. But, thank God, after His death, Christ was (and is) preached in the Gentile world, and all those who are citizens of spiritual Israel (God's elect, both Jew and Gentile) seek and find Him where His Gospel is preached. All His sheep own Him publicly, and they are not ashamed to call Him their own by their participation in the ordinances and truths of His Gospel before all men (*John 1:12-13*).

(2) *"I would kiss Thee"* - This metaphor describes God-given faith in and love for Christ. The psalmist wrote, *"Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him (Psalm 2:12)*. All who are members of His body, His bride, are brought by God to embrace and cling to Christ by means of all the grace given to them by the Holy Spirit. The Lord brings these graces to light and into exercise as we rest on His glorious Person and His finished work of redemption.

(3) *"Yea, I should not be despised"* - In clinging to Christ and pleading His blood (His righteousness imputed to us) as our only ground of salvation, we can rest assured of His love for us. We can be assured, even though we deserve His hatred and wrath, that neither is aimed towards us; for we are objects of His love, grace, and mercy (*Rom. 8:33-39; 1 John 4:10*).

**(8:2) - I WOULD LEAD THEE, AND BRING THEE INTO MY MOTHER'S HOUSE, WHO WOULD INSTRUCT ME: I WOULD CAUSE THEE TO DRINK OF SPICED WINE OF THE JUICE OF MY POMEGRANATE.** -

(4) *"I would lead Thee"* - It may seem odd that the bride speaks of leading the Bridegroom. We know HE is our supreme leader and always leads and guides us on our way. But this is not the leading of any authority that we have. In the original language this describes leading one who has triumphed over our enemies and, with respect and honor to Him, coming before Him and casting our laurels at His feet to worship Him. As servants of Christ, believers lead Him as ushers lead the master or as men go before kings to honor them as victorious conquerors (cf. *John 12:12-13*).

(5) *"And bring Thee into my mother's house"* - This is the advantage and blessing of true worship in the house (family) of the Lord. When we gather to worship God in spirit and in truth, we rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh (*Php. 3:3*). Christ is always with us, but we can be said to bring Him with us as we bring Him in our hearts and in His Word.

(6) *"Who would instruct me"* - This could read, "THOU would instruct me." God's people are taught of Christ by His Spirit and His Word, and all things are made known as we look at HIS word through His glory (*Luke 24:27,44-48; John 5:39-47*).

(7) *"I would cause Thee to drink of spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate."* - The idea here is not the church feeding Christ for nourishment as if He needed to be fed by us or needed anything from us for His own life and success. He is the one who feeds us with the bread and the water of life and grace. The idea here is the people of God (His bride) bringing Him pleasure by honoring Him with the sacrifices of praise and worship. In the days of King Solomon, the use of spiced wine and the juice of pomegranate was considered the most excellent form of celebration (*Song 5:1*). Spiced wine represents the joys of the Holy Spirit, and the juice of the pomegranate represents the gifts and graces of salvation.

**(8:3) - HIS LEFT HAND SHOULD BE UNDER MY HEAD, AND HIS RIGHT HAND SHOULD EMBRACE ME.** - This was stated in *Song 2:6*. The word "should" does not appear in the original manuscripts. It should read, *"His left hand IS under my head, and His right hand DOTH embrace me."* After seeking the Lord previously and not finding Him, now He returns to His bride, putting His left hand under her head and taking her in His arms and satisfying her desires. The meaning is that Christ condescends to His longing bride, willingly giving her the comfort and assurance of His presence. All who are saved by God's grace, all who are washed in Christ's blood and clothed in His righteousness, are safe in the arms of Jesus.

**(8:4) - I CHARGE YOU, O DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM, THAT YE STIR NOT UP, NOR AWAKE MY LOVE, UNTIL HE PLEASE.** - This is the third time the church has issued this charge to the daughters of Jerusalem (cf. *Song 2:7; 3:5*). It is a way of stating our desire not to have our sweet rest and comfort in Christ interrupted. If in this life it is interrupted, let it be at HIS appointed time. Let us not be used in an evil way to corrupt or divert believers looking to and resting fully in Christ and His righteousness alone. This charge is the result of having such access and being so familiar with Christ that her desire is to prevent ANYTHING from interrupting the assurance and comfort of His blessed presence. As members of the bride of Christ, as true believers in Him, we should take great care to let NOTHING come between us and our Lord (*2 Cor. 11:2-4*). Communion with Christ is the only thing that lifts us up above the cares and concerns of this life. When we are keenly aware of His presence, we should endeavor to keep Him ever present with us and seek to honor Him with the gifts and graces He has so richly and freely bestowed on us by the Holy Spirit.

**(8:5a) - WHO IS THIS THAT COMETH UP FROM THE WILDERNESS, LEANING UPON HER BELOVED?**

- The question is asked, "Who is this who comes up from the wilderness?" This is the bride of Christ (the true church) sojourning in this dark and sinful world, struggling against the flesh, the world, and the devil. How does she survive this difficult journey? How can she reach her ultimate destination with so much against her? God's Word states, "*If God be for us, who can be against us?*" (Rom. 8:31). How can we know that God is FOR us? The answer lies in the phrase, "*leaning upon her Beloved.*" Her Beloved is Christ the Lord of glory. The Lord God brings her to walk through this wilderness, not in her own power or goodness, but in the grace, power, and goodness of God in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are totally dependent upon Him for our whole salvation and preservation unto glory. He alone is able to save us to the uttermost (2 Tim. 1:12; Heb. 7:25; Jude 24-25). Being in Christ, looking unto Him as the Author and Finisher of our faith, we can be assured that God is for us. In Him, we know that God has "*freely given us all things*" that pertain to salvation (Rom. 8:32). In Him, we are assured that God will not lay our sins to our charge because He laid them to Christ's charge (Rom. 8:33). In Him, we can be confident that we cannot be condemned because we are counted righteous before God in Christ, and He intercedes on our behalf (Rom. 8:34). By God's grace, true believers trust and lean on Christ and not to their own understanding (Prov. 3:5).

**(8:5b) - I RAISED THEE UP UNDER THE APPLE TREE: THERE THY MOTHER BROUGHT THEE FORTH: THERE SHE BROUGHT THEE FORTH THAT BARE THEE.**

- Bible interpreters disagree on the speaker here. Some say it is the Bridegroom responding to the bride. If this is the case, then it is a declaration of the sovereign, powerful work of God to save and bring forth His children who make up the true church (the bride of Christ). The apple tree would represent Christ Himself (cf. Song 2:3) Who is Himself the tree of life. He sends forth His Spirit to give life and produce the fruit of God's grace in them. Christ, by the righteousness He accomplished by His death on the cross and which God has imputed to us, is the one ground of our salvation and the one source of spiritual and eternal life.

Others say this is the bride speaking of our lifting Christ up as we look to and worship Him (Isa. 45:20-22). Christ must be lifted up for our salvation. First, He must be lifted up on the cross to redeem us from our sins (John 3:14-15; 12:32-33). Then, He must be lifted up in His resurrection because, in His death, He established righteousness by which God justifies His people (Rom. 4:24-25). He must be lifted up into glory to be seated at His Father's right hand to make intercession for us (Rom. 8:34). He must be lifted up in the preaching of the Gospel whereby the Spirit gives life to the ones whom Christ redeemed (Rom. 1:16-17). He must be lifted up within the regenerate hearts of His people whereby God gives them faith to believe in Christ and brings them to repentance of dead works (Php. 3:7-9).

In either case, the "*mother*" that brought us forth would refer to the true church as the means God uses to call His elect into His kingdom through the preaching of the Gospel. The power of salvation and eternal life is not in the church. It is in the Lord, but He uses the means of His church preaching and witnessing the Gospel to the lost to give life to His children.

**(8:6) - SET ME AS A SEAL UPON THINE HEART, AS A SEAL UPON THINE ARM: FOR LOVE IS STRONG AS DEATH; JEALOUSY IS CRUEL AS THE GRAVE: THE COALS THEREOF ARE COALS OF FIRE, WHICH HATH A MOST VEHEMENT FLAME.**

- Again, there is disagreement amongst Bible scholars as to the speaker here. If it is Christ speaking to His church, He speaks of how HE has sealed His grace and love upon the hearts of His people as He sent the Spirit to give us

life and bring us to believe in and love Him (*Rom. 6:17-18; Eph. 1:13-14*). To have this divine seal upon our hearts is to be given a new heart and a new spirit to believe in and love Christ (*Jer. 31:33-34; 32:39-40; Ezek. 36:26-27*). This establishes the godly motives for obedience which are grace, love, and gratitude, rather than legalism (*Rom. 7:4-6*). To have this divine seal upon our arms means that we work and walk by HIS grace, power, and goodness and not our own (*Gal. 2:19-21*). In this case, we can truly say of our Lord that His love for us is as strong as death, for He loved us unto the death of the cross (*John 13:1; Php. 2:8; 1 John 4:10*). His jealousy (His zeal for the glory of His Father and the salvation of His people) sent Him to the cruel grave. His suffering unto death was all under the powerful fire of God's wrath as the Surety, Substitute, and Redeemer of His people.

If it is the church speaking, she expresses the extent and assurance of HIS love for His people (His bride). Before the world began, God the Father made a covenant with God the Son wherein Christ willingly became our Surety. He willingly became responsible for our sins imputed to Him and agreed to do all that was necessary to save us from our sins, even dying for us. We (the elect of God) were sealed upon His heart (His love for us) and His arm (His power to save us). When He brought us to Himself with cords of love, as communicated unto us in the Gospel of His grace, the Holy Spirit shed abroad His love within our hearts (*Rom. 5:5*). This is Godly love that is as strong as death, for He keeps us in His love and keeps us loving Him. Death cannot destroy this love. He also has made us jealous for His glory, so that we have an undying desire to honor Him alone (*2 Cor. 11:2-3*). Looking to Christ, we know the grave cannot destroy our love for Him (*1 Cor. 15:55-58*).

**(8:7) - MANY WATERS CANNOT QUENCH LOVE, NEITHER CAN THE FLOODS DROWN IT: IF A MAN WOULD GIVE ALL THE SUBSTANCE OF HIS HOUSE FOR LOVE, IT WOULD UTTERLY BE CONTEMNED.** - Again, this verse could describe Christ speaking to us, or to our speaking to Him. The waters and the floods represent the troubles and trials of life in this wilderness world. Job said, "*Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble*" (*Job 14:1*). Concerning the trials believers would go through in this world, the Lord said, "*These things I have spoken unto you, that IN ME ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world*" (*John 16:33*). We are assured that no trouble we experience in this world can cause us to lose our salvation or separate us from the love of God in Christ (*Rom. 8:28-39*). The love of God for His people cannot be bought. It is free and unconditional towards us. If a person were to give everything he owned to try to buy this love, it would be utterly despised. Salvation is never conditioned on sinners. It was (and is) all conditioned on Christ Who, out of His love for His people (sinners), fulfilled all conditions to insure their salvation.

We know also that Christ Himself suffered many trials and troubles when He came to this earth, assumed sinless human nature, and walked among sinful people. But nothing He suffered could quench or drown His love for those whom the Father had given Him before the foundation of the world. As stated in *Song 7:10*, His desire always has been, and always will be, toward His bride (the elect of God). The Good Shepherd loves and died for His sheep (*John 10:11-30*). He loved and died for sinners, the ungodly. His suffering unto death had nothing to do with any loveliness or worthiness in those whom He loves. Again, we see how He is the worthy Bridegroom, and we are the unworthy bride. It is the greatest insult to Him for us to try to buy His love in trying to earn it with our works. This is utterly scorned by Him. His love for His people is unearned and undeserved. His love for His people inspired Him to suffer unto death to establish a righteousness by which God justifies them and from which He gives them spiritual life and brings them to glory. "*Herein is LOVE, not that we loved God, but that He loved us AND SENT His Son to be the PROPITIATION FOR OUR SINS*" (*1 John 4:10*).

**(8:8) - WE HAVE A LITTLE SISTER, AND SHE HATH NO BREASTS: WHAT SHALL WE DO FOR OUR SISTER IN THE DAY WHEN SHE SHALL BE SPOKEN FOR?** - Many Gospel commentators agree that this “*little sister*” is God’s elect among the Gentiles who, as a collective body, have yet to be brought to Christ. In the Old Testament, the Gospel truth had been mostly confined to God’s elect among the Jews. Since the time of Moses and the Law, there is a record in the Old Testament of a few Gentiles who were saved (Rahab, Ruth, some of the Ninevites (*Jonah 3:5-8*), for example). But we do not have any record in God’s Word of many Gentiles who were brought to faith in the promised Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord made it clear in His covenant promise to Abraham that “*all families of the earth*” would be blessed through him, meaning that it would be through Abraham that Messiah would come forth in His humanity as the seed of Abraham to save all of God’s chosen people, Jew and Gentile (*Gen. 12:1-3*).

So, prophetically, this is speaking about the church of God scattered throughout the Gentile world. The Bible reveals that the Lord God had chosen a people for Himself from all the nations of the world, giving them to His Son in the everlasting covenant of grace before time began. God was also pleased to clearly reveal in the Old Testament that the barren and desolate Gentiles would be united to the Lord as a bride, and that the church would be made up of both Jews and Gentiles (*Isa. 54:1; Hos. 1:10; Rom. 9:25-26*). This reference to the little sister states that “*she has no breasts*,” i.e. she has not yet come to full age. So, this seems to support the interpretation that this refers to the future calling of God’s elect among the Gentiles in the formation of the New Covenant church. Paul spoke of this as a mystery (*Col. 1:21-28*), and it was a mystery that the Lord used Paul, more than anyone else, to reveal to the New Testament church (*cf., Eph. 2:11-22*). In this sense, generally speaking, the Gospel was first revealed to the Jews and then to the Gentiles (*Rom. 1:16-17*).

Consider how that there are unbelievers in this world whom God chose before the foundation of the world and espoused them to Christ in covenant love. Christ is their Surety, and they are all justified by His righteousness imputed to them. Christ will have them for His own (*John 10:16*). The day will come when they “*shall be spoken for*,” when God will call them by His grace through the preaching of the Gospel. This is one of the reasons God has left us here on earth (*2 Tim. 2:10*). Our desire is for God to be pleased to call out His elect in every generation. So, we preach and witness the Gospel of Christ to all who will listen, and we pray for the salvation of sinners to the praise of the glory of God’s grace.

**(8:9-10) - IF SHE BE A WALL, WE WILL BUILD UPON HER A PALACE OF SILVER: AND IF SHE BE A DOOR, WE WILL INCLOSE HER WITH BOARDS OF CEDAR. I AM A WALL, AND MY BREASTS LIKE TOWERS: THEN WAS I IN HIS EYES AS ONE THAT FOUND FAVOUR.** - These symbols describe the true church of the living God as built by and upon the Rock, Christ Jesus (*Matt. 16:18*). “*WE*” refers to the Triune Godhead (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), all Who are actively involved in the building this church (*Eph. 1:3-14*). God the Father chose His people (the bride) in Christ before the foundation of the world and gave them to His Son. God the Son agreed to be their Surety, having their sins imputed to Him, to take upon Himself their human nature without sin, and die in their place to redeem them from their sins. God the Holy Spirit applies all the benefits of Christ’s death (His righteousness imputed to them) in the new birth by giving them spiritual life and bringing them to faith in Christ and true repentance. The Lord God builds “*upon her a palace of silver*,” which is the security of having been redeemed by the blood of Christ. He encloses “*her with boards of cedar*,” which is the security of being shut up in Christ and safe from all enemies and harm.

In v. 10, the bride is expressing her faith in Christ with the assurance of His grace because He has made her strong, and she has “*found favor*” in God’s sight. She realizes how safe and now strong she is in the Bridegroom. It brings to mind the words of the Apostle Paul concerning himself in 1 Cor. 15:10 - “*But by the grace of God I am what I am: and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.*” All of us should acknowledge that salvation is entirely the work of God

**(8:11-12) - SOLOMON HAD A VINEYARD AT BAALHAMON; HE LET OUT THE VINEYARD UNTO KEEPERS; EVERY ONE FOR THE FRUIT THEREOF WAS TO BRING A THOUSAND PIECES OF SILVER. MY VINEYARD, WHICH IS MINE, IS BEFORE ME: THOU, O SOLOMON, MUST HAVE A THOUSAND, AND THOSE THAT KEEP THE FRUIT THEREOF TWO HUNDRED.** - Solomon, here, is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. Just as King Solomon had a beautiful vineyard in Baalhamon, Christ has a beautiful vineyard, which is His church - all sinners saved by His grace and blessed with the fruitfulness of His righteousness imputed. They were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world by the Father. Christ purchased them with His own blood at Calvary. From the life of Christ and by the Holy Spirit in the preaching of the Gospel, the Lord gathers in His fruit, which are His chosen, justified, and redeemed people. They are the good fruit produced by the good tree which is Christ as He is set forth and revealed in the Gospel revelation (Matt. 7:16-18; Rom. 1:16-17). I believe “*a thousand pieces of silver*” symbolically represents the entire company of God’s elect. The work of Christ in redemption (symbolized by silver) can never fail to save His people. They shall all be saved, and they shall all be made fruitful branches (John 15:1-11).

It is said here that He entrusted the care of His vineyard to “*keepers*” which are Gospel preachers and witnesses. They are sent forth by Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit to seek His sheep and call them into the sheepfold. Each one is entrusted by the Lord with a particular range of ministry - “*My vineyard, which is mine, is before me.*” This vineyard does not belong to the keepers, but the owner, which is Christ, has given each one the responsibility over this vineyard. “*Solomon*” (which is Christ) owns all of it - “*must have a thousand.*” But those who “*keep the fruit*” share in a small part of HIS glory - “*two hundred.*” This does not mean that they have any personal glory, but they share in His glory in the sense that they see HIS glory and worship Him in the glory of His Person and work.

**(8:13-14) - THOU THAT DWELLEST IN THE GARDENS, THE COMPANIONS HEARKEN TO THY VOICE: CAUSE ME TO HEAR IT. MAKE HASTE, MY BELOVED, AND BE THOU LIKE TO A ROE OR TO A YOUNG HART UPON THE MOUNTAINS OF SPICES.** - Here is Christ speaking to His bride who dwells in the gardens of His grace, love, and goodness. She is under His protection. She is watered and nourished by His voice, His Word. The “*companions*” are those to whom the ministers of Christ preach the Gospel. They are brought by God to hear and believe the Gospel as preached by Christ’s ministers (2 Cor. 5:20-21). The Lord says, “*Cause Me to hear it,*” meaning in our prayers, praise, our communion, and the voice of our hearts. In preaching the Gospel, we show lost sinners the way to God for salvation, the way to approach God for acceptance, blessings, and the way to draw near to God in prayer and worship (John 14:6; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 4:14-16).

Verse 14 is the bride expressing her strong desire for her Bridegroom’s return. As the Lord has now gone unto the Father to prepare a place for His people (John 14:1-3). The “*roe*” and the “*hart*” are known for their swiftness. The “*mountains of spices*” speaks of the aromatic and healing properties of the heavenly state into which all true believers will be brought in the end at Christ’s return. This is the state of eternal glory into which Christ will bring His bride to live forever and forever with Him.