

Lessons from the



Song of Solomon

LESSONS FROM THE SONG OF SOLOMON

Many Christians have questioned the authenticity, the veracity, of the Song of Solomon in the Old Testament. They are quite troubled with the nature of the contents of the book, and to a certain extent, we can sympathize with the problem. However, when this book is studied from a purely *spiritual* standpoint, the lessons are very meaningful. In fact, the lessons are so beautiful and so precious that we can then see why Jesus, in the New Testament, inferentially gave his stamp of approval to this book (compare Matthew 25:1-13). The purpose of the following presentation is to set forth sample illustrations of the signification of the Song of Solomon with the hope that Christians will consider the book further.

**“The Song of songs, which is Solomon’s.”
(Song 1:1)**

The opening expression “*The Song of songs*” signifies that this particular song is the most precious one in the entire Bible. Being of a very high symbolic and allegorical quality, this song is difficult to understand in its fullest sense—in the sense of the power it can have in our lives—except by the mature Christian.

**“Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth.”
(Song 1:2a)**

Here the Bride class, the Rebekah class, is enjoining Jesus as her Master, desiring some response on his part. Having dedicated her life to follow him, she wants constant, repetitive assurances of his grace and affection on her behalf. And so the Church is saying, "Kiss me with the kisses of thy mouth." The "mouth" pictures the utterances of Jesus. Of course we do not hear his audible voice or see him personally in vision, so the lesson to be learned is that assurances come from God's Word, the *Bible*. The Master's teachings are what attracts us and encourages us to follow him in all the paths of life.

"For thy love is better than wine." (Song 1:2b)

Many people are intoxicated with the pleasures of this life, and to them the pursuit of happiness is their chief goal. But for those who have tasted of the Word of God and realized its value, the pleasures of this life are foolishness. Such individuals are attracted to the gospel message of Christ, which far exceeds the transitory intoxicating pleasures of this life.

"Because of the savour of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth." (Song 1:3a)

When we meditate upon the virtues of Jesus' character, the power of his doctrine in our lives, and his lessons that help us make straight paths for our crooked feet and mend our difficulties in life, the meditations are like the words of two hymns.

“How *sweet* the name of Jesus sounds in a believer’s ear! It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds, and drives away his fear. It makes the wounded spirit whole and calms the troubled breast; ‘tis manna to the hungry soul, and to the weary, rest.” Part of the second hymn is, “Jesus! the very *thought* of thee with *sweetness* fills my breast.” As we hear others speak about Jesus and the Word, we find we have an affinity and an attraction to them. We want to commune and fellowship together. What the Book of Life tells about the Master brings forth many sweet remembrances of lessons we have already learned while sitting at his feet. The fragrance of his influence calls to mind many precious truths and experiences we have had at his hand.

“Therefore do the virgins love thee.” (Song 1:3b)

Two classes of virgins are described in the Song of Solomon. Matthew 25:1-13 categorizes them as the wise virgins and the foolish virgins. Of course the Bride class, the wise virgins, are the ones who learn the lessons well and have the special love for Jesus that is described so beautifully in the Song of Solomon.

“I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.” (Song 1:5)

The Bride class describe themselves as “black, but comely.” Humble Christians realize the pit whence they were dug, the rock

whence they were hewn. The realization that they have been called out of the mire of sin, out of darkness, into the marvelous light of Jesus Christ keeps them humble and meek (1 Pet. 2:9). They were originally attracted by Jesus' invitation: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest [from your weariness]. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart" (Matt. 11:28,29). And now, being of a similar disposition—being meek and lowly in heart—they continue to be attracted to Christ.

"Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me." (Song 1:6a)

Not only are true Christians "black" in connection with their origin on this sin-benighted earth, but also they are figuratively darkened by laboring in the sun in the vineyard. Throughout the nearly two thousand years of this Christian or Gospel Age, many have worked feverishly and have dedicated their lives in Christian service to a particular work. Sometimes, after long years of service, they realize they have not spent enough time in the development of their own characters and lives. In being so concerned with the characters and lives of others, they have been a little careless or negligent in regard to their own inspection. And so here in the Song of Solomon, the true Bride class come to the realization in the present life that they have to take time to be holy—and not just spend time preaching to others.

“My mother’s children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept.” (Song 1:6b)

In their humility, many Christians are so pliable in the Master’s hand that they are frequently given the hardest work to do as laborers in the vineyard and out in the field. But the time comes when some desire a more *personal* devotion to Christ—not merely to do great works in his name but also to feel the pulse and the warmth of *his love*. Realizing they have spent too much time in *outward* works, they want to have an *inner, more secret fellowship* and relationship with the Master. In the next verse, the Bride class inquire where they may get this particular fellowship.

“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?” (Song 1:7)

Many will step to the forefront and take honor and glory in connection with Christian service, whereas the *true* laborer, the *humble Christian*, is pushed into the background and onto the side path. In the present life, the blessings and favors of fellowship with other Christians seem to go mostly to the more nominal class, while devoted Christians, those who love the Master most deeply, feel cut off from fellowship. Being on the bypath, as it were, they long for a deeper, closer union with Christ. The Master

loves this class and knows they need assurance. Thus he instructs them in verse 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.”
(Song 1:8)**

In order to personally develop a Christlike character, we find it necessary to study and observe the working of the Holy Spirit in the lives of those we know to be true Christians. Of course the safest guide is the example of Jesus himself. The footsteps he trod, as well as the example of the apostles and other faithful saints of the past, should be studied. As we look to others for help and encouragement, we observe their walk in life. And as we study God’s Word and their example, we are guided into the proper paths. There is one caution, however: We should follow others *only in proportion as they follow the teachings of the Lord*. Sometimes it is necessary to take our family and young ones to a condition where they will be developed favorably in the service of the Lord; that is, we should be careful not to be attracted by the pleasures of life and the remuneration of labor in secular activities. As far as possible, we should place ourselves and our families in a condition of wholesomeness, and our children should be put in a position where they (and we too) will be blessed by following God’s instructions as laid out in His Word.

“While the king sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.” (Song 1:12)

Here the “king” represents Jesus. In fellowshiping with him, in serving him, and in hearing him speak to others as well as to ourselves, we are reminded of Spikenard Mary, who broke the costly box of ointment on the Master’s head and feet at great personal cost (Mark 14:3; John 12:3). And so we find that Christians seek opportunities of sacrifice on behalf of the Master to show the inner devotion of their lives and consecration to him.

The third chapter of the Song of Solomon tells how the Bride class responds during the present Gospel Age. We are given an insight into the dispensational experience of the Church.

**“By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not.”
(Song 3:1)**

The Bride class is pictured as resting on a bed of faith during the Gospel Age nighttime of sin. As those of this class rest, they are thinking about the Master, desiring to be near him. Very often the Christian finds discomfiture in the present life. An example is described by the Prophet Isaiah: “The bed is shorter than ... a man can stretch himself on ... and the covering narrower than ... he can wrap himself in” (Isa. 28:20). Spiritually speaking, the creedal or doctrinal bed can be likened to a crib that is too small

for development. As a literal babe or young child grows, the crib becomes too short to stretch out in and too narrow and confining. From a spiritual standpoint, this discomforting condition can actually benefit the Christian *if it stirs him to action* with the realization of his need for further Christian development both in doctrine and in character.

**“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.”
(Song 3:2)**

While the Bride class, pictured as a woman, is thinking about the Master as she rests on this doctrinal bed of faith, she becomes dissatisfied and voluntarily arises, saying, “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.” She is not satisfied to merely meditate on him, so she goes out into the world looking for some place, fellowship, or condition that will bring her into a closer relationship with her Master. In so doing, she is frustrated in her purpose: “I sought him, but I found him not.” However, this situation does not discourage the true Christian, who persists, as the next verse tells us.

**“The watchmen that go about the city found me: to
whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?”
(Song 3:3)**

The “watchmen” represent the so-called watchers of the flock, the shepherds of the flock in one sense of the word, who are the keepers of the Holy City, spiritually speaking. Sometimes we look to those who are considered more learned for guidance and counsel to help us with our problems in spiritual development, but verse 4 shows that the woman finds relatively little compassion and comfort from that source.

**“It was but a little that I passed from them.”
(Song 3:4a)**

Joy awaits her, however. Her persistence in seeking a closer relationship with Jesus is rewarded:

**“But I found him whom my soul loveth.”
(Song 3:4b)**

This finding of the Master is a dispensational truth that pertains to our day, to the end of the age. Just as Rebekah alighted from her camel to go to meet Isaac in the field in the evening— that is, at the end of the day or age—so this class, who were previously in a bed that was too short, now get out of that creedal bed of their own volition and go out to look for their Master (Gen. 24:63,64). Eventually they find him. Verse 4 ends:

“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.” (Song 3:4c)

The “mother’s house” would be Sarah’s house (Gen. 24:67). Sarah was not only the mother of Isaac but also, in a spiritual sense, the mother of Rebekah in allegorical signification.

“I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up nor awaken love until it please.” (Song 3:5; see RSV and NIV translations)

Sometimes in our spiritual development, a problem arises with other Christians who love the Master with a lesser degree of devotion. When the Bride is in sweet communion with her dear Master, the secondary or foolish virgin class, called here the “daughters of Jerusalem,” often distract the true Church from the intimacy of her worship. And so the Holy Spirit charges these others not to disturb the Bride in her relationship with Jesus. It may take only a word or short conversation to steer our thinking into paths that distract us from holy communion with the Father or His Son, or from meditation on the Scriptures. This element of intrusion into holy thinking may take place frequently in our lives. How often our hearts desire to have deeper fellowship and to remove distracting thoughts and influences produced by others who may mean well but who do not realize their own lukewarm condition!

In Song 4:3, the Master informs us why he is attracted to his beloved Church and Bride, why he loves his disciples as they

pursue the paths of righteousness for his name's sake in the present life:

“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.” (Song 4:3)

In appreciation of the fact that they were bought by the precious blood of Christ, that they were redeemed, Christians throughout their lives are constantly confessing and professing to be Jesus' disciples. They are not ashamed to declare his merits and the theme of the Ransom and redemption, which threads through the entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation—the gospel theme of the vicarious sacrifice of Christ and the merits of his blood. It is the constant theme of their “lips” (plural)—of both the upper and the lower lips; that is, of both the Old and New Testaments. Accordingly, Jesus looks upon the Bride's lips as a thread of scarlet, for her speech is very comely in his sight, and her temples meditate upon his precious Word. We are reminded of the well-known statue “The Thinker,” which, being a man in a sitting posture with his head bowed and his fist under his chin, suggests meditation. And so the Bride class not only proclaim but also take the time to meditate upon what they proclaim and upon their alignment with the Word.

“Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins, which feed among the lilies.” (Song 4:5)

Jesus is attracted to the Church because of the comeliness of her form. Just as from a physical standpoint in the natural life, we might discern a young maiden's beauty of form and development of maturity as symbolized in her breasts, so Jesus, from a *spiritual* standpoint, appreciates the Bride class because of her development along the lines of the Old and New Testaments, pictured here by the two breasts. Feeding on the milk of the Word and giving it to others helps her to develop. As she matures in conformity to the Old and New Testaments, she becomes more and more attractive to Jesus, her prospective Bridegroom.

“A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.” (Song 4:12)

Jesus is attracted to the Bride class, to the woman in this allegory, because she is like “a garden inclosed ... a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.” This virgin class is like a *garden enclosed* in the sense that no stranger has intruded upon her virginity. Being a “fountain” closed up is a mark of virginity. Jesus appreciates that she is as “a spring shut up, a fountain sealed,” that she is dedicated to him alone, and only he is to have these intimacies of worship. She will not bestow her reverence or worship on fellow human beings or on religious institutions. Her affection for Jesus Christ is on a level far above any affection that she might have for people down here. Hence she does not reverence any person or thing that puts itself in the place of God or purports to be His

spokesman. In Matthew 23:9,10, Jesus said: "Call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ." This personal loyalty to Jesus is what he most appreciates.

"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." (Song 4:16)

Christians, in their desire to develop Christlike characters, appreciate the fact that the experience of sorrow is needed in the present life. And so the Bride says, "Awake, O *north* wind." She realizes that adversity and discipline are necessary in the school of Christ, that the hard knocks of Christian experience are the only way to develop certain characteristics of patience and fortitude. Of her own volition, she says in effect: "Send sorrow; send pain, O north wind." Devastating cold winds are from the north.

Next she says, "Come, thou *south* [wind]." Christians recognize the need for trouble and persecution, for the Bible tells us that those who live a godly life in Christ Jesus *will suffer* persecution, and that if we do not have this experience in some sense, we are illegitimate children (2 Tim. 3:12; Heb. 12:8). Here we find that not only do Christians realize the necessity for fiery trials to try them in order to attain the "gold" or divine nature, to which they are called, but also they realize the need for the encouraging wind

of the south (2 Pet. 1:4). The “south wind” represents the seasons of blessing, fellowship, love, affection, and quiet—the sweet experiences of life. Both conditions are necessary: light and shadow, sorrow and pain, as well as pleasure. This mixed experience develops the Christian in the full sense of the word. Both the blowing of the winter winds and the development of the summer atmosphere give the plant a rounded-out experience, which is likened to a spice tree: “Blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.” Just as spices develop under these mixed conditions and exude a most beautiful fragrance, so Christian graces shine most from the lives of those who have had these experiences and are *rightly exercised thereby* (Heb. 12:11).

When Christians realize their development in life and have had a long time in Christian service and fellowship, they long for the day when they might be with their Master. And so they say, “Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.” They look forward with expectation to meeting Jesus, to the end of the race, to the end of suffering (Heb. 12:1). Their waiting will terminate in a morning of joy.

“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.

**“I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?”
(Song 5:2,3)**

Here is a picture of another class of Christians, a secondary class, who are also sleeping on the bed of faith, as the Bride class previously did. This other class have a little different attitude, however. Their hearts are awakened by the voice of their Beloved, who is knocking at the door and 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.” Of course Jesus is speaking, and while this other class, represented as a “sister,” are considering the matter, they respond with questions and excuses, such as, “I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on?” They are figuratively shown as being comfortable in bed, and it would require effort and would disturb their rest to have to get out of this bed to go meet the Master. This secondary class continue with another excuse: “I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?” Notice that *some cost* is involved in going forth to meet the Bridegroom.

“My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him.

“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.

**“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.”
(Song 5:4-6)**

While this secondary class are delaying and considering the matter, the Master puts his hand in at the hole of the door. *Only then* are they moved with a sufficiency of love and zeal. In other words, when this class hear the knock upon the time prophecy of the Master’s presence, they are *finally* stirred into action, but *too late!* When they rise up to go to the door, they find the door has the lingering evidences of his having been there—the sweetness of his presence—but *he is gone*: “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.” The secondary class then go out into the streets of the city seeking the Master. *Now* they go of their own volition, but *too late!* They waited too long.

“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.” (Song 5:7)

The watchmen wound this secondary class and take away their veil. A brief explanation is that eventually those of this class will realize they have lost out in obtaining the Master in the highest sense. As foolish virgins, they do not have a sufficiency of oil

and thus allow their lamps to go out (Matt. 25:1-13). When they get the oil, it will be too late to be of the Bride class.

In this allegory of a woman (a sister), we see that when she knocks on the door of opportunity to get into the Bride class, she finds obstacles. While she is in this circumstance, however, her love for the Master increases, and she gives a very vivid description of Jesus, which is much like the language the Church class used earlier.

“My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.

“His head is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy, and black as a raven.

“His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set.

“His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers: his lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh.

“His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl: his belly is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires.

“His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold: his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.

“His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.” (Song 5:10-16)

The sixth chapter of the Song of Solomon shows that the testimony of this secondary or foolish virgin class is so moving that in time, the “watchmen ... about the city” become more interested in knowing about the message of truth.

Although much more could be said, we will draw this lesson to a close, trusting that what has been presented will encourage further prayerful consideration of this very special “Song of songs.” Truly the Song of Solomon is a wonderful love story of Christ and his Church.

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