

The Bride (Body of Christ) and the Bridegroom (Jesus)

A Relationship of Pure, Passionate Love

Recently, the Lord had me reading and meditating from the “Song of Songs,” also known as the “Song of Solomon” or in some versions it is referred to as “Canticles.” It is a wonderful, beautiful “song” describing a passionate love relationship between a “Shulamite” woman and her “Beloved One” portrayed as King Solomon. As many of us are aware of, this portion of scripture is filled with beautiful imagery and language of pure, passionate love.

It has been widely, debated concerning what exactly is the reason or purpose for this particular writing to be incorporated and included within the “canon” of scripture. Some of the thoughts behind the meaning of this “Song of Songs” is that it is an allegory that could possibly represent or point to one of the following: 1) A husband and wife relationship; 2) God and His love for Israel; 3) God and His love for His people; 4) Jesus and His Bride, the believers in Christ. There are some that have stated that the nature of some of the language and descriptions of the main characters within this “love story” are inappropriate to be in a “Holy” Bible. Those debates and discussions of the above are better left to those who are more qualified than I. For now, I choose to read and look at this passionate “Love Song” as expressing, symbolizing and representing the pure, passionate love between Jesus, the King and Bridegroom, with His Bride, His beloved in which I am included. I choose to make it a personal “Love Story” between Jesus and myself.

For the purpose of our discussion, I will not be going into a full survey of the “Song of Songs,” but just “gleaning” a few items from the vast reservoir of material that can be found within this “Love Song.” I encourage any one that is reading this essay to read and meditate on the entire “Song of Songs” for your own blessing. There is so much within its few chapters that, when read with a “spiritual eye and ear,” will speak volumes to you personally concerning the love that Jesus has for each of us.

As we go forward, I would first like to take a look at the “Shulamite” woman found within this song. The word, “shulamite” is an adjective (a word that describes a person, place or thing) which means “perfect one” or “peaceful one.” It comes from the primary Hebrew word “shalam” or as we know the term, “shalom.” It is also the “feminine” opposite of the “male” name, Solomon. There is, I believe, no coincidence that this “Shulamite woman’s” actual name is never used or given. To me it allows me to “fill in that blank” with my name. As we can see from just the simple use of the adjective, “shulamite” and its meaning we can grasp the concept of the perfect love of the “King” towards this “woman,” His betrothed, bride to be. She is a perfect match to Him. Their very names make the two as one. She is seen as perfect in every way. She is looked upon as being in “perfect peace” as she keeps her eyes and attention fixed upon her “Beloved.” This reminds us of the scripture found in Isaiah 26:3, *“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose **mind is stayed on thee**: because he trusteth in thee.”*

At this point I would like to make just a few short observations concerning the heart of this “Shulamite woman” towards the One whom her soul loves. Throughout the “song” we read of detailed descriptions by the woman describing her Beloved. To her He is the most handsome of all. To her He is the strongest. To her there is absolutely no other. In chapter 2:4 of the “Song” we read the well known verse, *“He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.”* However, it is the very next verse that really hits home concerning what her heart is towards her Beloved. In verse 5 it states, *“Stay me with flagons (raisons), comfort me with apples: for **I am sick of love.**”*

Wow!! Did you hear what she just said? She is literally saying to those around her to hurry and give her something to eat. She is about to faint because she is “sick with love” towards her Beloved. She could not eat, nor did she want to eat because all she could think about and all she wanted was her Beloved One. She was “head over heels” in love with Him. Food would not satisfy her heart’s cry. She was totally “lovesick” for Him. Is this where my heart is for my Beloved One? Am I truly “lovesick” for Jesus? This really “ministered” to my heart when I read this. Of course I love Jesus. Of course He is my Savior, my Lord, my Beloved, my One and only – or is He? Was I truly “lovesick” for Him in the same way I am portrayed to be within these scriptures? Hmmmm...

As we continue, we read that she repeatedly expresses the overwhelming attitude that is found within her heart towards her Beloved. She expresses a constant “attitude of heart” that gave her continuous peace, joy, security and contentment. It is found within the following scriptures.

- Song 2:16 – *“My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the lilies.”*
- Song 6:3 – *“My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the lilies.”*
- Song 7:10 – *“I am my beloved’s, and his desire is toward me.”*

What beautiful words. What a beautiful expression of love and being loved. What a sense of security and contentment that flows over me knowing that I found my “First Love” and that I am loved by Him. I have complete assurance that He will take care of me. In the first two scriptures above we read, *“...he feeds me among the lilies.”* This means that my heart is confident that He will sustain me and supply my every need forever and ever. I am His, He is mine and I will be under His care and protection for all eternity. Let’s just take a “Selah moment” and pause and think on that.

As we continue, I would now like to take a brief moment to discuss the aspect of the “Bridegroom,” personified by Solomon. We know that His name means “peace.” Again, it is a proper name that comes from the primary Hebrew word “shalam” or “shalom.” For me as I read this “Song of Songs,” Solomon is a type that is referring to Jesus. After all, Jesus is the “Prince of Peace.” Jesus is the Bridegroom that is referred to throughout the New Testament especially in the Book of Revelation.

As we read through the “song” we hear His words of love as well as His thoughts of how He sees His beloved Bride. He tells of her beauty. In 4:7 He states, *“Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee.”* This reminds of what we read in Ephesians 5:27, *“That he might present it to himself a glorious church (His Bride, the Body of Christ), not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”* Our Beloved One sees each of us washed and cleansed by His blood and the water of His Word and with “no spot.”

We also read in 2:14 as the Beloved Bridegroom states, *“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.**”* This expresses to us that Jesus not only enjoys being with us “face to face,” but He loves to “hear our voice.” He loves to hear our voice, each of us, as we love on Him through our words and songs of worship.

In Song 4:9,10, our Beloved expresses the attitude of His heart towards each of us as His Bride, His beloved ones, as He declares, *“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. 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!**”* Wow!!! Did you hear what He just said? I “ravish” His heart. What this tells me is that Jesus’ heart is “smitten” with love for me. I am the joy of His heart. His heart is totally for me as His Bride and His Bride only.

He loves me so much that He tells me to, *"...Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away;"* and *"...Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away."* - 2:10, 13. This is His call to us and our great joy. We will soon hear His call to *"arise... and come away"* with Him.

As we continue in our discussion, I would like to draw our attention to Song 3:6-11. I encourage you to read those scriptures. They express the "marriage procession of Solomon coming for His bride, the Shulamite woman. We see Him coming with great splendor and majesty as He makes His way in a grand procession to come for His Beloved Bride. Will the Bride be ready???

In Song 5:2-7, we see a lapse in the Bride's passion for her beloved due to weariness.

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? 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."

In brief, we see that her Beloved came to meet with her in the night. The Shulamite woman had just went to bed. She was weary from the work of the day. She hears her beloved at the window but is too weary from her "work" of the day. She just got ready for bed, she washed her feet and did not want to get up and get them dirty again. She finally decided to get up. However, it was too late. He had left. She had missed Him. This reminds us of the parable of the virgins in Matthew 25 - they were sleeping and not ready for when the Bridegroom would come. It also reminds us of the Church at Ephesus that Jesus reprimanded because they were so busy and weary doing the "work of the ministry" that they left their "First Love." This really spoke to my heart, personally. Will I be ready or will I be too tired from the "work of the day?" Will you be ready or will you be too tired from the "work of the day?"

The "Song" concludes with a beautiful reference to each of us as believers living in eternity with Jesus found in Song 7:11-13. In essence these scriptures give the picture of the Bridegroom and His Bride living with each other in eternal joy and happiness. They enjoy living in all the bountiful blessings that He has laid up for His Bride to partake in forever and ever. For me as I read this concluding picture, I envisioned myself being with Jesus forever and ever in all the beauty of His and His Father's glory.

As I completed my reading of the "Song of Songs," I could not help but be drawn to the scriptures found in Revelation 19:7-9 concerning the "Marriage Feast of the Lamb."

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, these are the true sayings of God."

After reading those scriptures, I was then drawn to Revelation 21:2, 9, 10-27 concerning the "New Jerusalem." We read that the New Jerusalem was described as *"a bride prepared for her husband."* In the "Song of Songs" we saw the "procession of the Bridegroom" coming to take His Bride. As I read the account in the Book of Revelation of the "New Jerusalem" coming down as a *"bride adorned for her husband,"* all I could think of was a vision of a bridal procession that we see at weddings when the bride is "coming down the aisle" to be presented and given to her husband. In 1Peter2:4-9, it tells us that each of us is a "living stone" that individually and also collectively make up the Temple where the most High God dwells. Could it be that each believer will be one of the "stones" and that collectively we will be that "New Jerusalem" spoken of in this scripture?

In Revelations 21:22-24, it tells us that the Father and Jesus will be in the midst of the “Holy City” the “New Jerusalem.” The Father and the Son will be our “Light therein.” They will dwell and be in the midst of us. We as the Body of Christ, His Bride, will be His “resting place” where He will dwell forever. His purpose and plan was to always dwell in the midst of His people. He had always desired to dwell in a “tabernacle” that was not made with human hands. All the Tabernacles and Temples found throughout the scriptures were just types, pointing to His ultimate and final resting/dwelling place which was always meant to be a place that was not made with human hands but rather by His hand. It was His hand that created each of us so that He would rest and dwell within His people both individually and then collectively, forever and ever.

As we conclude our discussion, I would like to leave you with a few things to ponder on your own.

- Is Jesus your “First (primary purpose for living) Love?” (Revelation 2: 1-5), or have you become weary and too tired from the “work of the day” or should we say the “work of the ministry?”
- Are you “sick for love” for Jesus? Is this the “attitude of your heart? Your love may be expressed in many ways. Each of us may express it differently. It does not always look the same. Do you love Him as you, personally, were created to love Him?
- Do you truly love Him with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength?
- Is this the “attitude and desire of your heart” towards your “Beloved,” the “Lover of your soul,” the One whom your heart aches for?

“The Spirit and the Bride say, Come...”

- Revelation 22:17