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God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

Song of Solomon 4.

(2014)

The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

Teach it, don't demand it.

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Song of Solomon 4.

INTRODUCTION: the following introduction is quite long, but it does help understand the Song of Solomon, for those who are only interested in the actual chapter skip this section and scroll down to Song of Solomon chapter one. According to the most common interpretation, the Song of Solomon is a collection of love poems. It is possible that Solomon (tenth century B.C.) is the author (1:1). However, this verse could mean that the Song was dedicated to Solomon or was written about him, so many scholars regard the book as anonymous nevertheless it is a very intimate and romantic story of a man's love for a woman and a woman's love for the man. The focus of the Song of Solomon is that love is the same whether it is between: -

- A man and a woman or a husband and wife.
- God and Israel or Christ and the church.

For this reason the Song of Solomon can be about: -

- Solomon and the woman he loved.
- The relationship between God and Israel.
- The relationship between Christ and the church.

She: could refer to a woman, Judah or the church.

He: could refer to Solomon, a king or Christ and God.

The others: could refer to, friends, Israel or the world.

The daughters of Jerusalem: normally refer to Judah or the holy and faithful ones.

The primary focus is an intimate love story between a king and a dark skinned Shulamite woman, that is evident, but the king can also be seen as an echo of Christ's love for those who belong to him (the church) while the woman represents those who love Christ (the church) expressing their love for him. It is this aspect of the Song of Solomon that this study will focus on, but this is certainly not a dogmatic study or the only interpretation, but hopefully will inspire the reader to seek for even greater detail and their own insights. The following verses show the great love Christ has for the church: -

- Paul wrote: Christ loved the church and gave himself for it. (Ephes. 5:25).
- Jesus said: greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends. (John 15:13).
- Paul stated: for no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church. (Ephes. 5:29).

The global church: don't make the mistake of limiting the church to only the established religious institutions, denominations or church buildings. Certainly they are part of the body of Christ but they are not the only part. There are many individual Christians in all countries of the world who meet in coffee bars, social outings and mostly their own homes to give thanks to Christ and share their discoveries of God's word and their spiritual experiences with the Lord. Many of these people are helping others and simply manifesting the reality of their faith to the people that come into their lives.

God is not limited to any one pattern or religious organisation; He is far too creative for that. Jesus church is global and is manifested in a vast variety of ways across the face of the earth. Remember the word church does not embrace everyone simply because they confess to be Christians, when the Bible uses the word

church in its true sense it has in mind those who belong to Christ and who do the will of his Father. Jesus summed up the will of God in his command to all his followers in the words, "Love your neighbour as yourself," (Mark 12:31). James the brother of Jesus refers to this command as, the royal law (James 2:8). This is because it means do-good to others and not harm and because Jesus himself said, "All the law regarding mankind is summed up in the words love your neighbour as yourself," (Rom. 13:9) (Gal. 5:14).

Those who deliberately harm or use people, especially those who belong to Christ for their own selfish gain and greed, sexually, financially, verbally, emotionally, mentally or spiritually are referred to by Christ as workers of iniquity and will be cast out from the eternal Kingdom (Matt. 7:21-23).

Not everyone who confesses to know Christ is part of his church there are those in the Lord's present spiritual Kingdom who he calls wicked servants. They use his name and his Gospel for their own selfish gain and line their own greedy pockets with the wealth and riches of this world by making merchandise of those who do belong to him. Nevertheless Jesus knows those who are his and those who are not and will deny those who use his message of grace, mercy, compassion and love for their own selfish gain from entering his eternal Kingdom. Jesus said: -

- I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, but you do not believe because you are not part of my flock. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. (John 10:14) (John 10:26-27).

In the following study when the word, church is used in Scripture it not only applies to all the faithful members of a religious organisation and a local church building but also embraces all the faithful worldwide who Jesus loves and who he knows belongs to him and his global family. Before reading the Song of Solomon it is important to understand that many of the Old Testament prophecies regarding Israel include the New Testament Gentiles who accept Christ.

This is because under the New Testament covenant of grace God is creating one new nation in Christ called the church which is made up of Jews and Gentiles (Gentiles are everyone who is not a Hebrew or Jew). All the promises to Israel are now in Christ which means they include both the Jews and the Gentiles. In this new nation God is creating in the Lord Jesus Christ Old Testament Israel is equal with the Gentiles.

The apostle Paul in his letters wrote: -

- Gentiles were separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus they have been brought to God by the blood of Christ. Jesus has made Jews and Gentiles both one by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances so that Jesus might create in himself one new man (nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles). In Jesus both Jews and Gentiles are being built together into a dwelling place called the church for God by the Spirit. (Ephesians. 2:1-22 abbreviated).

This means that all the future and eternal promises God made to Israel through the Old Testament prophets also apply to those who belong to Christ and in the beautifully written love story recorded in the Song of Solomon it means that the love the king has for the dark skinned Shulamite woman is the same love Christ has for those who faithfully follow him. The book of Revelation states: -

- When Christ returns everyone will see him (the Gentiles) and those who pierced him (the Jews). And tells us, Jesus the faithful witness and the ruler of kings on earth loves us (Jews and Gentiles), freed us from our sins by his blood and ransomed a people for God from every tribe (Jews) and language and people and nation (Gentiles) to be a kingdom and priests to God and they and will reign on the earth (Revelation 1:5-10).

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

The king speaks.

Song 4:1-5 ----- ¹Behold, you are beautiful, my love, behold, you are beautiful! Your eyes are doves behind your veil. Your hair is like a flock of goats leaping down the slopes of Gilead. ²Your teeth are like a flock of shorn ewes that have come up from the washing, all of which bear twins, and not one among them has lost its young. ³Your lips are like a scarlet thread, and your mouth is lovely. Your cheeks are like halves of a pomegranate behind your veil. ⁴Your neck is like the tower of David, built in rows of stone; on it hang a thousand shields, all of them shields of warriors. ⁵Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle, that graze among the lilies.

Gilead was a lush region with goodly forests rich grazing, lands, and abundant moisture, it had a scenic gorge running into the Jordan. The pomegranate was one of the trees grown in the hanging gardens of Babylon. It has a refreshing fruit filled with a tangy, sweet amethyst-coloured juice.

The king expresses his great love to his bride, there is no one more beautiful for him nor are there enough words to describe her beauty. It is enormously fascinating to notice that the king sees his bride's beauty behind the veil when it is considered the flesh veils the Spirit and the righteousness and love of God dwelling within the heart of the faithful, the symbolism of course is that God's eyes see past the flesh and perceive the love, righteousness and faith that is in the heart of every faithful brother and sister of Christ.

The king says that the woman's neck is, "like the tower of David" (v4) this can be taken as an expression of the strength of the woman's love and her spiritual and emotional strength. Symbolically it can be seen as Christ the King praising those whose faith endures even the worst of hardships and sorrows.

The king says of his bride, "Behold, you are beautiful, my love, behold, you are beautiful!" Most faithful Christians are fully aware of the love they hold deeply in their heart for the Lord they love and long to see, but it is often not considered that the King and Saviour they love so passionately has the same love for them and the same excitement in seeing them when he returns in glory. This is the symbolism of this song, the king's love for his bride and the bride's love for her king is symbolically an expression of the love of the faithful (the bride) for Christ their King and his love for his bride.

The king is still speaking.

Song 4:6 ----- ⁶Until the day breathes and the shadows flee, I will go away to the mountain of myrrh and the hill of frankincense.

Figuratively myrrh speaks of bitterness and frankincense of sweet smelling incense. The King has been telling the woman how valuable and beautiful she is to him, and now says, he must go away to a place of bitterness mixed with sweet smelling incense. In this verse there maybe a quiet echo of Christ intimately walking with the apostles and his disciples proclaiming the Good News of the Gospel and of God's love and then having to leave the ones he loves to be crucified (the bitter place), but will ultimately return to gather to himself all who belong to him (the sweet incense).

The king is still speaking.

Song 4:7-8 ----- ⁷You are altogether beautiful, my love; there is no flaw in you. ⁸Come with me from Lebanon, my bride; come with me from Lebanon. Depart from the peak of Amanah, from the peak of Senir and Hermon, from the dens of lions, from the mountains of leopards.

The king sees his beloved as being perfect and is calling her to forsake everything and go with him. Such is the call of Christ to the church and those who love him.

Lebanon; is included in God's promise; it is a snowclad mountain range extending 100 miles with peaks reaching 10,200 above Sea Level.

The melting snow creates great rivers including the Jordan River meandering through Palestine to the Dead Sea. Its isolated crags, supported watch towers and refuge-points and came to symbolize the exalted status of Judah's royal house.

Writers of biblical poetry speak at length on the motion of Lebanon's famous Cedar trees, their massive branches their fragrance and on their height as a symbol of dignity and pride and on their growth and resistance to decay as a symbol of endurance. The psalmists' speaks of the greatness of the Creator who both plants the cedars and shatters them by His voice. The Lebanon's were also famous for choice-wine the lion and the leopard.

All the blood of Lebanon's animals is not enough to cleanse from sin: Lebanon was not only famous for its cedar trees, but for the multitude of its animals, including the lion and the leopard, yet the LORD says, even all the blood of Lebanon's animals would not be enough for burnt offerings. There was only one blood type that was pure enough to cleanse us and make us whiter than snow in the eyes of God and it was not in an animal but a man whose name was Jesus (Isaiah 40:16).

Christ's blood flows back to the foundation of the earth: some may think that Christ blood cleanses only those who are saved after Christ's death and resurrection, but this is not so. The power of Christ's cleansing blood flows back to the foundation of the earth so that the faithful of the Old and New Testament are save by the same Saviour and Redeemer.

In the book of Revelations it is written: -

- All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Rev. 13:8).

And Peter wrote: -

- You were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot foreordained before the foundation of the world and manifest in these last times for you. (1 Peter 1:18-20).

These verses shine a brilliant spotlight on the truth that Jesus was not only the central focus of God's eternal mind and of His eternal plans and purposes for mankind's salvation and for eternity, but also the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. The cleansing power of Jesus blood shed on the cross of Calvary doesn't just cover and cleanse only those who have come to the Lord after his death and resurrection, but flows all the way back to the foundations of the earth to Adam and Eve like a spiritual invisible river cleansing all the faithful of the Old Testament from the fall of Adam onward who by faith looked to the appearing of the promised Messiah the Christ.

The faithful of the Old Testament were saved by their faith that the blood of their sin sacrifices (shadows of Christ) covered their sin and by their faith in the promised seed of the woman spoken of in (Genesis 3:15), in the prophet Moses said was to come like him, in God's promise to Abraham that from his seed a deliver would come and by their faith in the promised seed of David the Messiah and Saviour.

The faithful of the New Testament are saved by their faith in looking back to the bloodstained cross of Calvary and by looking forward to the glorious return of the Lord Jesus Christ. This shines a glorious eternal floodlight on the truth that whether a man or woman is of the Old or New Testament we are all saved by the same cleansing power, the same cleansing blood and the same deliver and Saviour. This is because God in his eternal mind planned and purposed before time began that His Son the Lord Jesus Christ would be the Saviour of all mankind for all eternity. Truly, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. (Heb. 9:22).

Mount Hermon and Senir; are the same high and aw-inspiring sacred mountain in NE Israel. It is snow covered most of the year.

The Arabs call it “Jebelesh Sheikh” or “Mountain of the old man” perhaps because of its white head, but more likely because of its dignity. Jesus transfiguration almost certainly occurred on its slopes.

The king is still speaking.

Song 4:9-10 ----- ⁹You have captivated my heart, my sister, my bride; you have captivated my heart with one glance of your eyes, with one jewel of your necklace. ¹⁰How beautiful is your love, my sister, my bride! How much better is your love than wine, and the fragrance of your oils than any spice!

In a literal sense the Shulammite woman may have been a distant half-sister of King Solomon which would explain the expression, “My sister my bride”, but on a figurative level the word bride means to complete or make perfect, so in these verses a faint echo can be seen of those who are made complete by their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Whoever trusts in Christ belongs to the family of God and is therefore called Jesus brothers and sisters and when they are viewed collectively they are referred to as his bride which is the faithful church.

The king is still speaking.

Song 4:11-16a ----- ¹¹Your lips drip nectar, my bride (Spouse in KJV); honey and milk are under your tongue; the fragrance of your garments is like the fragrance of Lebanon. ¹²A garden locked is my sister, my bride, a spring locked, a fountain sealed. ¹³Your shoots are an orchard of pomegranates with all choicest fruits, henna with nard, ¹⁴nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense, myrrh and aloes, with all chief spices— ^{15a}a garden fountain, a well of living water, and flowing streams from Lebanon. ^{16a}Awake, O north wind, and come, O south wind! Blow upon my garden, let its spices flow. Let my (the Woman’s) beloved come to his garden, and eat its choicest fruits.

The King calls the wind to blow on the beauty of the woman, symbolised by all the chief spices. Christ is seen in the New Testament controlling the wind and blowing on the blind to give them sight. If the king is seen as Christ and the woman the church, perhaps in these verses depicting the woman’s beauty there is an echo of the Lord sending the Holy Spirit amongst those who praise and honour him.

Aloes: it is interesting to note that aloes is a large fragrant tree of the lily family that spreads. Lilies have no thorns they are a harmless plant a perfect symbolism of the church which is a global family established in Christ who the Lord commanded to, “love their neighbour as themselves”, meaning they are to do-good and not harm to others which means the church like the aloes should be harmless to all humanity and continually growing.

Even more than this aloes contain a substance that when dissolved in water and added to myrrh, was used by the ancients in their highly perfected art of embalming, a perfect picture of those who are sleeping in Christ, being protected and kept by the loving power of God.

The woman now speaks.

Song 4:16a ----- ^{16b}Let my beloved come to his garden, and eat its choicest fruits.

The woman is willing to surrender to her lover. She expresses her love by inviting him to intimately embrace her and her willingness to give him her most cherished gift. So it is with all who belong to Christ, it is a love relationship. Christ loving those who belong to him, and they in return responding in love by spiritually inviting him into the inner most depth of their lives, their mind and their hearts.

End