

The Song of Solomon

by C.I. Scofield

The Song of Solomon is a love story between the Bridegroom and the Bride, showing the deepening and growth of the Bride's love for the Bridegroom.

Scripture: Ephesians 5:25

Topics: "Christ's Love", "Spiritual Fellowship"

Description

C.I. Scofield delves into the profound and sacred themes of the Song of Solomon, emphasizing that this book is not for the natural man but for those who have entered into the heart and purpose of Christ. He highlights the bridegroom and the Bride relationship depicted in the Song of Solomon, showcasing the deep love and cleansing process between Christ and His Church. Scofield explains the six divisions of the book, illustrating the lapses and restorations in the bride's communion with the bridegroom, emphasizing the importance of being in unbroken fellowship with Christ.

Transcript

We are to look together for a little time to-night at the Song of Solomon, and I need not detain you for one moment with what the natural man has said about this most precious book. There is not a line in it for the natural man. It is a profanation for him to look into, and there is very little in it for a carnal saint. If we can be satisfied with the world, even though we be Christ's, satisfied with a kind of formal fellowship with Him, going on in a kind of indifferent way, I fear this book will have very little to say to us. But if we have entered into His heart, if we have entered into the heart and purpose of Him who purchased us to be His Bride, that Bride whom He is now cleansing by the washing of water by the Word, and whom He is to present to Himself without spot or wrinkle, with exceeding joy, then I believe our souls will be fed with this book.

The key of this song we have in the expression that fell from the lips of John the Baptist. In the third chapter of John, the twenty-ninth verse, he says: "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly."

The bridegroom and the Bride! These we have in the Song of Solomon. Now I need not dwell at all on any explanation of which might seem at first to be a contradiction, namely, that we do not find the church in the Old Testament. Very true. We do not find the church described in the Old Testament. There is nothing in the Old Testament from which, apart from the New, one would have any conception whatever of the church. But now that we have the New Testament revelation, and can use it to look back on the Old Testament, we see two things. First, that allowance is dispensationally made in the prophecies for the

Church to come in. The Old Testament saints did not know it; but now that we do know it, we can see that there was a place made for it. Another thing. There are, specially in the Brides of the Pentateuch, wonderful foreshadowings of this bride relationship to Jesus Christ. Adam and Eve prefigured the Church. In the fifth chapter of Ephesians there is a direct quotation of the words of Adam to Eve. I need not remind you of Isaac's bride, and of Joseph's bride. Wonderful prefigurings, and sacred, of this holy relationship. "Bone of His bone, flesh of his flesh," lifted into the very highest place, made one with Him. It is marvelous! Not merely as members of His body we are one; we are baptized by one Spirit into this body. Just as there was identification between Eve and the body of Adam, just so there is identification between us and the Lord Jesus. It is not a singular belief of mine, for I sit at the feet of the most spiritual saints down through all the ages, when I find in the Song of Solomon the heart of the Bridegroom for his Bride, and I believe we may trace there the wonderful deepening and increase and growth of her love to Him, and appreciation for Him.

Chrysostom called it the holy of holies of the Bible. Dispensationally, the book of John is that; but here we may say we are in the very heart of Christ; and if Moses must put off the shoes from his feet when he stood on holy ground, how unshod must we be in soul and spirit.

Bengel said: "It is a very touchstone of my spiritual state. When I come to it cold of heart, it has no voice for me; but when I come to it from my knees, and with communion for Him whom my soul loveth, then it breathes the very breath of divine life for me in the very closest and holiest of possible relationships." This is not a book which gives us the heavenly side of the relationship between the Lord Jesus and His Church. The bride is seen here, not in her perfected, but in her unperfected state. We are to learn here what Jesus is thinking of His Church now, when she is unperfected, and full of blemishes, as the bride in the book of Canticles was. We see existing a real love by her for Him, and we see the workings of His love for her.

The book shows two lapses and restorations in the part of the bride from communion with the bridegroom. No lapse from salvation, no severing of relationship; and the structure of the book hinges very largely on this. There are two places where we are permitted to see the bride out of communion with Him.

I believe the book to fall into six divisions. In the first, the bride is brought to the bridegroom, and into restful communion with Him. Chapter i:1 to ii:7.

Second division. The bride returns to her former home, a lapse from communion; a separation, not of divorce, but a separation in the continuity of fellowship, but is brought back and is tenderly admonished, ii:8 to iii:5.

Third division, iii:6 to v:1. Happy communion. Then a long passage of communion between the heavenly bridegroom and his restored bride.

Fourth division, v. 2, 3, discloses a separation of heart. She does not go away from Him, but she for a time has no longing in her heart, while the purpose of His heart is supreme toward her. It is a different kind of lapse from communion, but we shall see that later.

Fifth division, v:4 to vi:3. The bride now seeks Him and testifies of His beauty.

Sixth division, vi:4 to viii:14. Unbroken fellowship. In the first division we have the Bride brought into relationship with the Bridegroom and entering into intercommunion with Him. It is not on the highest level. We get something far more intimate later on; she has learned Him better. I will take a few passages under

these heads or divisions.

The book opens with the inscription, "The Song of Solomon." Then Solomon is the author and the penman. We have in the second, third and fourth verses the voice of the Bride who has given Him her heart and expresses to Him her first love, so to speak. "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth." "Because of the savour of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth." You see what won her. What won you to Christ? A sense of our needs brought us to Him. Many of us came to Christ with very little sense of His loveliness or of His beauty. We came not to Him with love, but we came with faith and trust, and then He won our hearts. Then He unveiled His beauty. We saw Him there on the Cross, that wonderful spectacle, the God-man dying for us. We loved Him because He first loved us, and then there came into our hearts, not so much a sense of our love for Him as of the beauty of Christ, and of His great love for us, and His name became to us as ointment poured forth. The burden of sin rolled away, and His name became to us the sweetest of all names. Remember, that when we have His name spoken of in this way, we are to think of His full designation in the New Testament, not in shadow, but the substance, the Lord Jesus Christ. When we say it, is there any other name like that? "Draw me, we will run after thee," and then next "the King hath brought me into His chambers." "The upright love thee." Now, it is a love relationship. Remember we began with a trust relationship.

I remember when I was an unconverted man living in the West, a practicing lawyer there, I met a famous evangelist who said to me, "Do you love Jesus?" I said no. And he replied, "Well, you never will be saved until you love Jesus." He meant well, but his instruction was unwise. Our first touch of Him is a despairing touch, and we love Him because He saves us. Thus love wins our love.

Notice in the first stage of the book, the bride is occupied with herself. "I am black," she says. How quickly He answers, "but comely." She is beautiful to Him.

"Oh ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon. 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."

This is apt to be the case with a Christian brought into a conscious and known relationship with Jesus Christ. The first thought, and properly so, is, "I am black"; in myself there is nothing to fit me for this place, for this intimacy. It is not good to be occupied all the time with ourselves. He is not occupied with our blackness. It is possible for a saint of God to be so pre-occupied with what he is in the old Adam as to pass his whole life in a kind of perpetual discussion of a dead body. Now why should we not receive the sentence of death so that we trust not in ourselves but in Christ who raiseth us from the dead; and why, forever and forever be occupied with the old man who is all vile, and nothing but vile Now and then, when the Lord wants to show us ourselves, it may be well to take one look at that dead body, as Paul calls it, but let us not be occupied with it. It is an evidence of immaturity. The Bride is to be occupied with Him; she is not talking about herself.

There are some very sweet things in this preliminary stage of fellowship. "Tell me oh my beloved, where thy flock feeds?" and he answers, "Oh, thou fairest among women." Hear that, will you? Well, it is just love, just love. But suppose she should keep on all the time by saying, "Oh, I am black," their fellowship would not progress very much. Let us think His thoughts. The old man is always bad, but why turn aside to dig it up? Remember this, for after awhile it will get to be a habit, and habit is a kind of cant. There was a gentleman who had a habit of saying, "Oh, my miserable black heart." A friend of his became so familiar

with it that he would greet him with, "Well, friend George, how is your black heart now?" Oh, no, we cannot understand it when He says "fairest of women," but let us be glad He does say it.

He sees us in His own perfection, imparted and incorporated into His bride, so that to His love, there is answering love. We are going to be like Him, just as beautiful as Christ. When He looks at His bride He does not see the blackness; His blood has cleansed her, you and me.

Then she speaks in the ninth verse, "I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots." The best comparison she can make now. What does He say "Thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels, thy neck with chains of gold." Then comes that beautiful passage, and He unfolds Himself to her. You know it is only when we are in communion with the Lord Jesus, when we come into His presence to rest in His love, to commune with Him, not about our blackness, but about His beauty, to tell out in our poor way our heart-growing conception of His charms, it is then that we learn things about Him, it is then only He can unfold Himself.

Now look at the second chapter. "I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys," and then He says a wonderful thing to her, "As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters." Get that contrast. The Spirit of God is very fond of lilies. Then there is the thought of thorns. His Bride is like a lily. She answers back, "As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons." Pretty good, but not like the other. Trees of the wood are very beautiful, and some yield fruit, and so she thinks of the apple tree. You see she does not know Him when He says, "I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valley." It is a kind of figure of speech. He loves to disclose Himself. You know that "Beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

Now in the second division, I see the Bride returns evidently to her former home. We do not know why. The Lord does not go and talk with His neighbors about His domestic affairs. The neighbors may see that something has happened. Let me read the eighth verse.

"The voice of my beloved, behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. My beloved is like a roe or a young hart: behold, he standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the windows, shewing himself through the lattice." He is coming for her. What was the house we lived in? When we lapse back into the world He can bring us out; He can bring us back into fellowship. Hear her:

"My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; 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." Over in our land the voice of the turtle is heard. Come back, my dear. Arise, my love, come away. Oh, are you in the world, my beloved? Hear this, "Arise and come away." There are better things in love's land. Newport is a poor place compared to love's land. Now here is the sweet admonition, "Oh, my dove." Fancy calling us that. That is the new nature. Hawk, bird of prey, by the old nature; dove by the new nature. "Oh my dove, that hideth in the clefts of the rock." He begins by reminding her of her place, safe in the cleft of the Rock. Bengel said, he entered into the heart of Christ by a great spear wound. Now that is where she is. She has been out of communion, but in a safe place, "in the secret places of the stairs." "Places" is italicized, showing it is a supplied word. Would the bride come up a public staircase as she comes into the presence of her dear bridegroom? Not a bit. A secret stair for her. Now the next thing "Let me see thy countenance." Come to me. Something else. "Let me hear thy voice." Oh, He wants us near, after we have lapsed from our fellowship with Him. He wants us

to come to Him by the secret of the stairs, having access by the Spirit. And then He has got a tender little word, "Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines." The little foxes of tempers, faults, made much of and accentuated, and that makes a perpetual lot of little issues with Him.

Her confession here is very beautiful, down to the fifth verse of the third chapter. Then she breaks out in a beautiful song. "Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness?" And he answers, "Behold, thou art fair."

We have that beautiful passage from the sixteenth verse of the third chapter to the first verse of the sixth. "I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse." Beautiful communion.

Now comes that second lapse. Here is the bridegroom at the door. "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."

He is out there in the darkness on His mission. How does she answer "I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?"

This washing represents the washing of the laver. In the beginning she was occupied with her blackness. Now she is occupied with her whiteness. If there is anything worse than to be occupied with your bad self, it is to be occupied with your good self. It represents that state of spirituality that becomes too sublimated to think of that world out in the darkness. There is a danger in a certain attainment of spirituality. You want to get with a few who can talk just like you, and who have wonderful experiences just like you.

"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."

Oh, so occupied with her own spirituality, and yet it all came from him, and now His gifts are occupying her, not Himself. "I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had withdrawn himself and was gone." In the beginning of your fellowship you bore all sorts of things, but when the feet get washed, and the hands drip with perfumery and all spiritual graces, He will teach us the lesson. He went on. He could not wait, and now she seeks Him, poor thing. You know the mother of our Lord went a whole day supposing Him to be in the company, and she turned back and sought Him for three days sorrowing. It does not do to take things for granted in our fellowship with Jesus Christ.

"I sought him but I could not find him; I called him but he gave me no answer. The watchman that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me. I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him that I am sick of love. 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?"

What is your Christ more than Buddha? What is your Christ more than any one else? Then she breaks into that marvelous description of Him:

"My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely."

Now that is better than to say He is an apple tree in the trees of the wood. "He is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, O daughters of Jerusalem."

Then suddenly He comes. "Thou art beautiful O my love as Tirzah." Communion again. He can now take her into His thoughts for Israel. Then from the tenth verse to the fourteenth the bride gives a closing song. She is thinking not of herself, nor of herself, but of the great mission they two have. And it closes very beautifully, "Make haste, my beloved" like that refrain at the end of Revelation, "Come quickly. Lord Jesus, come quickly."

If I have helped any of you to a better understanding of this book, then I may add one thing: Study it after prayer when you are sure you are in fellowship with Him. Not when there is a cloud between you and Him; get restoration, and then when it is all sweet, ask Him to speak to you out of it.

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