



LIVING WAY BIBLE STUDY

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THE SONG OF SOLOMON

Erwin Kurth

What Does the Text Say?

Note: The designations "Lover" and "Beloved" are used in the New International Version; "The Man" and "The Woman" are used in the Good News Bible.

"The Woman," called "The Girl" in the Living Bible or "The Shulamite" in The New King James Version, makes a quick opening request: "Let him kiss me"--not on the cheeks as is customarily done today, but on the mouth, i.e., the lips, an erogenous zone. "Your kisses are sweeter and more exhilarating than wine " (1:2).

The Beloved continues to compliment her Lover as in the following paraphrases:

"There is an attractive fragrance about you like incense. The very mention of your name conjures up memories of your pleasing scent. Little wonder women are drawn to you " (1:3).

"To possess you completely for myself, where no one can find us, would be like living in a palace and having a king for my companion. All who know you respect, admire and love you." (1:4).

"I am dark of complexion but also beautiful in form and features. 'Dark you are,' I am frequently told; 'in fact, you remind us of the black, goat-haired tents of Kedar. And yet,' they are quick to add, 'you are as exquisite as the draperies in Solomon's palace.'" (1:5).

"Don't think harshly of me, I pray you. Don't reproach me because I am dark. You see, my brothers compelled me to work in the blazing sun out in the vineyards. I didn't have time to give attention to my personal appearance. 'Mine own vineyard have I not kept.'" (1:6).

Dialogue Between the Lover and the Beloved

Beloved: "Tell me, my Lover, where you shepherd your flock, and I'll hasten to join you. Why should I waste time looking for you here, there, and elsewhere?" (1:7).

The Lover responds: "You should have no trouble locating me, my fair one; just follow the hoofprints of my flock. Bring your sheep and goats with you. The little goats can graze near the shepherds' tents " (1:8).

"I think of you as a stately filly harnessed to Pharaoh's chariot. Your hair falls in waves about your cheeks. Your necklaces enhance your control over it. It springs into being by itself, spontaneously." (2:7).

What Does the Text Mean for Me?

The text depicts a man and a woman engaging in dialogues of mutual rapture--an activity in which couples have engaged since the world began and, certainly, will continue till time is no more.

Courtship is the prelude to marriage--which, be it noted, has a prerogative all its own.

Marriage "was instituted by God for the welfare and happiness of mankind, blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ, and likened by Saint Paul to the mystical union subsisting between Christ and His church, and is to be held in honor among all men." Accordingly, the subject of betrothal and marriage has a rightful place in Holy Writ and may serve, as in the case of The Song of Solomon, as an allegory, portraying the relationship between Jehovah Lord and His Chosen People in the Old Testament and between Christ as Bridegroom and the Church as bride in the New Testament.

Old Testament Texts

"For thy Maker is thine husband; The Lord of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel " (Isaiah 54:5).

"As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee " (Isaiah 62:5b).

To backsliding Judah and Israel the Lord said, "Thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the Lord " (Jeremiah 3:1b).

"Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you " (Jeremiah 3:14a).

New Testament Texts

"For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church " (Ephesians 5:31, 32).

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son " (Matthew 22:2).

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." (Ephesians 5:25).

"For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ " (2 Corinthians 11:2).

And so, thinking of Jesus, who loved us and gave Himself for us, we are happy to say in words taken from The Song of Solomon: "My beloved is mine, and I am his " (2:16). This is the heart verse, according to the allegorical method.

PERSONAL APPLICATION

We give thanks, O Holy Spirit, for the portrayal of steadfast love in The Song of Solomon and ask you to bring to our remembrance the surpassing love of the Father, who so loved that He gave His dearest treasure, His only begotten Son, to be the Savior of the world. In His blessed and adorable name we offer our heartfelt thanks. Amen.

The Song of Solomon 2:8-17 (Give two answers when applicable - i.e. #3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8,)

1. In her daydreaming, the Shulamite maiden fancied hearing the voice of her Lover calling to her and announcing his coming. What Great Invitation does our Heavenly Bridegroom extend to us? (Matthew 11:28)

2. Certain texts in the Bible have been designated Great Texts, such as the one stated above: the Great Invitation, Matthew 11:28. Write out and memorize, if possible, the following:
 - a. The Great Confession (Matthew 16:16) _____

 - b. The Great Question (Acts 16:30) _____

- c. The Great Answer (Acts 16:31) _____

- d. The Great Commendation (Romans 5:8) _____

- e. The Great News (John 3:16) Underline the letters of the word
GOSPEL, in proper sequence, as you find them there. _____

- f. The Great Substitute (Isaiah 53:4, 5) _____

- g. The Great Relationship (Song of Solomon 2:16a) _____

3. Besides proclaiming his coming (2:8a), what other activities does the
Beloved observe her Lover engage in? (2:8b, 9) _____

4. What request does the Lover make of his Beloved? (2:10b) _____

5. He feels their love is as exuberant as the springtime. List the ways in
which he describes the advent of spring.
2:11: _____
2:12 (turtle in the KJV means turtledove): _____

2:13: _____
6. What invitation, stated earlier in 2:10b, does the Lover repeat to
his sweetheart? (2:13b) _____

7. It seems she is hesitant in her response, as if playing "hard to get." He bids her to not be like a certain bird in the palisades. What bird does he single out? (2:14a) _____
8. What compliments does he pay her in order to persuade her to come out of hiding? (2:14b) _____
9. The Song of Solomon is a poetic description of an ideal union between a man and a woman. When married folk today are rocked in marriage by grave happenings and adverse circumstances, more likely than not they will be drawn closer together and will stand by each other in personal, familial or economic adversities. But it is "the little foxes that spoil the vines" (2:15)--little everyday annoyances, remarks, attitudes and behaviors. List some of the ones in your memory. _____
- _____
10. In thinking of Christ as the Lover of our souls, what joyous proclamation can we make concerning our relationship? (2:16, 17)
- _____

Song of Solomon 3:1-5

11. We desire to feel close to our Savior and Lord. How did the Shulamite maiden seek to be close to her Lover? (3:1-4) _____
- _____
12. When at long last they were together in her mother's house, what instructions did she give the daughters of Jerusalem -----(the chorus in the drama)? (3:5) _____
- _____