

Of the 1005 songs of Solomon (1 Kings 4:32ⁱ), this is His song of songs. Mitchell writes about how he has read commentaries and articles, preached and taught, and since 1992 worked earnestly on his 1,300-page commentary on the Song. He has worked almost thirty years on the Song, but then he writes in the preface of his commentary of his desire to spend another decade to "delve more deeply into ... *this most difficult book of sacred Scripture.*"ⁱⁱⁱ Charles Haddon Spurgeon wrote 84 sermons on this book of 8 chapters. I encourage you to download and read them. Do an internet search (**— 64 SERMONS ON THE SONG OF SOLOMON Preachershelp.net**) and you can download the entire set.

Indeed, there are so many interpretations that the book has been set beside Revelation as one of the most difficult books in the Bible. I should not call it a book but rather a song, for the entire thing is a song that is categorized as one of the books of wisdom literature. The questions we should ask are who is the song referring to? Who is the man? Is he a shepherd or a king? Was it written about Solomon or about a fictitious couple and the perfect love? How could Solomon write like this when he had a thousand wives? Is it written in his youth or his old age? Could it be his song of repentance as to what should have been (Proverbs 5:18ⁱⁱⁱ)?

We will consider the song as a song from Solomon and his bride, a picture of Christ and the church, and of the perfect marriage. It does not follow a chronological order, but instead seems to be a number of love songs. Chapter 8:6 tells us *that loves flashes of fire are the very flame of the Lord*. This is an indication that we should see it as symbolism for Christ and His bride, the church. Ephesians 5 also tells us we can interpret it as Jesus' relationship with us in a metaphorical way. ²⁵ *Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,* ²⁶ *that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,* ²⁷ *so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.* ²⁸ *In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.* ²⁹ *For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church,* ³⁰ *because we are members of his body.* ³¹ *"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."* ³² *This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.* ³³ *However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.* Ephesians 5:25-33 Since the mystery is that marriage is about Jesus and the church, then we can see this song about marriage in the light of that mystery.

Solomon, as a son of David, was in his great wisdom a foreshadow of the Messiah, the Son of David predicted by the prophets (Hosea 3:5^{iv}; Matthew 12:42^v). However, his downfall was an anti-type, meaning an example of the opposite of the Messiah. He acquired a thousand of wives and concubines (1 Kings 11:3^{vi}) which he was specifically forbidden to do in God's law. This led to him compromising his faith in the God of Israel. His failures are a warning to men to consider how easily we can be ensnared by our sexuality and damage our testimony. Consider his father David's transgressions (2 Samuel 11:2-4^{vii}).

So how are we to interpret this song about his bride? One thought is that it was his first bride, and if he had stayed faithful to her alone, he would have been even more blessed. Another is that it was later in life, and he is writing about his first love to encourage others to fan the flame of love and not follow his example. But the fact that Jews included this in their sacred writings means that they saw it as an inspired work that was helpful for the nation. And if you believe as I do that God divinely oversaw the collection of writings in our Bible, then we can conclude it must point us to Jesus. Jesus told the disciples after the resurrection that all the Scriptures were about Him (Luke 24:27^{viii}). So, we will consider the man in the text as the Lord Jesus and the woman as the church, his bride, which is in accord with most evangelical interpretations.

I will be drawing from Spurgeon whose 84 sermons on this short book and several commentators to give us an insight into the depths of love of our Lord. Spurgeon's short introduction to the book is as follows: *This Book stands like the tree of life in the midst of the garden, and no man shall ever be able to pluck its fruit, and eat from it, until first he has been brought by Christ past the sword of the cherubim, and led to rejoice in the love which has delivered him from death. The Song of Solomon is only to be comprehended by the men whose standing is within the veil. The outer court worshippers, and even those who only enter the court of the priests, think the Book a very strange one; but those who come very near to Christ can often see in this Song of Solomon the only expression which their love to their Lord desires.* Some of his sermons on a single verse are so rich and beautifully worded that I will often quote portions, as I could not come close to his beautifully worded insights.

² *Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! For your love is better than wine;* Song of Songs 1:2 The woman in the songs does two-thirds of the speaking. She is not named until later in the book. The book begins with her passionate desire to experience the love she longs for. Do you long for the Lord's love with such intensity? The song is asking us to feel with the characters. **It is important to understand that the Hebrews see the physical world as a representation of spiritual realities.** They understand that God made the world in such a way as to teach us about Himself through His creation.

How does He kiss us? It is with His lips and tongue for from them come His words of love. (His seed is the Word.) We will read them in this book and should receive them as kisses from His mouth. We should all read the Bible as a love letter to us.

Why do we come so infrequently to the inner chamber, the holy of holies, where we are alone with Him? Why are we so prone to be distracted with the busyness of this life? He woos us throughout the day but we do not notice, or we take it for granted. Instead, we should enter the secret place and spend time alone with Him. Our scattered thoughts are like other suitors vying for our attention. We must put the distractions away, close the door, and be alone with Him (Psalm 46:10^{ix}; Matthew 6:6^x). **Intimacy requires privacy.**

How do we find this experience? We must take the time, even if just fifteen minutes first thing in the morning, or if you are a night person, in the evening. Ask God to give you the desire to be alone with Him and give Him your full attention. Do this regularly and you will soon be wanting more time with Him. Be still and listen for Him to speak the Scriptures to your heart. Of course, you must get to know the Word, His love letters to you, so that He can bring those expressions to your mind. Think about what He has done for you and what He has seen you through and thank Him for His unfailing love

(Psalm 118:1^{xi}). Ask Him to speak those words of love, the kisses of his mouth. Think about how He chose you before the creation of the world, and how He drew you while you were still rebelling against Him (Romans 5:8^{xii}), He loved you enough to take your sins upon Himself and suffer and die to make you His own (Ephesians 1:7^{xiii}).

I often hear people talking about relaxing with a good glass of wine. Children of God, we have something much better. Wine can lead to excess (Ephesians 5:18^{xiv}), but the more the better with drinking in the love of Jesus. Our lack of this experience is simply from our unwillingness to receive His love because we instinctively know that if we do, our love of earthly things will dim. His kisses are not only better than wine; they are better than anything! No believer will ever tell you to consume them in moderation. The more the better. In fact, the more you receive the more you will desire to your benefit and to the increase of your love for Jesus.

The love of Christ is better than wine because it is free. Some people spend so much on choice wines that they can barely afford, but Jesus offers His love freely.

¹ *“Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Isaiah 55:1 It is priceless. And yet, it is freely given to those who will receive it. You cannot earn it. No amount of good deeds or prayers or sacrifice would be sufficient to merit it. It is a spontaneous love; it flows from the heart of Christ because it must come like a stream that leaps from an ever-flowing fountain. If you ask why Jesus loves his people, we can give no other reason than this: “Because it seemed good in his sight” (Luke. 10:21^{xv}).*

Everything in this world when consumed in excess becomes tiring and distasteful. I really enjoy a week or two in Hawaii, but when I lived there, I missed the seasons. I enjoy chocolate, but eat a little too much and my body lets me know. Too much honey can be sickening. Too much wine and you get a hangover. But you can never get too much of the love of Jesus. The more you get, the more you cry, “More Lord!” That is the glow you see on some believers’ faces.

Spurgeon comments, *If ever there was a man on earth who had Christ’s love in him to the full, it was holy Samuel Rutherford; yet you can see in his letters how he laboured for suitable expressions while trying to set forth his hungering and thirsting after the love of Christ. He says he floated upon Christ’s love like a ship on a river, and then he quaintly asks that his vessel may founder, and go to the bottom, till that blessed stream shall flow right over the masthead of his ship. He wanted to be baptised into the love of Christ, and flung into the ocean of his Savior’s love; and this is what the true Christian ever longs for. No lover of the Lord Jesus has ever said that he has had enough of Christ’s love.*

The love of Christ is better than anything this world can offer. No matter what you pursue, you will always find it insufficient to fill your soul. That is because God created you with a space in your heart that is so enormous that only the eternal infinite love of Christ can fill it. Solomon tells us in Ecclesiastes that everything he tried to find fulfillment in ended up being vanity (Ecclesiastes 1:14^{xvi}). Not so the love of Christ. *“He is altogether lovely” (Song 5:16^{xvii}), all perfections melted into one perfection, and all beauties combined into one inconceivable beauty. Such is the Lord Jesus, and such is his love for his people without anything of imperfection needing to be removed.”*

If you have ever tried to make your own wine, you know how easily it can turn to vinegar. If all the conditions are not right, it sours. Not so with the love of Christ. How

many times have we put other things before Him, ignored His warnings, even set aside His commands to do what we wanted? How often are we selfish and refuse to be generous when we see a need? How many times have you felt the Holy Spirit try to draw you into prayer and you just turned away? But none of those things affected the richness of Jesus' love for you. There is nothing you can do to make Him love you any less because it is unconditional love. It will never sour!

Nor will too much of the love Christ harm as too much wine would. Wine can make a fool of the wisest man or drop the strongest man to the floor or cause a chaste woman to let down her guard (Proverbs 23:29,30^{xviii}). But the love of Christ though inebriating only makes us wiser and spiritually stronger. *There is an elevation that lifts the soul above all earthly things, and bears the spirit up beyond where eagles soar, even into the clear atmosphere where God communes with men. There is all that sacred exhilaration about the love of Christ; but there are no evil effects arising from it.*

Spurgeon goes on to say, *Oh, may God grant to us, dear friends, to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge (Ephesians 3:19^{xix})! I feel sure that, while I am preaching on such a theme as this, I must seem to some here present to be talking arrant nonsense, for they have never tasted of the love of Jesus. But those who have tasted of it will, perhaps, by my words, have many sweet experiences called to their minds, which will refresh their spirits, and set them longing to have new draughts of this all-precious love which infinitely transcends all the joys of earth.*

To this point I have been addressing how Jesus' love is unlike wine. Now let us see the greatness in similarity. First, it was used in Jesus' day to cleanse wounds. But wine cannot heal the wounds of the heart. It only seems to make us forget for a time but then to find we are in more pain than before. But the love of Christ can bring forgiveness as we find we are forgiven for so much. It also heals the guilt that mars our soul for the deeds that we have committed, for it was the love of Christ that took those evil deeds upon Himself on the cross. Truly the love of Christ is a healing balm for our souls.

Recently the Lord brought to mind some painful memories from my youth. He showed me how they had hindered my effectiveness because I misunderstood them. It was love that allowed those humiliating events to direct me into God's calling and blessings beyond what I ever imagined for myself. It was in that closet of intimate prayer that healing balm of Jesus' presence made the scars into marks of love.

For the Hebrews, wine was a symbol of joy. It was a part of wedding celebrations. But the temporary joyful feeling from wine is far surpassed by the abiding joy in our hearts when we find the joy of the Lord in our hearts. Jesus said, *¹¹ These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.* John 15:11 The words of love from His lips are meant to fill us with His joy. When we know we are unconditionally loved by our Creator, what peace and joy we should have. How much greater is this joy than the temporary joy wine gives! I think we are always trying to find what Jesus alone can give us from the things He created rather than from Him personally. But his desire is for us. That is an amazing thought. The God of eternity who brought all things into being desires you! How strange it is that we would desire His gifts more than Him. How thankless and selfish! And yet, the love of Christ continues to pursue us.

Hosea 2:19,20 are my favorite verses. *¹⁹ And I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy. ²⁰ I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. And you shall know the LORD.* The love of Christ for us

is forever. It is enduring. It will never change. The loves we experience in this life fluctuate, but not so the love of Christ. He loves us with a righteous love. It is not selfish or with mixed motives. It is holy and pure. He betroths us in justice. That means a legally binding covenant. It is a covenant that He will never break. He loves us with the beautiful attribute which in Hebrew is *hesed*. It is translated steadfast love, or sometimes as lovingkindness. And His love is merciful. He does not give us what we deserve. Rather He forgives our iniquities and showers us with lovingkindness. His love is the epitome of faithfulness. The expression “to know” in the Hebrew is to have an intimacy with another (Genesis 4:1^{xx}). What a Savior! What a husband! What a lover of our souls!

He displayed His love for you by leaving heaven and entering this cursed world as a baby. He showed it in His sinless life, in His teaching, in His fearless confrontations with the religious elite. He showed it to His disciples patiently enduring their slowness to understand. He showed it in His healing miracles. Think of each of those demonstrations as cluster of grapes, all of which went to the winepress of the cross to make you His own, His bride. That was the greatest display of the greatness of His love (John 15:13^{xxi})

Spurgeon concludes his message on this verse: *Love to me! Dear child of God, do think of it in this way; let me speak for you. “He loves me! He, a King, loves me! A King? The King of kings, HE loves me! God, very God of very God, loves me!” Strange conjunction this between the Infinite and a worm (Job 25:6^{xxii})! We have heard and read romantic stories of the loves of emperors to poor village maidens, but what of these? Worms were never raised so high above their meaner fellow-worms as the Lord Jesus is above us. If an angel loved an ant, there would be no such difference as when Jehovah-Jesus loves us. Yet there is no fact beneath heaven, or in heaven, that is so indisputable as this fact, that he loves us if we are his believing people. For this, we have the declaration of inspiration; no, brethren, we have more even than that to confirm it beyond all question, for we have his own death upon the cross. He signed this document with his own blood in order that no believer might ever doubt its authenticity. “Herein is love.” “Behold what manner of love” there is in the cross! What wondrous love is there! Oh, then, let us have Christ’s love in the cup, the love that we may daily drink, the love that we may personally drink just now at this moment, the love which shall be all our own, as if there were no others in the world, and yet a love in which ten thousand times ten thousand have an equal share with ourselves.*

How pathetic are our little worldly desires when we consider His love for us. **His love is greater than wine, and it is greater than anything this world offers. It is for you personally.** Will you open your heart to receive it? Will you make a habit of taking time alone with Jesus to pour out your heart to Him and hear His heart for you? It is then that we will not want to leave His scarred side. His desire is that you savor His presence throughout your day, a branch on the vine bearing fruit (John 15:4,5^{xxiii}). Do you want your life to change, your family, your church, your town, your nation to be overflowing with love, peace, and joy. This is where it starts, lives surrendered in love to our Savior.

Lord, draw us after you. Quiet our hearts that we might turn from the world and gaze on You and receive the kisses of Your words, and then let that love overflow to all whom we meet (Luke 10:27^{xxiv}). Soften our hard hearts that we might receive Your love. Merciful Jesus, help us receive that love in wave after wave until we are Yours and Yours alone, baptized in the great ocean of your love.

Questions:

- 1 What is the subject of this book?
- 2 Why should we interpret it that way?
- 3 How is Solomon a type and anti-type of Christ?
- 4 Review Spurgeon's introduction.
- 5 Why do we come so infrequently to the inner chamber?
- 6 How can we experience God's love?
- 7 How is God's love different from wine?
- 8 How is it like wine but better?
- 9 Review God's commitment in betrothal.
10. How did Jesus display His love for you?

ⁱ **1 Kings 4:32 (ESV)**

³² He also spoke 3,000 proverbs, and his songs were 1,005.

ⁱⁱ -Preaching the Word - The Song of Solomon: An Invitation to Intimacy.

ⁱⁱⁱ **Proverbs 5:18 (ESV)**

¹⁸ Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth,

^{iv} **Hosea 3:5 (ESV)**

⁵ Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God, and David their king, and they shall come in fear to the LORD and to his goodness in the latter days.

^v **Matthew 12:42 (ESV)**

⁴² The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.

^{vi} **1 Kings 11:3 (ESV)**

³ He had 700 wives, who were princesses, and 300 concubines. And his wives turned away his heart.

^{vii} **2 Samuel 11:2-4 (ESV)**

² It happened, late one afternoon, when David arose from his couch and was walking on the roof of the king's house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful. ³ And David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, "Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" ⁴ So David sent messengers and took her, and she came to him, and he lay with her. (Now she had been purifying herself from her uncleanness.) Then she returned to her house.

^{viii} **Luke 24:27 (ESV)**

²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

^{ix} **Psalms 46:10 (ESV)**

¹⁰ "Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!"

^x **Matthew 6:6 (ESV)**

⁶ But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

^{xi} **Psalms 118:1 (ESV)**

¹ Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever!

^{xii} **Romans 5:8 (ESV)**

⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

^{xiii} **Ephesians 1:7 (ESV)**

⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,

^{xiv} **Ephesians 5:18 (KJV)**

¹⁸ And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

^{xv} **Luke 10:21 (ESV)**

²¹ In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.

^{xvi} **Ecclesiastes 1:14 (ESV)**

¹⁴ I have seen everything that is done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind.

^{xvii} **Song of Songs 5:16 (ESV)**

¹⁶ His mouth is most sweet, and he is altogether desirable. This is my beloved and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.

^{xviii} **Proverbs 23:29-30 (ESV)**

²⁹ Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? ³⁰ Those who tarry long over wine; those who go to try mixed wine.

^{xix} **Ephesians 3:19 (ESV)**

¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

^{xx} **Genesis 4:1 (ESV)**

¹ Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have gotten a man with the help of the LORD."

^{xxi} **John 15:13 (ESV)**

¹³ Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.

^{xxii} **Job 25:6 (ESV)**

⁶ how much less man, who is a maggot, and the son of man, who is a worm!"

^{xxiii} **John 15:4-5 (ESV)**

⁴ Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. ⁵ I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

^{xxiv} **Luke 10:27 (ESV)**

²⁷ And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself."