

The Mystery of the Church: 'The Shepherd and the Shulamite'

by Keith Malcomson

The Song of Solomon is a beautiful picture of the redeeming love of God, specifically between Jesus Christ and the Church, and the ultimate goal of the Church is to be with her beloved in the air.

Topics: "Christ's Love", "Church Unity"

Description

Keith Malcomson delves into the deep revelation of intimate fellowship with Jesus Christ found in the Song of Solomon, emphasizing the theme of redeeming love between the Bride and the Shepherd. Contrary to common belief, Solomon in this song is not a type of Christ but rather represents a mixture of true and false beliefs within the church, while the Shulamite symbolizes the exclusive love and dedication of the true Church to the Shepherd, Jesus Christ. The story unfolds with the Shulamite's unwavering love for the Shepherd amidst the temptations and pressures of an ecumenical union, showcasing her singular devotion and longing for Christ alone.

Transcript

The Song of Solomon is certainly my favourite book of the Old Testament. From a child I have been most aware that it opened up a deep revelation concerning intimate fellowship with the person of Jesus Christ.

Just as the Book of Ruth was read each year at the Feast of Pentecost by Israel, the Book of Solomon was read by them at Passover. Its theme and message is redeeming love. It speaks of the Bride and the Blood.

It starts with the words "Song of Songs" (1:1). Solomon wrote 1005 songs and 3000 proverbs (I Kgs.4:32), yet this is the greatest song he ever wrote. It is thee song or the greatest song of all. Moses and David were also song writers but this is indeed the greatest.

Solomon

Most commentators and Bible teachers, both ancient and modern, teach that Solomon in this song is a type of Christ and that the Shulamite is a type of the Church. But this is only partially correct. In this song Solomon is not a type of Jesus Christ.

During the events and writing of this song we read in chapter 6:8 that Solomon had 60 Queens, 80 concubines and virgins without number. For Solomon to pursue the Shulamite and add her to his already large harem which would yet grow in size to 1000 is hardly a story about the exclusive love of Jesus Christ.

In earlier days Solomon had experienced personal visitations of God (I Kgs.11:9). His name means peace and at birth he was given the name Jedidiah by God which means whom the Lord has sworn to love.

He was one who knew the real Gospel of grace, who had an experience of the true God and who walked in the truth of God but through love of many foreign women his heart was turned from the true God unto other god's.

Solomon is a picture in this song of many loves and of foreign beliefs mixed with the true gospel. He is a picture of the true and false mixed and merged within the church. He reveals to us a gospel and church which is a mixture of the real with utter apostasy.

The Shulamite

Solomon had many women. Why would he write about the Shulamite? He wrote about her because she was the one who got away. He had all the wealth, all the woman and all the wisdom he could desire but he wanted this little woman as well. But she resisted all his offers and eventually got away.

Some commentators have thought that she was Pharaoh's daughter or the Queen of Sheba. But again this cannot be so. She was not rich, powerful or foreign. We are told that she tended sheep and tended to vineyards and as a result she was heavily sunburnt (1:6). Her mother was a widow and she had brothers.

She is always associated in the song with villages, fields, gardens, sheepfolds and mountains; not palaces, princes and power. Her name comes from Shulem or Shunem a small village near Nazareth (6:13)

The Shepherd

Who then is her lover in the song? He is called the Shepherd. He may well have even come from Nazareth! He is revealed in 1:7 as her lover and as a shepherd, "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?"

Jesus Christ is the "shepherd of the sheep" (Jn.10:2) "the good shepherd" (11) "the great shepherd" (heb.13:12) and "the chief Shepherd" (I Pet.5:4). The predominate mark of the Shepherd is His sacrificial love. This was the one whom the Shulamite loved and who the Church now loves.

All through this song the Shepherd refers to the Shulamite as "My love, my fair one" and as the "fairest among women" (1:15; 2:10, 13; 4:1, 7, 10; 5:9; 6:1, 10). There was none to compare with her; she was His only true love. This is another proof that he cannot have been Solomon. This was an exclusive love set upon one person only and shared with none other.

Her Beloved goes on to say "Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes..." (4:9) and "Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me:" (6:5). The term to "ravish the heart" means to take the heart to yourself. The term "overcome" means to

capture. So we see here the beautiful truth that because her eyes and love is fixed upon the Shepherd alone and because her eye is single upon him, she has literally taken his heart captive - Oh to have such a vision of Jesus Christ.

The Story Behind the Song

Let's look very briefly at the overall story. The Shulamite lived at Shunem with her widowed mother and brothers. It was in the days of her youth that she fell in love with the shepherd boy who laboured in the hills.

Her brothers were angry with her so they sent her away to look after their vineyards. While labouring there in the hot sun with her own hands and missing her beloved, King Solomon visits his thousand vineyards in the same area. When his eyes fall upon her and he sees her beauty he immediately falls in love with her and desires to win her as his own. Today's ecumenical movement desires to woo every pure chaste virgin church into an apostate union.

She is brought back to Jerusalem where Solomon begins to woo her in an attempt to win her with his wealth and words. He pours out adoration and offers her everything in order to add her to his entourage of women.

Here she is in Jerusalem. It is the most religious city in the world with the greatest heritage and reputation that can be found anywhere. The worship; the temple; the walls; the gathering of the people for the feasts; it was here that the greatest and wisest sermons could be heard from the most gifted man of the age. What else could she desire? Would this not fulfil all her dreams?

No. She was in love with the Shepherd boy. He alone is what she desired. This song is made up of chapters filled with dreams, visitations, longings, failures, searching's, heartache, prayers, revivals and much time as she awaits the coming of the Shepherd boy. It is her love for him that keeps her heart. None else will satisfy her. She is not looking for the confused mixture of true and false religion found at Jerusalem; she is seeking for the person of Christ Himself.

While Solomon presses upon her an ecumenical church union, she instead is separated by her love for the Shepherd. Her love is an exclusive love.

The Watchmen

She speaks of the watchmen who walked around the streets and walls of Jerusalem at night. Of course these watchmen were supposed to bring safety to the inhabitants and to guard the people of God when it was dark.

She encounters them at a time when she is desperate for her beloved, the Shepherd. Nothing in Jerusalem could satisfy; she must have his presence and person alone. "The watchmen that go about the city found me: to whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth? It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him, and would not let him go" (3:3-4). They had no answer for her; no Christ to give her; they knew not how to find him. But her hungry heart leads to him.

Again later during a time of hesitancy on her part in seeking after Christ she goes in search of him in the streets. "The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me; (5:7). These watchmen not only could not point her to Christ but abused her physically. Instead of healing her they

wounded her. Many so-called watchmen and Shepherds are not only failing in the care of the Church but are hurting her terribly. They are busy bending the Bride to the culture of Solomon's Jerusalem instead of leading her to Christ.

She also says "the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me." (5:7). These men who were to warn of the approach of the enemy against the walls were instead caught up in removing the modest covering of the Shulamite and making her a shame and reproach to all.

So many watchmen today have lost the ability to keep watch against the enemy and instead entertain themselves by leading the Bride into shame and exposing her beauty to the world.

Jesus called himself the Bridegroom (Mt.9:15; 25:1; 5-6). John the Baptist said, "I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. (3:29).

Again the five-fold ministry must return to be "friends of the bridegroom." They ought not to draw the Bride to themselves but ought always to point to Christ and to present her to Christ. This alone will test the worth of their ministries. Their motto must be "He must increase, but I must decrease." (3:30)

The Daughters of Jerusalem

One last group who appear in the story several times are the daughters of Jerusalem. They live in Jerusalem and are captivated by the glory, glamour and gild of this powerful King.

They are a picture of virgin churches that have been seduced by Solomon and so added to his harem. They are captivated by him but having won them he now counts them as only one amongst many.

In Revelation 17:5 we read of the MOTHER OF HARLOTS; a Mother of Harlots or one who mothers harlots. This Harlot makes harlots of virgin churches. Revelation 17 is a prophecy concerning the Roman Catholic Church in the end days before Christ's return for His Bride. Today through ecumenical charismatic influences Rome is wholesale making harlots of most churches but one will escape this confusion, deception and apostasy; she is the true Bride of Christ.

We have watched Rome since the glorious Revival in the days of the Reformation make harlots of the Lutheran Church, the Anglican Church, the Methodist Church and now the Pentecostal Church.

These daughters of Jerusalem are in the most religious city on the earth - Jerusalem. In Revelation Jerusalem is spiritually called "Sodom and Egypt." This city once noted for her great kings, revivals and prophets, although still religious, is no different from Sodom and Egypt. She is unclean inside.

These daughters of Jerusalem cannot understand why the Shulamite thinks more of her Shepherd than of Solomon. They constantly beseech her to look at and love King Solomon but she in response charges them to 'not stir up her love' or 'move her heart' unto things or persons of this world (2:7; 5:8; 8:4). Her love is singular; it is agape love.

Their response to this is "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? (5:9). They cannot understand her love for the shepherd taking priority over this ecumenical city and its king.

She then preaches to them concerning her Christ, "My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand." (5:10). She not only charges and challenges them but also preaches to them by overflowing with a message of utter consuming love, dedication and faithfulness.

This is revival preaching which comes forth out of love to Christ. This sort of preaching will arise and challenge worldly compromised churches to repent and return to their first love. Thank God in this song this revived Bride reaches some of these daughters: "Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? whither is thy beloved turned aside? that we may seek him with thee." (6:1).

Rev 22:17 "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

Spiritual Fruit & the Shepherd's Return

In the midst of this song in chapter 5, Solomon, the Watchmen and the Daughters disappear from sight leaving the Shulamite alone in her garden with her beloved.

The Shepherd is called, "Thou that dwellest in the gardens" (8:13). In chapter 4:12, she is called "A garden inclosed." She is like a garden where the fruit of the Spirit grows. Around the garden is a protective wall to keep out all but the Shepherd. Only He can partake of the spiritual fruit of the Bride. While the Church is on earth the one thing Christ seeks for is the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal.5:22-23).

In 4:16, she prays for the Spirit of God to blow upon her in such a way as to revive her and to bring forth Christian character and virtue. "Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits." Christ responds by saying "I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse:" (5:1) He visits her regularly to inspect her love to Him and likeness to Him.

Lastly, all through the song she looks forward to a better day, "Until the day break, and the shadows flee away" (2:17; 4:6). At present she sees "through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." (I Cor.13:12).

At present she must persevere through trials, troubles and temptations, but then she shall possess in fullness the one she has loved.

One day very soon there will be a sight seen by every eye and one question asked by every tongue "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?" (8:5). It is the Shulamite leaning on the Shepherd.

"And the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee." (Zech.14:5). "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints," (Jude 14). "...the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints." (I Thess.3:13) "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen." (Rev.1:7)

The Shulamite is a beautiful type and picture of the true Church from the day of Pentecost until the return of her beloved when she shall be caught up to be with Him in the air.

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