

## Song of Solomon Chapter 1

“The song of songs”: The most excellent of all songs, Hebrew idiom (Exodus 29:37; Deut. 10:14). A foretaste on earth of the "new song" to be sung in glory (Rev. 5:9; 14:3; 15:2-4).

Solomon's description "King of Israel," or "Jerusalem," is not added, as in the opening of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. Not because Solomon had not yet ascended the throne, but because his personality is hidden under that of Christ, the true Solomon (equivalent to Prince of Peace). The earthly Solomon is not introduced, which would break the consistency of the allegory. Though the bride bears the chief part, the Song throughout is not hers, but that of her "Solomon." He animates her. He and she, the Head and the members, form but one Christ. Aaron prefigured Him as priest; Moses, as prophet; David, as a suffering king; Solomon, as the triumphant prince of peace. The camp in the wilderness represents the Church in the world. The peaceful reign of Solomon, after all enemies had been subdued, represents the Church in heaven, of which joy the Song gives a foretaste. A description of the earnest longing of the church after Christ, verses (1:1-4). A confession of her deformity; and prays for direction (1:5-7). Christ's direction and command (1:8). He showed his love to her both for her strength and comeliness (1:9-10), and gives her gracious promises (1:11). The church's commendation of Christ both for the sweetness of fellowship with him, and the excellency of ordinances (1:12-17).

“The song of songs”; the most excellent of all songs, whether composed by profane or sacred authors, by Solomon or by any other. So, this Hebrew phrase is understood in other cases, as the Holy of Holies signifies the Most Holy. And the highest King is called King of kings; and there are multitudes of such instances, as hath been often observed. And so, this might well be called, whether you consider the author of it. Who was a great prince, and the wisest of all mortal men, with only the two Adams excepted. Or the subject of it, which is not Solomon, but a greater than Solomon, even Christ, and his marriage with the church, as hath been noted. Or the matter of it, which is loftiest and mysterious. Containing in it the greatest and noblest of all the mysteries contained either in the Old or the New Testament. Most spiritual and causing feelings of sadness, breathing forth the hottest flames of love between Christ and his people. Most sweet, and comfortable, and useful to all that read it with serious Christian eyes. Nor is it the worse because profane and wanton wits abuse it, and endeavor to fasten their absurd and filthy senses upon some passages in it. The truth is, this book requires a sober and God fearing reader (not one that was foolish and having an offensive sexual desire). For which reason, some of the ancient Hebrews advised young men to forbear the reading of it, till they were thirty years old.

(Psalms chapter 45), is a companion to this book. It is also a song of loves, which speaks of Christ and His kingdom. "My beloved" is a frequent expression.

This is what the Christians call Christ, as in the following Scripture.

Song of Solomon 2:16 "My beloved [is] mine, and I [am] his: he feedeth among the lilies." The Father, also, spoke of Jesus as "My beloved".

Matthew 3:17 "And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Matthew 17:5 "While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."

### **Song of Solomon 1:1 "The song of songs, which [is] Solomon's."**

This is the Song of songs, excellent above any others, for it is wholly taken up with describing the excellences of Christ, and the love between him and his redeemed people.

The most excellent of all songs. And so this might well be called, whether we consider the author of it, who was a great prince, and the wisest of all mortal men. Or the subject of it, which is not Solomon, but a greater than Solomon, even Christ, and his marriage with the church. Or the matter of it, which is most lofty, containing in it the noblest of all the mysteries contained either in the Old or the New Testament. Most pious and compassionate, breathing forth the hottest flames of love between Christ and his people, sweetest and comfortable. And useful to all that read it with serious Christian eyes.

Wrote by Solomon, king of Israel, as the "amanuensis" of the Holy Ghost; and not by Hezekiah and his men, as the Jews say. Or, "concerning Solomon". Christ, of whom Solomon was a type (see SOS 3:7); of his person, excellences, love to his church, care of her, and concern for her. And of the nearness and communion he admitted her to, and indulged her with. The Jews have a saying, that wherever the word Solomon is used in this song, the Holy One is meant, the holy God, or Messiah. It is called "the Song of songs", because the most excellent, as the Holy of Holies, King of kings, etc., which, with the Hebrews, express a magnificence. This being more excellent than the one thousand and five songs, written by Solomon, or than any human composure whatever. Yea, preferable to all Scriptural songs, as to subject, manner of style, and abundance of it.

Verses 2-6: The church, or rather the believer, speaks here in the character of the spouse of the King, the Messiah. The kisses of his mouth mean those assurances of pardon with which believers are favored, filling them with peace and joy in believing, and causing them to abound in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost. Gracious souls take most pleasure in loving Christ, and being loved of him. Christ's love is more valuable and desirable than the best this world can give. The name of Christ is not now like ointment sealed up, but like ointment poured forth. Which denotes the freeness and fullness of the setting forth of his grace by the gospel. Those whom he has redeemed and sanctified, are here the virgins that love Jesus Christ, and follow him whithersoever he goes (Rev. 14:4). They entreat him to draw them by the quickening influences of his Spirit. The more clearly we discern Christ's glory, the more sensible shall we be that we are unable to follow him suitably, and at the same time be more desirous of doing it. Observe the speedy answer given to this prayer. Those who wait at Wisdom's gate, shall be led into truth and comfort. And being brought into this chamber, our griefs will vanish. We have no joy but in

Christ, and for this we are indebted to him. We will remember to give thanks for thy love; it shall make more lasting impressions upon us than anything in this world. Nor is any love acceptable to Christ but love in sincerity (Eph. 6:24). The daughters of Jerusalem may mean professors not yet established in the faith. The spouse was black as the tents of the wandering Arabs, but comely as the magnificent curtains in the palaces of Solomon. The believer is black, as being defiled and sinful by nature, but comely, as renewed by Divine grace to the holy image of God. He is still deformed with remains of sin, but comely as accepted in Christ. He is often base and contemptible in the esteem of men, but excellent in the sight of God. The blackness was owing to the hard usage that had been suffered. The children of the church, her mother, but not of God, her Father, were angry with her. They had made her suffer hardships, which caused her to neglect the care of her soul. Thus, under the emblem of a poor female, made the chosen partner of a prince, we are led to consider the circumstances in which the love of Christ is accustomed to find its objects. They were wretched slaves of sin, in toil, or in sorrow, weary and heavy laden, but how great the change when the love of Christ is manifested to their souls!

**Song of Solomon 1:2 "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love [is] better than wine."**

"Let him": Him, whom her thoughts were so much employed about; her affections were so strongly after; and whose image was as it were before her, present to her mind. That is, Solomon; Christ, the antitype of Solomon, the church's beloved. This is spoken in the person of the Church, or of the faithful soul inflamed with the desire of Christ, whom she loves.

"The kisses of his mouth": She desires, intend some fresh manifestations and discoveries of his love to her. By some precious word of promise from his mouth, applied to her; and by an open espousal of her, and the consummation of marriage with her. The usual tokens of love and goodwill. She means the communications of his love and favor, his graces and comforts breathed into her from the Spirit of Christ.

"Thy love": This sudden change of the person is frequent in pathetic discourses. First she speaks of him as absent, but speedily grows into more acquaintance with him, and by ardent desire and faith, embraces him as present.

"Is better than wine": Than the most delicious meat or drink, or than all sensual delights, one kind being put for all. For the antiquity of it, it being from everlasting. And for the purity of it, being free from all dregs of dissimulation and deceit on the part of Christ. And from all merit, motives, and conditions, on the part of the church. For its plenty, being shed plenteously in the hearts of believers, and who may drink abundantly of it. And for its freeness and cheapness, being to be had without money and without price. And it is preferable to wine for the effects of it; which not only revives and cheers heavy hearts, but quickens dead sinners, and comforts distressed saints. And of which they may drink plentifully, without hurt, yea, to great advantage.

The way a bride and her groom show their mutual love for each other is in kissing each other's lips. This shows a very close relationship that the world does not share in. Christ has just such a relationship with the church.

John 15:13 "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

The greatest love that exists is that Agape love that Christ had for His followers.

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

This love is far beyond human love. This is love of the unlovely.

**Song of Solomon 1:3 "Because of the savor of thy good ointments thy name [is as] ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee."**

It was usual for lovers to anoint themselves, their hair, garments, etc. to commend themselves to each other. And it was common to commend each other's ointments, and the grateful smell of them none being like them, or so agreeable as theirs. By these ointments may be meant the grace of Christ, the fullness of it, the oil of gladness with which he is anointed above his fellows, and without measure. And which so greatly recommends him to his church and people (Psalm 45:7).

"Thy name is as ointment poured forth": Which denotes the freeness and fullness of the setting forth of his grace by the gospel. The name of Christ is not now like ointment sealed up, but like "ointment poured forth". Those whom he has redeemed and sanctified, are here the virgins that love Jesus Christ, and follow him whithersoever he goes (Rev. 14:4). They entreat him to draw them by the quickening influences of his Spirit. The more clearly we discern Christ's glory, the more sensible shall we be that we are unable to follow him suitably, and at the same time be more desirous of doing it. The very names of lovers are dear to one another, sweeter than nectar itself; the very mention of them gives an inexpressible pleasure. This may respect not merely the fame of Christ spread abroad in the world through the ministry of the word. Nor the Gospel only, which is his name (Acts 9:15). And is like a box of ointment broke open, which diffuses the savor of his knowledge everywhere. But some precious name of his, as Immanuel, God with us. Jesus, a Savior; but more particularly his name Messiah, which signifies anointed, the anointed Prophet, Priest, and King of his church.

"Therefore do the virgins love thee": They that are pure in heart and conversation. For the preciousness of his person, the fullness of grace in him, and the truths of his Gospel. And which love shows itself in a desire of his presence, and communion with him. In a regard to his word and worship, to his truths and ordinances. And to his people, to conversation and communion with them. By these virgins are meant either congregational churches that strictly adhere to Christ, and to his pure worship. Or particular believers, for their inviolate attachment to him. For the singleness and sincerity of their love to him. For their incorruptness in the doctrine of faith. For the truth and spirituality of their worship. For the purity of their lives and conversations. For their beauty and comeliness through Christ. For their colorful and costly attire, being clothed with his righteousness. And for their modest behavior, having the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit.

Jesus told a parable about ten virgins who were waiting for the bridegroom. Five of them ran out of oil, before He arrived. This is speaking of virgins in the sense of those who have not profaned themselves with false gods.

2 Corinthians 11:2 "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."

The virgin in all of these instances, is speaking of the believers in Christ, who make up the bride. The name of Jesus is sweet to the Christians. Jesus means Savior, and that is exactly what He did for all of us who will receive Him. We see in the following Scripture, that one woman thought much more of Jesus than she did her expensive perfume.

Matthew 26:7 "There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat [at meat]."

**Song of Solomon 1:4 "Draw me, we will run after thee: the king hath brought me into his chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine: the upright love thee."**

With the cords of love, for what draw lovers to each other more strongly? Under the influence of that they cannot bear to be without each other's company. Aben Ezra takes these words to be spoken by the virgins, who every one of them said this, promising upon it to follow after the one drawing. But they are rather the request of the church, desirous of nearer and more intimate communion with Christ. For this is not to be understood of drawing at first conversion, as the fruit of love, and under the influence of grace (Jer. 31:3). But of being brought nearer to Christ, and to enjoy more of him.

"We will run after thee": The church and the virgins, she and her companions, or particular believers. Every one of them in their respective stations would act with more rigor upon such drawings. They would run in a way of duty, follow Christ, and walk in his steps. As they had him for an example, and according to his word, and in the ways of his commandments. Or "that we may run after thee"; intimating that there is no running without drawing. No following Christ, at least no running after him with readiness and cheerfulness, without being drawn by his love, and influenced by his grace.

"The King hath brought me into his chambers": The blessing she sought after, and was so solicitous for in the preceding verses. Namely, to have the marriage consummated, to be owned by Christ as his spouse and bride, by taking her home and introducing her into the nuptial chamber. By putting her into the enjoyment of himself, and the possession of his substance. And this being done by him as King of saints, yea of the world, showed great condescension on his part, and great honor bestowed on her. Since by this act, as he was King, she was declared queen!

"We will be glad and rejoice in thee": She and her bridesmaids, the virgins that attended her. That is, "when he should introduce" her into his chambers, as some render the words. Then they should express their joy and gladness on that occasion. And that in the greatness, glory, and

fitness of his person. In the fullness of grace in him and in the blessings of grace from him. In what he has done for, and is, to his church and people. In the offices he bears, and in the relations he stands in to them. And particularly that of a husband, now declared.

We will remember thy love more than wine": Which, upon the introduction of the bride to the bridegroom, might be plentifully drank. Of the desire of Christ's love to wine (see notes on SOS 1:2). It may design more particularly the love of Christ, expressed at this time of solemnizing the marriage between him and his church in an open manner (Hosea 2:19). And which would never be forgotten. Christ's love is remembered when thought of and meditated upon. When faith is exercised on it, and the desires of the soul are drawn after it, and the affections set upon it. And when it is often spoken of to others, being uppermost in the mind. Saints under the Gospel dispensation have an ordinance for this purpose, to commemorate the love of Christ.

The upright love thee": Men and women of upright hearts and conversations, who have right spirits renewed in them. Or Israelites indeed, in whom there is no guile. Who have the truth of grace in them, and walk uprightly according to the rule of God's word, and the Gospel of Christ. And do all they do sincerely, from a principle of love, and with a view to the glory of God. Those love Christ superlatively, sincerely, fervently, and constantly. And "love him rightly", or "most uprightly", as some render the phrase.

These are words spoken from a heart of love. I believe the bride is speaking to her bridegroom here. The upright are the Christians. All believers in Christ will be carried to the chambers of the Lord.

John 14:2-3 "In my Father's house are many mansions: if [it were] not [so], I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, [there] ye may be also."

He wants our love more than anything else. He asked Peter three times, "Lovest thou me"? He loves us, and wants us to return that love to Him.

**Song of Solomon 1:5 "I [am] black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon."**

The church having obtained of Christ, what she wanted, turns to the daughters of Jerusalem. The same perhaps with the virgins her companions. They seem to be young converts, it may be not yet members of the visible church, but had a great respect for the church, and she for them. And who, though they had but a small knowledge of Christ her beloved, yet were desirous of knowing more of him, and seeking him with her (see 3:9). To these she gives this character of herself, that she was "black" in herself, through original sin and actual transgression. In her own eyes, through indwelling sin, and many infirmities, spots, and blemishes in life. And in the eyes of the world, through afflictions, persecutions, and reproaches, she was attended with, and so with them the off scouring of all things. "But comely" in the eyes of Christ, called by him his "fair one", the "fairest among women", and even "all fair" (see 1:8). Through his comeliness put upon her, the imputation of his righteousness to her and through the beauties of holiness upon her. Through, the sanctifying influences of his Spirit. And, being in a church state, walking in Gospel order,

attending to the commands and ordinances of Christ. And so beautiful as Tirzah, and comely as Jerusalem (see 6:4). And upon all accounts "desirable" to Christ, and to his people, as the word may be rendered.

"As the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon": Each of which are thought by some to refer to both parts of her character. And suppose that the tents of Kedar, though they might look poor on the outside, were full of wealth and riches within. And Solomon's curtains, or hangings, might have an outward covering not so rich and beautiful as they were on the inside. Which within were all set with precious stones and jewels. But rather the blackness of the church is designed by the one, and her comeliness by the other.

Black in this particular instance, means dusky. "Comely" means suitable or beautiful in this Scripture. The word "Kedar" means to be dark. It is also a tribe descended from Ishmael. The curtains of Solomon could be speaking of a tent in the wilderness, where he stayed when he was away from the palace. The bridegroom seems to be speaking of her unworthiness here. It appears from the verse above, these are the Christians who make up the bride and not the natural house of Israel.

**Song of Solomon 1:6 "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."**

Meaning not with scorn and disdain because of her meanness; nor as prying into her infirmities to expose her; nor with joy at her trials and afflictions. none of these can be supposed in the daughters of Jerusalem addressed by her. But rather, not look on her as amazed at her sufferings, as though some strange thing had befallen her. Not at her blackness only, on one account or another, lest they should be stumbled. But at her beauty also.

"Because I am black": Or "blackish" somewhat black, but not so black as might be thought, or as she was represented. The radicals of the word being doubled, some understand it as diminishing. But rather it increases the signification (see Psalm 14:2). And so it may be rendered "very black", exceeding black. And this she repeats for the sake of an opportunity of giving the reason of it, as follows:

"Because the sun hath looked upon me": And had burnt her, and made her black; which effect the sun has on persons in some countries, and especially on such who are much abroad in the fields, and employed in rural services; as she was. Being a keeper of vineyards, as in this verse, and of flocks of sheep, as in the following. This may be understood of the sun of persecution that had beat upon her, and had left such impressions on her, and had made her in this hue, and which she bore patiently. Nor was she ashamed of it; nor should she be upbraided with it, nor slighted on account of it (see Matt. 13:6).

"My mother's children were angry with me": By whom may be meant carnal professors, members of the same society. Externally children of the same mother, pretend to godliness, but are enemies to it. These were "angry" with the church for holding and defending the pure doctrines of the Gospel. For keeping the ordinances as they were delivered. And for faithful

reproofs and admonitions to them and others, for their disagreeable walk. And these grieved the church, and made her go mourning, and in black. And more blackened her character and reputation than anything else whatever.

"They made me the keeper of the vineyards": This is another thing that added to her blackness. Lying abroad in the fields to keep the "vineyards" of others, by which may be meant false churches, as true ones are sometimes signified by them. And her compliance with their corrupt worship and ordinances, which was not voluntary, but forced. They made me, obliged her, and this increased her blackness; as also what follows.

"But mine own vineyard have I not kept": Which made her blacker still. Her church state, or the spiritual affairs of her own. Her duty and business incumbent on her, were sadly neglected by her. And this sin of hers she does not pretend to extenuate by the usage of her mother's children. But ingenuously confesses the fault was her own, to neglect her own vineyard and keep others, which was greatly prejudicial to her, and was resented by Christ. Upon which it seems he departed from her, since she was at a loss to know where he was, as appears from the following words. With the Romans, neglect of fields, trees, and vineyards, came under the notice of the censors, and was not to go unpunished. "Mine own vineyard": Speaks of herself (compare 8:12).

This black again means dark from the sun. It is almost as if the bride is saying, do not look at my outward appearance. It appears the bride had done the work that had been intended for the brothers. This still makes me think of the physical house of Israel, which represents the "male child" throughout the Bible. The "maid child" always represent the church. The maid child did the work the male child would not do.

Matthew 10:36 "And a man's foes [shall be] they of his own household."

Galatians 4:29 "But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him [that was born] after the Spirit, even so [it is] now."

Natural Israel (brothers), were the flesh. Spiritual Israel (daughters), are the Christians.

Verses 7-8: Observe the title given to Christ, "O Thou whom my soul loveth". Those that do so, may come to him boldly, and may humbly plead with him. Is it with God's people a noon-time of outward troubles, inward conflicts? Christ has rest for them. Those whose souls love Jesus Christ, earnestly desire to share in the privileges of his flock. Turning aside from Christ is what gracious souls dread more than anything else. God is ready to answer prayer. Follow the track, ask for the good old way, observe the footsteps of the flock, look what has been the practice of godly people. Sit under the direction of good ministers; beside the tents of the under shepherds. Bring thy charge with thee, they shall all be welcome. It will be the earnest desire and prayer of the Christian, that God would so direct him in his worldly business, and so order his situation and employment, that he may have his Lord and Savior always before him.



**Song of Solomon 1:7 "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?"**

With all her heart, cordially and sincerely. For, notwithstanding her sinful compliance with others, and neglect of her own affairs, she had not lost her love to Christ. And, being sensible of her sin and folly, whereby she was deprived of his company, and communion with him, applies to him to guide, direct, and restore her wandering soul. And particularly inform her where she says;

"Where thou feedest": That is his flock, like a shepherd. For this phrase supposes him to be a shepherd, as he is, of God's choosing, appointing, and setting up. The chief, the good, the great, and only Shepherd of the sheep. And that he has a flock to feed, which is but one, and a little one, is his property, given him by God. Purchased by his blood, called a flock of slaughter, and yet a beautiful one, he has undertaken to feed. And feeding it includes the whole business of a shepherd, in leading the sheep into pastures. Protecting them from all enemies, restoring them when wandering, healing their diseases, watching over them in the night seasons, and making all necessary provisions for them. Or, "tell me how thou feedest"; the manner of it, and with what. Which he does by his ministers, word, and ordinances. With himself, the bread of life; with the doctrines and promises of the Gospel, and with the discoveries of his love.

"Where thou makest thy flocks to rest at noon": Either at the noon of temptation, when Satan's fiery darts fly thick and fast; when Christ is a shadow and shelter in his person, grace, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice (Isa. 25:4). Or the noon of affliction, when he makes their bed in it, and gives them rest from adversity. Or the noon of persecution, when Christ leads his flocks to cooling shades, and gives them rest in himself, when troubled by others. The allusion, is to shepherds, in hot countries, leading their flocks to some shady place, where they may be sheltered from the scorching heat of the sun.

"For why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?" Not real associates with Christ, that keep company with him, and are attached to his word and ordinances. But false friends, hypocrites and heretics, rivals with him, who set up schemes of worship and doctrine in opposition to his. Such as Papists, Socinians (those denying the divinity of Christ and consequently denying the Trinity), etc. Now such false teachers have had their flocks in all ages, such as have followed them, and have formed separate societies. And therefore, the church, sensible of their craftiness, and her own weakness, and liableness to go astray, desires she might not be under, and left to such a temptation, as to apostatize from Christ, and join to such persons and their flocks, or seem to do so.

This is the bride speaking to the bridegroom (Jesus). He is the Shepherd. His sheep do not follow after other shepherds.

John 10:27 " My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:"

He leads all the believers to a place of safety.

**Song of Solomon 1:8 "If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents."**

Or, "seeing thou knowest not". The saints in this imperfect state know but in part and are ignorant of many things, and in some measure of themselves. For though they know much of the sinfulness and deceitfulness of their hearts, yet they know not all. And of their imperfection and weakness, yet not the whole of it. Saints have not a perfect knowledge of Christ and his truths, and are sometimes at a loss to know where he is. His word is purely preached, and his ordinances faithfully administered.

"O thou fairest among women": These are not the words of the daughters of Jerusalem, as some think. Who were not capable of giving her the following advice and directions. But of Christ himself, to whom the church applied for it. Who, though black in her own eyes, and in the eyes of others, yet was fair. Surpassingly fair, fairer than all others in his eye. Even notwithstanding her late sinfulness and negligence. Which shows the invariableness of his love; who directs her as follows.

"Go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock": Not "from the footsteps". As if it was an exhortation to depart from false teachers, their doctrine and worship, and the abettors of them. She was tempted to turn aside to. But the "footsteps" are the rule and mark by which she was to go, and on which she was to keep her eye. And steer her course by, in seeking after Christ. For by "the flock" is meant the flock of Christ. And by the "footsteps" of it the ways and ordinances in which saints walk in obedience to Christ. And who are to be followed so far as they follow him; their steps are to be trod in. And this is the readiest and most likely way to find Christ. Even where saints meet together, the word is preached, and ordinances administered.

"Feed thy kids": Take care for the feeding of all, and especially young and weak Christians, who do and shall associate themselves to thee, whom the Holy Ghost calls lambs (John 21:15-16), as here kids.

"Beside the shepherds' tents": Under the conduct, and according to the instruction, of my faithful shepherds, or pastors. First and chiefly those who have gone before thee. The prophets and apostles, and after, and in subordination to them, and to their writings. Others whom I shall raise from time to time to feed my people with wisdom and understanding.

The fairest among women is the bride of Christ. They are to bring the young Christians with them. They are to eat what the Shepherd has provided. They must stay as close as possible to the Shepherd. Their protection is in His presence. This is like the Christians on earth staying as close to the Lord as they can. They are waiting for the rapture of the church. They will be doing whatever they can to bring more into the sheepfold. They do not wander out in the world, they stay close to the Shepherd.

Verses 1:9-17: The Bridegroom gives high praises of his spouse. In the sight of Christ believers are the excellent of the earth, fitted to be instruments for promoting his glory. The spiritual gifts

and graces which Christ bestows on every true believer, are described by the ornaments then in use (verses 10-11). The graces of the saints are many, but there is dependence upon each other. He who is the Author, will be the Finisher of the good work. The grace received from Christ's fullness, springs forth into lively exercises of faith, affection, and gratitude. Yet Christ, not his gifts, is most precious to them. The word translated camphire, signifies atonement or propitiation. Christ is dear to all believers, because he is the propitiation for their sins. No pretender must have his place in the soul. They resolved to lodge him in their hearts all the night; during the continuance of the troubles of life. Christ takes delight in the good work which his grace has wrought on the souls of believers. This should engage all who are made holy, to be very thankful for that grace which has made those fair, who by nature were deformed. The spouse (the believer), has a humble, modest eye, discovering simplicity and godly sincerity. Eyes enlightened and guided by the Holy Spirit, that blessed Dove (see Matt. 3:16). The church expresses her value for Christ. Thou art the great Original, but I am but a faint and imperfect copy. Many are fair to look at, yet their temper renders them unpleasant. But Christ is fair, yet pleasant. The believer (verse 16), speaks with praise of those holy ordinances in which true believers have fellowship with Christ. Whether the believer is in the courts of the Lord, or in retirement; whether following his daily labors, or confined on the bed of sickness, or even in a dungeon. A sense of the Divine presence will turn the place into a paradise. Thus the soul, daily having fellowship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, enjoys a lively hope of an incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading inheritance above.

**Song of Solomon 1:9 "I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots."**

The church having taken the direction of Christ, had now found him, and was with him. And when for her encouragement and comfort he greets her as his love, an appellation very usual among lovers. And in the chestiest sense between husband and wife; the church was Christ's love. Being both the object and subject of it; to whom he had showed love, and whose love was shed abroad in her heart. "My love": The first of 9 uses (1:15; 2:2, 10, 13; 4:1, 7; 5:2; 6:4).

"To a company of horses": Christ's church and people be compared to "the horse" for their strength, majesty, and comeliness. They are strong in Christ, and in his grace, and of an undaunted courage in bearing hardships, reproaches, and persecutions for his sake. And in fighting the Lord's battles. They are stately and majestic, especially a company of them in Gospel order (SOS 6:4). And are very comely and beautiful in their trappings, clothed with the righteousness of Christ, and the graces of his Spirit. And to a "company" of them, a collection of goodly ones, as Egyptian ones, reckoned the best; and those in Pharaoh's chariot best of all. Joined together in a chariot, all drawing one way. Christ's church and people are a choice and select company, distinguished from others by the grace of God. And cost a great price, the blood of Christ. They are well fed with the finest of the wheat; and are under the care both of angels and Gospel ministers. And look very beautiful as under the yoke of Christ, and joined together in Gospel bonds, being of the same faith and judgment. Drawing one way, striving together for the faith of the Gospel, and endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.

The horses are just speaking of the stately beauty and the strength that the horses had. They were at the command of Pharaoh. They were the finest in the land. This is speaking of the bride, being chosen and being the finest.

**Song of Solomon 1:10 "Thy cheeks are comely with rows [of jewels], thy neck with chains [of gold]."**

"Rows of jewels": Which being fastened to the heads of brides, used to hang down upon and to adorn their cheeks, according to the manner in those times. He mentions the cheeks as the chief seat of beauty. And he intimates that the church's beauty is not natural, nor from herself. But from the jewels wherewith Christ adorns her.

"Thy neck": Which is mentioned as another visible part and seat of beauty (Hosea 10:11). But to accommodate every part and ornament named in this book to some particular thing in the church.

"Chains of gold": Whereby, as well as by the rows of jewels. He may seem to design all those persons and things wherewith the church is made beautiful in the eyes of God and of men. Such as excellent ministers, and saints, righteous laws, holy ordinances, and the gifts and graces of God's Spirit. All which are given by God to the church, and are her best ornaments.

This is speaking of the blessings the groom had bestowed upon the bride. Jesus has brought us blessings beyond measure, the greatest of which is eternal life. The chains of gold around the neck show His approval of the bride.

**Song of Solomon 1:11 "We will make thee borders of gold with studs of silver."**

"We": I thy Bridegroom, with the cooperation of my Father, and of the Holy Spirit. Such plural expressions are sometimes used in Scripture concerning one God, to note the plurality of persons in one Divine essence. As hath been noted upon (Gen. 1:26), and elsewhere. The switch to the personal pronoun "we" indicates Solomon is drawing others into his praise for his beloved. What we say about our spouses in public reflects on them ... and us.

"Borders of gold with studs of silver": Beautiful and honorable ornaments, such as those (in verse 1:10). Variety of expressions are used to signify the various kinds and improvements of the gifts and graces which are bestowed by Christ upon the church. The phrase here used may be compared with that of apples of gold in pictures of silver (Prov. 25:11).

"Silver" symbolizes redemption. Gold symbolizes God. God has put a protection around His bride. He has sealed her with redemption.

**Song of Solomon 1:12 "While the king [sitteth] at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof."**

These are the words of the church, relating what influence the presence of Christ, her Lord and King, had upon the exercise of her graces. While he was keeping the nuptial feast, on account of his marriage with her. He was anointed King of saints from eternity, before his incarnation.

When he was rejoicing before God his Father, as if at a feast. And while he was thus distant, the faith, hope, desire, and expectation of the saints, were exercised on him, as their Lord and King, that was to come. When he did come, he came as a King, as was foretold of him. Though his kingdom was not of this world. And while he was here, the Gospel of the kingdom of heaven was preached, and emitted a sweet savor in Judea. And when he went up to heaven, after his resurrection, he was declared Lord and Christ, and sat down at the right hand of God. Being encircled by angels and glorified saints. And in the meanwhile, before his second coming as King, when he will appear as such in a more glorious manner, he sits down at his table. In the ordinance of the supper, feasting with, entertaining, and welcoming his church and people.

"My spikenard": The graces of his Spirit conferred upon me, here compared to those sweet ointments, which the master of the feast caused to be poured out upon the heads of the guests (Luke 7:38). In which ointments spikenard was a chief ingredient.

"Sendeth forth the smell thereof": This denotes the exercise and manifestation of her graces, which are a sweet-smelling savor in the nostrils of her husband, and of her companions.

"Spikenard" is a strong perfume. The king is at rest. The Lord is even now sitting at the right hand of the Father. One of the things we are instructed to do as Christians, is to partake of the Lord's table. Every time we take communion, we are to do it in remembrance of Him. The fragrance is the sweet odor rising to the Lord. The prayers of the saints are to rise to Him as a sweet smelling savor.

**Song of Solomon 1:13 "A bundle of myrrh [is] my well-beloved unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts."**

These are the words of the church continued. Expressing her great delight in Christ, and her strong love and affection for him, and therefore calls him "my well beloved". Which is expressive both of the greatness of Christ's love to her, and of the strength of her affection to him, as well as of her faith of interest in him. Hence she says, he was as "a bundle of myrrh" to her. "Well-beloved": The first of 24 appearances.

"He shall lie all night betwixt my breasts": "It" or "he"; the bundle of myrrh, or Christ, which comes to the same sense. By her "breasts" are meant her heart, where Christ dwells by faith. Which is the best room the church has, and where she desires Christ might lodge. So Alshech explains it of being in her heart. And the time in which she would have him continue here is "all night"; meaning the night of affliction, temptation, etc. Or rather the whole time of this life, until the everlasting day breaks. And so it is a desire of Christ's presence with her, and of her having communion with him, as long as she lived in the world. And between her breasts, and in her bosom she desires he might be for an ornament to her. Like sweet flowers, and for her delight and pleasure, refreshment and comfort. And that he might be always in her sight, and never be forgotten by her.

"Myrrh" is sweet smelling savor for the wedding bed. Myrrh was also used in the anointing oil. This is speaking of that wonderful communion between Christ and His church. The statement above is speaking of Christ's personal relationship with each believer. Christianity is not

collective. It is a personal relationship between Christ and each Christian. Christianity is not a religion; it is a relationship. "Betwixt my breasts" means next to my heart.

**Song of Solomon 1:14 "My beloved [is] unto me [as] a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of En-gedi."**

En-gedi was a place near Jericho, and famous for palm trees, as that was, hence called Hazazon-tamar (2 Chron. 20:2). Now as Christ compares himself to a vine (John 15:1); the church may compare him to a cluster of the grapes of the Cyprus vine, reckoned the best. There being a cluster of all perfections, divine and human, in him. And of all the spiritual blessings of the everlasting covenant, and of all the precious promises in it. And of all the grace of the Spirit, and the fullness of it, which is in him. The Jews call a man, eminent for virtue, and a large share of knowledge, "clusters". And they interpret "eschol", a cluster, by, "a man that has all things in him". Such a one is Christ, in the highest sense, having all perfections, excellences, and virtues in him. Some leave the word untranslated, "copher", and which has the signification of atonement and propitiation. And so well agrees with Christ, who is the propitiation for sin, and has made atonement for it. "En-gedi": Is in South Palestine, near the Dead Sea (Joshua 15:62; Ezek. 47:10), and is famous for aromatic shrubs.

The figurative meaning of "camphire" is the price of redemption. There were beautiful gardens in En-gedi in the time of Solomon. Jesus is our redemption. The plan of salvation is beautiful beyond compare.

**Song of Solomon 1:15 "Behold, thou [art] fair, my love; behold, thou [art] fair; thou [hast] doves' eyes."**

These are the words of Christ, commending the beauty and comeliness of the church. Expressing his great affection for her, and his high esteem of her. Of her fairness and beauty.

"Behold, thou art fair": Exceeding fair, really so, both inwardly and outwardly. Both with respect to justification and sanctification. Verbal affirmation fueled this romance.

"Doves' eyes": Large and beautiful in the doves of Syria. The prominent features of her beauty (Matt. 10:16). Gentleness, innocence, and constant love, emblem of the Holy Ghost, who changes us to His own likeness (Gen. 8:10-11; Matt 3:16).

The bride has spoken of the wonder of the groom in previous verses. Now the groom speaks of the soft eyes of the bride. The "dove" symbolizes love. Not only does the Lord love us, but He wants our love as well. He wants to see love in our eyes for Him. The beauty spoken of here is that inward beauty that is seen in the eyes, which are the windows to the soul.

**Song of Solomon 1:16 "Behold, thou [art] fair, my beloved, yea, pleasant: also our bed [is] green."**

These are the words of the church, giving back to Christ his commendation of her, and much in the same words, as more properly belonging to him than her. He calls her "my love", she calls

him "my beloved". He says that she was "fair"; the same she says of him, with a like note of wonder, attention, and declaration, he had prefixed to the commendation of her. Suggesting, that his fairness and beauty were essential, original, and underived, but hers was all from him. And therefore, he only ought to have the character. He, as man, is "fairer" than the children of men. As Mediator, is full of grace and truth, which makes him look lovely in the eyes of his people. And, as a divine Person, is the brightness of his Father's glory. To which she adds;

"Yea, pleasant": Looks pleasantly, with a smiling countenance on his people, being the image of the invisible God. Pleasant to behold, as the sun of righteousness, and Savior of men. Pleasant in all his offices and relations. The doctrines of his Gospel are pleasant words. His ways and ordinances, are ways of pleasantness. And especially having his presence, and communion with him in them. And which may be designed in the next clause.

"Also our bed is green": The same with "his bed which is Solomon's"; his by gift and purchase. The church's, by having a right through him, and an admittance to all the privileges of it. Where the word is preached, ordinances are administered, and souls are begotten and born again. There Christ and his church have fellowship with each other. Said to be "green", in allusion to the strewing of beds with green herbs and leaves, and branches of trees. Particularly the nuptial bed. And it may denote the fruitfulness of the saints in grace and holiness. Like green olive trees, in the house of God: or else numerous converts in the church, a large spiritual seed and offspring of Christ and the church, as were in the first times of the Gospel. And will be in the latter day. A green bed is an emblem of fruitfulness in the conjugal state; so the Targum and Jarchi interpret it.

The bed of green is similar to the green pastures in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm.

Psalms 23:2 "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters."

The mutual admiration of the bride and groom is very important.

**Song of Solomon 1:17 "The beams of our house [are] cedar, [and] our rafters of fir."**

Not only strong and incorruptible, but also fragrant and delightful. Though I am in myself but a mean and rustic person, yet the house to which I invite thee, and where thou and I shall dwell together, is, by thy favor, built with cedar. Whereby is here signified the stability of God's church upon earth, which is called God's house (1 Tim. 3:15). And the firmness and sureness of God's word and promises.

"And our rafters of fir": By these may be meant the ordinances of the Gospel. Which are that to the churches as "rafters" are to a house, the means of supporting and strengthening it. So by the ordinances saints are supported in their spiritual state. And by them their spiritual strength is renewed. And these being said to be of "fir", which is a pleasant and lasting wood, may signify the delight that is had in ordinances, and the continuance of them.

This speaks of a home that is made of cedar. Cedar is a wood that is strong, and does not rot easily. This is a home that would be very similar to a comfortable country home.

Hebrews 11:10 "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker [is] God."

### **Song of Solomon Chapter 1 Questions**

1. What other name is Song of Solomon known as?
2. Who was the penman?
3. The very first verse says these are \_\_\_\_\_.
4. A bride and groom show their mutual love for each other by \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Thy name is as ointment \_\_\_\_\_ forth.
6. Jesus told a parable about \_\_\_\_\_ virgins who were waiting for the bridegroom.
7. I am jealous over you with \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Who is the virgin speaking of?
9. The upright are the \_\_\_\_\_.
10. How many times did Jesus ask Peter, "Lovest thou me"?
11. What does "black", in verse 5, mean?
12. What does "comely" mean?
13. What does "Kedar" mean?
14. Who was Kedar descended from?
15. Why was she black?
16. The male child represents who?
17. The "maid child" represents who?
18. Who is the Shepherd?
19. Who are the fairest among women?
20. What are the horses, in verse 9, speaking of?
21. What is the greatest blessing Jesus has given us?



22. "Silver" symbolizes \_\_\_\_\_.
23. What is "spikenard"?
24. What is "Myrrh"?
25. Christianity is not a religion; it is a \_\_\_\_\_.
26. What is the figurative meaning of "camphire"?
27. The \_\_\_\_\_ are the windows of the soul.
28. The beams of our house is \_\_\_\_\_.