

Song of Solomon Chapter 3

Verses 1-5: It was hard to the Old Testament church to find Christ in the ceremonial law. The watchmen of that church gave little assistance to those who sought after him. The night is a time of coldness, darkness, and drowsiness, and of dim apprehensions concerning spiritual things. At first, when uneasy, some feeble efforts are made to obtain the comfort of communion with Christ. This proves in vain; the believer is then roused to increased diligence. The streets and broad ways seem to imply the means of grace in which the Lord is to be sought. Application is made to those who watch for men's souls. Immediate satisfaction is not found. We must not rest in any means, but by faith to apply directly to Christ. The holding of Christ, and not letting him go, denotes earnest cleaving to him. What prevails is a humble, ardent pursuing by prayer, with a lively exercise of faith on his promises. So long as the faith of believers keeps hold of Christ, he will not be offended at their earnest asking, yea, he is well pleased with it. The believer desires to make others acquainted with his Savior. Wherever we find Christ, we must take him home with us to our houses, especially to our hearts. And we should call upon ourselves and each other, to beware of grieving our holy Comforter, and provoking the departure of the Beloved.

Song of Solomon 3:1 "By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not."

The day being not yet broke, the night of Jewish darkness still on the church, and the shadow of the ceremonial law as yet stretched upon her. And having some knowledge of Christ by types and prophecies, desires more, and seeks it in the use of means. Though the words may be taken in a larger sense, and represent the state and condition of the church and of all true believers in any age, and at one time as well as another. Who, when their beloved is absent, it is "night" with them. As Christ's presence makes day, his absence makes night. And it was now night with the Church. Either of affliction, or of darkness and desertion, and indeed of both. One night after another, successively, she sought her beloved. Which both expresses the continuance of her state, and her diligence and constancy in seeking Christ. The place where she sought him was "her bed"; not the same as in (verse 1:16). Which was both Christ's and hers, and where a different word is used, but this was purely her own. Either a bed of affliction, when good men usually seek the Lord (Isa. 26:16; Hosea 5:15). Or rather of carnal ease and security, in which she continued, and rose not up from it to seek her beloved. Which shows the cold, lukewarm, lazy frame she was in, and formal manner in which she sought him, and so succeeded not. However, he was still the person "whom her soul loved", cordially and sincerely. Though not so fervently as she had done. True love, though it may be abated, cannot be lost.

"I sought him, but I found him not": Because she sought him not in the right manner; not timely, nor fervently and diligently, nor in a proper place. Not in her closet, by prayer, reading, and meditation, nor in public ordinances as she afterwards did; but on her bed.

This speaks of the church wanting the Lord Jesus to come back, but something seems to be delaying Him. Sometimes Christians feel this separation, when they long to be out of this world and be with Jesus in heaven. They long for that close relationship they will enjoy with the Lord. Paul spoke a little of this, when he wanted to die and be with the Lord.

Philippians 1:21-25 "For to me to live [is] Christ, and to die [is] gain." "But if I live in the flesh, this [is] the fruit of my labor: yet what I shall choose I wot not." "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:" "Nevertheless to abide in the flesh [is] more needful for you." "And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith;"

This world is not the home of the Christian. The desire of the Christian is to be with Jesus. The Lord leaves us here for the purpose of winning the lost to Him.

Song of Solomon 3:2 "I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not."

Perceiving she had taken a wrong method, and therefore unsuccessful, she fixes on another. And, in the strength of divine grace, determines to pursue it. And "now", at once, immediately, without any delay, "rise" from her bed of sloth and ease, and forego her carnal pleasures, in pursuit of her beloved. Which showed the sincerity of her love to him.

"And go about the city": Not the city of Jerusalem, though there may be an allusion to it; but the spiritual city, of which saints are fellow citizens. Where they dwell, and where the word is preached, and the ordinances are administered. And "going about" it, as she proposed, showed her diligence and industry in seeking him. And the night being an unseasonable time to walk about a city, especially for women, this is a further proof of her great love to Christ. In that she not only exposed herself to reproach and scandal, but to harm and danger also. But being fired with love, and fearless of danger, and set on finding her beloved, she resolved to proceed, whatever she suffered. Hence she sought him;

"In the streets, and in the broad ways": That is, of the city, such as commonly are in cities. So Troy is described as a city, having broad ways in it. And also Athens: meaning the public ordinances of the Gospel, where he takes his walks, and often shows himself. In seeking him here, she was right, though she did not succeed.

"I will seek him whom my soul loveth": Her love was still the same, not abated, but more likely to be increased through disappointment. Nor was she discouraged, but was determined to go on seeking, till she found him.

"I sought him, but I found him not": This was to chastise her for her former negligence. To try her faith, love, and patience. And to show that even the best means, though to be used, are not to be depended on. And that Christ has his own time and way to make himself known to his people, which depends on his sovereign will.

Jesus will not be found in the broad ways. The path that leads to righteousness is a straight and narrow path. Christianity is not a one-time experience; it is a daily walk through life to Jesus. It is like a marriage. You do not get married, have one experience with your groom, and then go back into the world. Marriage and Christianity are eternal commitments.

Song of Solomon 3:3 "The watchmen that go about the city found me: [to whom I said], Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?"

By whom are meant the ministers of the Gospel; who are called watchmen, as the prophets were under the Old Testament (Isa. 52:8). In allusion to watchmen in cities; and are so called in regard to themselves, it being their duty to watch over themselves. And to their doctrine, and all opportunities to preach it, and the success of it. Their business with respect to others is to give the time of night. To point out the state and condition of the church; to give notice of danger to sinners in the broad road to destruction; and to saints, through the prevalence of error, heresy, and immorality. All which require sobriety, vigilance, prudence, courage, and faithfulness. And show the necessity and utility of the Gospel ministry, and the awfulness of it. And the care Christ takes of his churches, in providing such officers in them.

"That go about the city", denoting their industry and diligence; and being in the way of their duty, they "found" the church, fell upon her case in their ministry, and hit it exactly. Which shows the efficacy of the word under a divine direction. Which finds out sinners, and their sins; saints, and their particular cases, unknown to ministers; and the church, having met with something suitable to her case under their ministry.

"Found me": While they walked round about the city, according to their duty.

"To whom I said": Without either fear or shame, as being transported and wholly swallowed up with love.

"Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?" She doth not name him, because she thought it needless. As supposing that a person of such transcendent excellency could not be unknown to men in that public capacity. Their answer is not mentioned, either because they gave her no answer, at least no satisfactory answer. Or because by their silence she gathered that they were unable or unwilling to inform her. And being eager in the pursuit of her Beloved, she would not lose time in impertinent discourses with them.

The watchmen are those who are to watch and warn. I believe this is speaking of spiritual leaders, who are to warn the people of the coming of the Lord. The Christian, in this instance, is asking the watchmen to help them find the time of the coming of the Lord.

Song of Solomon 3:4 "[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, until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me."

Christ met me, and manifested his love to me, according to his promise made to those that seek him constantly and diligently (Prov. 8:17; Matt. 7:7).

"I held him, and would not let him go": Being taught by my late experience how sorrowful a thing it was to lose him. And how hard it was to find and recover him when he was lost.

"Until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chambers of her that conceived me": The allusion is to the tents and apartments women had in former times, distinct from their husbands (Gen. 24:67). And all this may be understood either of the visible church, and the ordinances of it. The mother of all true believers, where they are born again, brought up and nourished. And where Christ may be said to be brought, when his name is professed, his Gospel is embraced, and his ordinances are submitted to. And here the church is desirous of introducing Christ, that she with others might magnify him, and praise him for all the instances of his grace and goodness, and have communion with him. Or else the heart, and the inmost recesses of it, may be meant. Where the incorruptible seed of divine grace is cast. Where the new creature; conceived, born, and brought up, until it becomes a perfect man. And where Christ is desired to be, and to dwell by faith, and saints may have uninterrupted communion with him. Christ is, as it were, the father that begets, and the church, the mother that conceives and brings forth believers.

This is odd, but it speaks of the individual finding Christ for himself. The watchmen knew not when the Lord cometh. This speaks of the individual Christian who finds Christ, and hangs on with everything within him. He will not let go. The groom may have delayed His coming, but He was always near. This speaks of the "omnipresence" of God. He is near and yet; He is in heaven at the right hand of the Father. The fact of the mother's chambers here, is speaking of this being a holy union, which is not outside the teachings of the mother. This is not a clandestine relationship, but one sanctioned by the teachings of God.

Song of Solomon 3:5 "I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake [my] love, till he please."

Which are either the words of Christ, adjuring the young converts not to disturb the church; who had now Christ in her arms. Taking repose with him, being wearied with running about in search of him. Or they are the words of the church; who having experienced a long absence of Christ, and having been at much pains in search of him, and now had found him, was very unwilling to part with him. And fearing these young converts should by any unbecoming word or action provoke him to depart, she gives them a solemn charge.

"By the roes and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please": See notes on (SOS 2:7).

This is the same statement as (verse 2:7), in the last lesson. We took note that the "daughters of Jerusalem" were speaking of the physical house of Israel.

Verses 3:6-11: A wilderness is an emblem of the world. The believer comes out of it when he is delivered from the love of its sinful pleasures and pursuits, and refuses to comply with its customs and fashions. To seek happiness in communion with the Savior. A poor soul shall come up, at last, under the conduct of the Comforter. Like a cloud of incense ascending from the altar, or the smoke of the burnt-offerings. This signifies pious and devout affections, and the mounting of the soul heaven-ward. The believer is filled with the graces of God's Spirit. His devotions now are very lively. These graces and comforts are from the heavenly Canaan. He, who is the Peace

of his people, the King of the heavenly Zion, has provided for the safe conveyance of his redeemed through the wilderness of this world. The bed, or litter, was contrived for rest and easy conveyance, but its beauty and magnificence showed the quality of its owner. The church is well guarded; more are with her than are against her. Believers, when they repose in Christ, and with him, though they have their fears in the night, are yet safe. The chariot here denotes the covenant of redemption, the way of our salvation. This is that work of Christ, which makes him loved and admired in the eyes of believers. It is framed and contrived, both for the glory of Christ, and for the comfort of believers. It is well ordered in all things and sure. The blood of the covenant, that rich purple, is the cover of this chariot, by which believers are sheltered from the wind and storms of Divine wrath, and the troubles of this world. But the midst of it is that love of Christ which passes knowledge (Eph. 3:19), this is for believers to rest upon. Christ, in his gospel, manifests himself. Take special notice of his crown. Applying this to Christ, it speaks the honor put upon him, and his power and dominion.

Song of Solomon 3:6 "Who [is] this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?"

The persons speaking seem to be the daughters of Jerusalem (the physical house of Israel), who, upon occasion of the bride's speech to them, make this reply. The person spoken of is the spouse.

"That cometh out of the wilderness": Believers were to be called. Not only out of the holy land, which was as the garden of God, but also out of the Gentile world. Which, in prophetic writings, is frequently described under the notion of a wilderness, as (Isa. 35:1 43:19-20). Withal he seems to allude to the people of Israel, which to the wonder and astonishment of all those parts came up out of the wilderness into Canaan.

"Like pillars of smoke": Being conducted out of the wilderness as by a pillar of smoke going before them. As the Israelites were led through the wilderness to Canaan, by a pillar of cloud and fire (Exodus 13:21).

"Perfumed with myrrh and frankincense": The spouse is said to be thus perfumed, for her excellent virtues and religious services, which are pleasant and acceptable to God. And for the merits and graces of Christ, which are a sweet savor to God, wherewith she is enriched and beautified.

"With all the powders of the merchants": Which are fetched by the merchants from Arabia, or other remote parts.

God led the children of Israel through the wilderness with a pillar of smoke by day and a fire by night. The bridegroom is perfumed with myrrh and frankincense. "Frankincense" accompanies the meat sacrifice. Jesus was the perfect Lamb sacrifice. He was anointed for the sacrifice by the woman with the box of ointment.

Mark 14:3 "And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured [it] on his head."

Song of Solomon 3:7 "Behold his bed, which [is] Solomon's; threescore valiant men [are] about it, of the valiant of Israel."

Not Solomon the son of David, and penman of this song, but a greater than he, the antitype of him. So it is interpreted of the Messiah by many Jewish writers. They were both sons of David and sons of God, and kings and preachers in Jerusalem. Solomon was a type of Christ in his wisdom and wealth, and in the largeness and peacefulness of his kingdom. In his marriage with Pharaoh's daughter, and in building the temple, a figure of the church. And by his bed is meant the place where saints meet together for religious worship, his church visible, which is his resting and dwelling place. Where souls are begotten and born again, and have fellowship with Christ. And which he has a property in by gift and purchase. And a "behold" is prefixed to it as a note of attention, directing the daughters of Jerusalem to turn off the discourse from her, and from commendation of her, to consider the greatness of Christ her beloved. Who might conclude, that if his bed was so stately as after described, how great must he himself be. And as a note of admiration, to show how much she was affected with the greatness of his grace to her. And the privileges she enjoyed of having nearness to him, and fellowship with him.

"Threescore valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Israel": Ministers of the Gospel, such as are Israelites indeed. Faithful and upright; and who are valiant, and heartily concerned for the good and welfare of Christ's people. And are careful that nothing hurt them, nor disturb their rest and repose.

This symbolizes the Lord coming after His bride. This is very similar to the 45th Psalm.

Psalms 45:10 "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house;"

This is speaking of carrying her home to be with Him. Threescore is 60. This 60 is speaking of the bodyguard which bring her to the groom. The church is ministered to by the angels of God.

Hebrews 1:14 "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"

Song of Solomon 3:8 "They all hold swords, [being] expert in war: every man [hath] his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night."

Or a "sword"; the word is singular, which designs the word of God, called the sword of the Spirit. And said to be sharper than a twoedged sword (Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12). Which every one of the ministers of the Gospel hold in their hands. And which denotes not only their apprehension, but their retention of it, and firm adherence to it. It cleaves to them, and they to that. They and their sword cannot be parted, as Gussetius observes the word signifies. These ministers could not be prevailed upon to drop it, or part with it, but retained it to the last. Which shows them to be valiant men.

"Being expert in war": In military straits, in the spiritual war against sin, Satan, and the world, in common with other Christians. And in fighting the good fight of faith, against all opposition of

the doctrines of the Gospel. Knowing how to use to the best advantage the spiritual sword, the Scriptures of truth, to defend the Gospel, and refute error.

"Every man hath his sword upon his thigh": As a preparation for war, and an indication of readiness to engage in it (Psalm 45:3). For, being on the thigh, it is near, easy to come at, at once upon occasion, and so always in a posture of defense. All which expresses the familiar acquaintance ministers have with the word of God. Its nearness, so that they can easily come at it, and furnish themselves with a sufficient proof of truth. And with proper arguments for the refutation of error. And this is done:

"Because of fear in the night": When there is most danger. Hence king Cyrus considering that men are most easily taken when eating and drinking, and in the bath, and in bed, and in sleep, looked out for the most faithful men to be his bodyguard. By "night" or "nights" may be meant the nights of desertion, temptation, affliction, and persecution. When saints are in fear of their spiritual enemies, and of being overcome and destroyed by them. Now Christ has provided a guard for his people, to prevent or remove these fears, and defend them from such as would make inroads upon their faith and comfort. Namely, his ministers, that by their ministering they may be a means of securing their peace and comfort, and of freeing them from all terrible apprehensions of things. Which, as it shows the safety and security of the saints, so the tender care and concern of Christ for them.

The bride of Christ (church), may go through dangerous places, but the Lord protects Her. The "sword", sometimes symbolically means the Word of God.

Psalms 46:1 "God [is] our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

Psalms 62:7 "In God [is] my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, [and] my refuge, [is] in God."

Song of Solomon 3:9 "King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon."

"A chariot": In which the royal Bridegroom and bride might ride together in state, as the manner was in the nuptial solemnities of such persons. By this chariot he seems to understand the word of Christ dispensed by his ministers in the church. Whereby both Christ is exalted and rides triumphantly in the world. Conquering his enemies, and subduing the world to the obedience of the gospel. And all believers are carried with safety and comfort through this present evil world, into those blessed mansions of heavenly glory.

"Of the wood of Lebanon": I.e. of cedars, for which Lebanon was famous. Which wood, being incorruptible, does fitly signify the word of the gospel, which endureth forever (1 Peter 1:25). And is called the everlasting gospel (Rev. 14:6). In opposition to the legal institutions, which were to continue only until the time of reformation (as we read Heb. 9:10).

"Wood" as we discussed earlier, speaks of worldliness. This speaks of the chariot being of the world (see 1 Cor. 3:12).

Song of Solomon 3:10 "He made the pillars thereof [of] silver, the bottom thereof [of] gold, the covering of it [of] purple, the midst thereof being paved [with] love, for the daughters of Jerusalem."

The truths and doctrines of the Gospel are the "pillars" of it. Which, like pillars, are solid and substantial, and continue firm and immovable, and are of great use to support the children of God under the several trials and exercises they are attended with. And, for their utility, value, and duration, are said to be of "silver", and are as carefully to be sought for and into as that is, and even to be preferred to it, being of more worth than "thousands of gold and silver". The ministers of the Gospel are sometimes compared to pillars, and the church itself is said to be the pillar and ground of truth (Gal. 2:9).

"The bottom thereof of gold": Christ, the golden bottom of the Gospel, the sum and substance of it, the principal subject in it to be insisted on. He is laid in it as the bottom, ground, and foundation of faith and hope, and of everlasting life and salvation. And for its richness, firmness, and duration, may be said to be of gold, as the street of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:21). Or its "pavement", as the word here signifies. The Septuagint renders it, a "reclining" place, to sit and rest, or lean upon; such is Christ.

"The covering of it of purple": Or the top of it. The word signifies a chariot itself. It may respect such doctrines of the Gospel which relate to redemption, pardon of sin, and justification through the blood of Christ. And all under the purple covering of the blood of Christ are secure from wrath to come, and go safe to heaven.

"The midst thereof being paved with love, for the daughters of Jerusalem": The carpet wrought with lovely figures or with love stories. The doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel are full of love, of God in Christ, in providing Christ as a Savior, and sending him to be one. And of the love of Christ in assuming human nature, and suffering and dying in it for sinners. Even for Jerusalem sinners. The Gospel sets forth the heart of Christ as "inflamed", as the word here used signifies, with love to the daughters of Jerusalem. His dear children, which moved him to do all he did and suffered for them. And could his heart be looked into, the very images of these persons would be seen upon it. The ordinances of the Gospel are designed both to set forth, in the most striking manner, the love of Christ to his sons and daughters. For whose sake he became man and suffered death, and to draw forth their love to him. So the words may be rendered, "paved with love by the daughters of Jerusalem". Or "with the love of them". How delightful must it be to ride in such a chariot, or sit under such a ministry, where there is nothing but love! Moreover, the whole description of the "bride chamber", which some choose to render the word for "chariot", well agrees with the New Jerusalem state, as given in (Rev. 21:1). Where the church being as a bride prepared for her husband, will be introduced, the nuptial feast will be kept, and Christ will be seen by the daughters of Zion in all his regal glory. With the royal diadem on his head, as he is described in (verse 3:11).

"Silver" speaks of redemption. "Gold" speaks of God. "Purple" speaks of royalty. To me, this is speaking of the bride coming from the earth, or the worldly. She is redeemed (silver), by the blood of Jesus. God (gold), is the foundation. The path is paved by the love of God. Jesus is the

way that was opened to Physical Israel first, and then made open to the Gentiles who became spiritual Israel through belief.

Galatians 3:29 "And if ye [be] Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

Song of Solomon 3:11 "Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart."

The same with the daughters of Jerusalem. The reason of the variation is, because Christ, here so gloriously described, is King of Zion, and they his subjects. These the church observing, being intent on looking at the bed and chariot she had described, calls them from those objects to look at a more glorious one. To whom Solomon in all his glory, on his coronation or marriage day, to which the allusion is, was not equal. Wherefore she invites them to "go forth" and look at him. As people are forward to go out of their houses to see a crowned king pass along the streets, especially on his coronation day. And men never see any glory and excellency in Christ, until they go out of themselves, and look off of every other object to him alone.

"And behold King Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals": Alluding to a custom with the Jews and other nations, to put nuptial crowns on the heads of married persons, both men and women, on the marriage day. Christ is undoubtedly here meant by Solomon, who is King of Zion, King of saints (see notes on SOS 3:7). Christ became man, was crowned by the love of God with the glorious crown of his divinity. By whose mother is meant either the church, the Jerusalem above, the mother of us all, of Christ mystical. Or else every believer, who is not only his brother and sister, but his mother (Matt. 12:50). And this may refer to the time when Christ is first made known unto and held by a sensible sinner, in the glory of his person. And the fullness of his grace, as sitting and riding in the chariot of the everlasting Gospel. When such honor him, and crown him by venturing on him, and believing in him. For every act of faith on Christ is putting the crown upon his head. And every submission to his ordinances is an acknowledging him King of saints. And every ascription of salvation to him and his grace by any, is casting their crowns at his feet and setting one on his head. And such a time is the time of his open espousals to them, when such consent to be his forever, and give up their whole selves to him. There was a secret espousal of all the elect to Christ, upon the Father's grant of them to him in eternity. And there is an open espousal of them to him personally, at their conversion under the ministry of the word, when they are espoused as chaste virgins to Christ. At which time there is a large breaking forth of Christ's love to them, and of theirs to him. Hence it is called "the love of their espousals" (see 2 Cor. 11:2).

"And in the day of the gladness of his heart": When Christ gladly and cheerfully receives such souls into his embraces, and rejoices over them as the bridegroom over the bride. Now the church would have the daughters of "Jerusalem behold". Look at this glorious person with an eye of faith and love, with attention and admiration (see Zech. 9:9). There being such astonishing, incomparable, and transcendent excellences in him, which require such looks as these.

"Zion" symbolizes the church. This is speaking of the bride of Christ. The crown of the Lord is because He is King.

Hebrews 2:9 "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."

Revelation 19:12-13 "His eyes [were] as a flame of fire, and on his head [were] many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself." "And he [was] clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God."

Song of Solomon Chapter 3 Questions

1. What is verse 1 speaking of?
2. When do Christians feel this separation the most?
3. Who spoke of this very clearly?
4. What is wrong with the search in verse 2?
5. What is Christianity?
6. Marriage and Christianity are _____ commitments.
7. Who does the author believe the watchmen are speaking of?
8. What is the Christian asking the watchmen?
9. What is verse 4 speaking of?
10. What does "omnipresence" mean?
11. Who are "daughters of Jerusalem"?
12. Where did God manifest Himself to the children of Israel in a pillar of smoke?
13. What special use did the "frankincense" have?
14. What does verse 7 symbolize?
15. Threescore is _____.
16. Who protects the church?
17. What does the "sword" symbolize?

18. King Solomon made himself a chariot of the _____ of Lebanon.
19. "Wood" speaks of _____.
20. "Silver" speaks of _____.
21. The church is redeemed by the _____ of Jesus.
22. What does "purple" mean?
23. "Zion" symbolizes the _____.