

Song of Solomon Part Three

04/12/2015

Hymns: 51 Love Lifted Me 54 Oh, How I Love Jesus
33 Roll Is Called Up Yonder 25 Sweet Bye and Bye

Psalm 39:4-13

Good Morning! Well, we lived through another nail-biting – March Madness. Few sports offer as much excitement – especially around these parts – as college basketball. The NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament finished up with the championship game last Monday. The march to the title required six consecutive victories. One loss and you're out – perfection only. But by the end of those action-packed games the **drama** was finally over and nearby Duke captured the championship crown.

USA TODAY Sports (1:31 am. EDT April 7, 2015) adds this color regarding the finale:
Sixteen lead changes. Five ties. [including halftime and with just five minutes to go] Enough stress, tension and pressure for the entire month of March – and all of April, for that matter.

Review

Today, we're going to consider a drama of a different sort. If you were here the time before last, you know that we entered into the theater of the mind – much like those serial shows that had you huddled around the radio many years ago.

You recall: our hero, Solomon, that boy king who asked for wisdom and was given great wisdom, peace, riches, and prosperity, and our heroine, that most beautiful of women, Solomon's bride and his true love. At her home, she awaits her espoused husband to come and take her to **their** new home and complete their union.

We left off last time with the beautiful bride **longing** for her husband's appearance. The Daughters of Jerusalem spoke:

Daughters

Cant 3

[6] Who is this that come[s] out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?

Woman

[7] Behold [Solomon's carriage];

[sixty] valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Israel.

[8] They all hold swords,

being expert in war:

*every man [has] his sword upon his thigh because of **fear** in the night.*

Did you notice that word *night* there? Remember the bridegroom traditionally came with a group of his friends at **night** to claim his bride. Why did Solomon bring a small army of elite fighters with him? He was not going to risk **any** encounter with man or beast that might bring harm to his *precious cargo* **on** their 150-mile journey to Jerusalem – especially when it involved **night** travel.

[9] King Solomon made himself a [carriage with] the wood of Lebanon.

Apparently this carriage she's describing (rendered *bed* and *carriage* in the KJV) is what's called a litter. Can anyone guess what that might be? Here's an on-line definition:

a vehicle containing a bed or seat enclosed by curtains and carried on men's shoulders or by animals.

Certainly you've seen these vehicles in the movies.

[10] He made the pillars [] of silver, the bottom [] of gold, the covering [] of purple, the midst thereof being paved with love, [by] the daughters of Jerusalem.

[11] Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and **behold** king Solomon with the **crown** [with which] his mother **crowned** him in the day of his espousal [], and in the day of the **gladness** of his heart.

This was not a king's crown, but one presented to him to celebrate his marriage betrothal. Apparently, Solomon's mother, Bathsheba, was pleased when these two agreed to become husband and wife. How touching it was that he would wear it.

Note too, even back then, the guy's car was a big deal to his girl. This carriage was something **very** special.

Have you ever gone to an antique car show? The owners of these cars lovingly restore and maintain their prized possessions. That's the kind of care afforded this carriage: ornately decorated **with** silver, gold, and purple. It likely **did** have a bed, a ceiling, and curtains – a vehicle fit for a king and his beautiful new queen.

Cant.4

As the culture of that time dictated, before he drew near, the beautiful woman quickly covered herself with her veil. At long last, Solomon, her beloved, had arrived.

No longer does she need to imagine. Instead he speaks face-to-face. He reaches out, gently holds her hands, looks lovingly into her eyes, and says to her.

Man 25

[1] Behold, thou art fair, my love;

behold, thou art fair;

thou hast doves' eyes within thy [veil]:

thy hair is as a flock of goats, that appear from **mount Gilead**.

[2] Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which came up from the washing; whereof every one bear twins, [not one is alone]

[3] Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet,

and thy speech is [lov]ely:

thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate [behind] thy [veil].

[4] Thy neck is like the tower of David buil[t] for an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand

[shields], **all** [] of mighty men.

[5] *Thy two breasts are like two [fawns] that are twins [of a gazelle], which feed among the lilies.*

[6] *Until the day break, and the shadows flee away,*

I will [go] to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense.

[7] *Thou art **all fair**, my love;*

*there is **no** spot in thee.*

While this song opened with the woman seeing her sun-darkened skin as a flaw, her beloved sees her as perfect in every way. Notice Solomon refers to her as “my love.” From his love for her, flows these words of delight in her beauty and charm.

[8] *Come with me from **Lebanon, my spouse**, with me **from Lebanon**: look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards.*

He leads her gently by the hand into his carriage and together they head off on their trip to Jerusalem.

Who can tell me **where** – that is, what country – the couple is located in as they start on their journey? They are in the woman's home of Lebanon. This is where she was born and this is where she grew up.

A number of geographical locations were just cited. Here's the rundown on them:

Gilead is a lush plateau east of the Sea of Galilee in northern Israel.

Amana is a mountain in southern Lebanon. Lebanon borders Israel on the north.

Shenir and *Hermon* refer to the same place – the tallest summit in northern Israel at more than 9000 feet.

They're in the mountains where lions and leopards dwell.

[9] *Thou hast **ravished** my heart, **my sister, my spouse**;
thou hast **ravished** my heart with one [**glance**] of thine eyes,
with one [**strand** of] thy [necklace].*

[10] *How **fair** is **thy love**, my sister, my spouse!*

*how much better is **thy love** than wine!*

and the smell of thine ointments than all spices!

Note here that the term *sister* is actually meant to be endearing and intimate rather than just familial as it is today. Here he went beyond his bride's physical appearance and commented on *her love* itself. Despite her dazzling beauty, indeed her love is her **greatest** attribute.

[11] *Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honeycomb:*

honey and milk are under thy tongue;

*and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of **Lebanon**.*

[12] *A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.*

Notice the metaphor of the woman as a garden. This is important to remember as it is used repeatedly. Note too a third reference within four verses to Lebanon. Also note the words

enclosed, shut up, and sealed referring to her purity.

[13] *Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits;*

[henna], with spikenard,

[14] *Spikenard and saffron;*

calamus and cinnamon,

with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes,

with all the chief spices:

[15] *A fountain of gardens,*

*a well of living waters [] and streams from **Lebanon**.*

Where is this woman from? He repeats it again and again: She's from Lebanon.

Woman responds:

[16] *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.

At this point, the curtain drops and the lights go out. The couple's blissful journey has ended. They have arrived at their beautiful new home. The honeymoon has begun. No more a vision of the future as **the** woman imagined to begin this song. The king had finally *brought her to his chambers*. There they are together as husband and wife for the first time.

The Bible elaborates no further about this very personal, intimate, and private time. Similar to very old movies the rest of the scene is left completely to our imaginations.

This is a good point though to give you a detailed refresher of **this** portion of the Jewish wedding custom of that time. Here's a quote from a well-researched document by Chuck Missler:

After the groom received his bride, together with her female attendants, the enlarged wedding party returned from the bride's home to the groom's father's house,¹³ where the wedding guests had assembled.

Shortly after their arrival, the bride and groom were escorted by the other members of the wedding party to the bridal chamber (huppah). Prior to entering the chamber, the bride remained veiled so that no one could see her face. ¹⁴ While the groomsmen and bridesmaids waited outside, the bride and groom entered the bridal chamber alone. There, in the privacy of that place, they entered into physical union for the first time, thereby consummating the marriage that had been covenanted approximately one year earlier. ¹⁵

After the marriage was consummated, the groom came out of the bridal chamber and announced the consummation of the marriage to the members of the wedding party waiting outside.¹⁶ Then, as the groom went back to his bride in the chamber, the

members of the wedding party returned to the wedding guests and announced the consummation of the marriage. ¹⁷

Upon receiving the good news, the wedding guests remained in the groom's father's house for the next **seven days**, celebrating with **a** great wedding feast. ¹⁸

During the seven days of the wedding feast, the bride and groom remained hidden in the bridal chamber¹⁹ (Cf. Genesis 29:21-23, 27-28)²⁰ Afterwards, the groom came out of hiding, bringing his bride with him, but with her veil removed so that everyone could see her.

Cant.5

Now let's return to our song and see how this plays out.

Man

[1] I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse:
I have gathered my myrrh **with** my spice;
I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey;
I have drunk my wine with my milk:

Friends

eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.

Woman 1

[2] I sleep, but my heart waketh:

Can anyone guess what that means? She had drifted into a dream.

it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying,

Man 3

Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.

Woman 6

[3] I have put **off** my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?

[4] My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my [heart was] moved for him.

[5] I rose up to open to my beloved; and my hands dr[i]pped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock.

Leaving sweet perfume on the door was a custom.

[6] I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, **and** was gone: my soul failed when he spake: I **sought** him,

but I could not find him;

I **called** him, but he gave me no answer.

What happened to her beloved? Where did he go?

Unfortunately, we're out of time for today. But **tune in** next time for the answer to that question and **much**, much more.

Application

You may have heard that the former head coach of the University of North Carolina and one of the most famous basketball coaches of **all time** passed away less than two months ago at age 83. Honored and revered as a great coach, he was viewed by most as a nice guy and a good person. In fact (as Rodney Dangerfield might have said), if you look up *nice guy* in the dictionary, you'll find his picture there.

Can anyone guess his name?

In addition, *Dean Smith* was a long-time member of: T. Binkley Memorial Baptist Church in Chapel Hill.

From the on-line site *Your Dictionary* we have the following:

*Smith combined his outspoken support for liberal causes, including nuclear disarmament and abolition of the death penalty, **with** a devout Christian faith. He served as director of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes from 1965 to 1970. He ordered his players to go to **the** church of their choice every Sunday and return with a brochure to **prove** they had gone.*

Even after he **died**, he was doing thoughtful things (espn.com):

The former North Carolina coach, who died last month at 83, directed his trust in his will to give \$200 to every letter winner who played for him during his 36 seasons as head coach at the school.

the \$200 checks were sent out on Monday to about 180 letter winners.

*Smith's message was to "enjoy a **dinner out** compliments of Coach Dean Smith."*

Certainly Dean Smith ranked high on the nice guy, good person list. But nice guys, good people, and even church members, are not the criteria that God uses to secure our place in heaven. Perfection is his standard. The Bible says none is righteous. None has risen to His standard and no man comes to the Father except through Jesus Christ.

During his lifetime, Coach Smith participated in **hundreds** of **thrilling**, climactic moments. Yet, in our lives we face no greater climax than that instant in time when we meet our Maker. Even if you did all of the good works and kind deeds of Dean Smith, that would not save you. Only your faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ for your personal salvation brings you into favor with God.

When that final curtain falls, what will **be** your claim to **the** perfection that God demands? Mine will be faith in the saving blood of Our Risen Savior. I trust you have made your peace with Him and put your faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ as well.

Benediction

Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. (Revelation 1:5b-6)

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