

The King is Coming – Part 2

3-Year Bible Reading Plan

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Bible Text: Song of Solomon 1-8
Preached On: Sunday, November 8, 2020

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Tonight we have come to study one of the least studied books in the Bible, the book of Song of Solomon, and anytime you're going to teach on Song of Solomon, you need to pray so let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we do come tonight, we recognize that your word says all Scripture is inspired by you. Lord, forgive us if we ever elevate one portion above another, one subject matter or passage above another one. God, we recognize tonight that these eight chapters are just as inspired and just as preserved as our most beloved passages of the Bible so, God, help us tonight on an area that oftentimes is unfamiliar, a subject matter that maybe we haven't delved that much into, help us tonight to glean the wisdom of the ages, the truth for today and for tomorrow and, God, may we walk in it. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

Tonight before we approach the subject matter of Song of Solomon, allow me as I did last week to make a few little introductory remarks. The first one is this: there's an old adage that good doctrine does not always make good preaching and sometimes bad doctrine can make pretty good preaching. What I mean by that is anytime you're going to dig into the doctrinal truths of Scripture, sometimes it doesn't translate into good preaching and into good teaching and I think we would all confess we've all heard some what we might call unbiblical content that makes for some good presentation, have we not? Tonight we're going to be dealing with what we call just good old fashioned, solid, biblical doctrine. Tonight is not going to make for good preaching, it's not going to make for good teaching but it's going to make for good doctrine.

Now that being said, allow me to remind you that anytime you take any passage of Scripture, there are three approaches that we must take to every single passage. We call it the historical interpretation, the doctrinal interpretation, and the spiritual interpretation. Let me kind of unpack what that means as I've already addressed the fact that tonight is going to be a purely doctrinal message.

When we look at the Song of Solomon historically speaking, you have to look back at who were the individuals that God inspired to give us this, what was the context, what was their setting, what was the environment, what was happening in their lives. Well,

you're probably familiar we have who we know as King Solomon. He's the third monarch in the history of Israel. He is the son of David and Bathsheba. And Solomon is reigning in one of the most powerful, most opulent reigns that humanity has ever known, and even though he was known for his hundreds of wives and concubines, the book of Proverbs talks about the wife of your youth and that is who these letters are being written to. And so historically speaking we have eight chapters that are a series of communication between Solomon and his wife, and much like the Apostle Paul communicated to the church at Thessalonica, God inspired these words not just for that historical setting but for believers down the road.

The spiritual application is that every single passage of the Bible, every single passage can somehow devotionally or spiritually help us in our walk with the Lord even if they do not doctrinally apply to our lives. One of the best ways to illustrate this is a great portion of what you and I know as the Old Testament. You and I when we're reading Isaiah or Jeremiah, we are not on the brink of the Babylonian captivity, we are not on the brink of Nebuchadnezzar coming in and razing literally what we know as the Temple Mount, but we can learn lessons about what it means to be arrogant or narcissistic in the face of God; what happens when we continue to reject his warnings in our life, then there are negative consequences that can take place in our life. And there's a multitude of places we could go in the Old Testament in particular to show you this, whether it is the giving of the 10 Commandments on Mount Sinai, whether it is the Sabbaths of Exodus 31, and a plethora of other passages. So when we come to Song of Solomon, I've heard people say, "Well, I'm not married. It has no application to me." No. Even if you are single, these passages can have a spiritual application to you because all Scripture can help us as we walk with the Lord.

So that's the historical and the spiritual, it's the doctrinal that we're going to deal with the most tonight. The doctrinal application of any passage in the Bible is the fact that it was written to a specific people, at a specific, for a very specific purpose. Now the reason this is critical is oftentimes what the Lord gave the Israelites in the Old Testament, or even what the Lord gave the apostles in the New Testament may have had a historical meaning at the time but a doctrinal meaning for future events. For example, many of the passages that we have in the Old Testament in reference to what we know as the Second Coming, whom we know as Isaiah, Jeremiah, whomever it may be, when they wrote it, it would make perfect sense that it would be for their historical context, they did not realize that there was another layer, they did not realize that there was a doctrinal truth not just for their day but for future days as well. And so when we go into the Song of Solomon, we're going to be dealing with the doctrinal truths here, not just the spiritual application, not just the historical facts of the story, but what is there, who is this message to and what strategic purpose does it have.

I've mentioned to you that tonight we're going, I've entitled it "The King is Coming – Part 2." If you were not with us this morning, we looked at chapters 2, verses 8 through 13, as a very picturesque chronology of some Second Coming events. There is this voice that cries out to the bride to, "Come up here." He is skipping upon the mountains. The winter is over. The rain has passed and the relationship has physically commenced, a very clear

picture, I believe, of what we see in 1 Thessalonians 4, 1 Corinthians 15, and a multitude of other passages. There might be a tendency tonight to claim or state that looking at the Song of Solomon through the Second Coming lens might be what we call eisegesis. Now if you're not familiar with eisegesis, allow me to explain it. Exegesis is what you want to do, take the Bible for what it says and pull the meaning out. Eisegesis is I have a pre-described teaching that I want to force into the text, okay? Eisegesis is when you take what you want it to say and you make it say what you want it to say. What we're going to do tonight is look at passages in the Song of Solomon and compare them to other passages in the Bible, not what we want it to say, not what we hope it to say, but allow it to speak to us doctrinally in light of other Scriptures that the Lord has inspired and he has preserved.

Now with all that introductory remark said, it's time to go to Song of Solomon. We are going to cover all eight chapters in the next few moments. "The King is Coming – Part 2." I want to segment or divide what we know as the Song of Solomon into a variety of sections, but really just for two minutes allow me to recap this morning. We have two primary characters here, we have the bridegroom and we have the bride. The bridegroom is also referred to as the Beloved, very picturesque as we're about to see in just a moment of whom we know as Jesus Christ the Messiah. The bride is where it's going to get interesting. Now this morning we talked about the bride being the people of God, the church being called up together to be with him, we're actually going to go in and delineate a little bit more tonight because we discover as we walk through the Scriptures that at different times and at different places the Lord works in a variety of means with his people.

So I'll let you hang on that one for a moment, but let's begin with what should be a simplistic analysis here, what the Song of Solomon could possibly teach us in regards to the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ. Now remember this morning I addressed the fact that, yes, these are the writings of Solomon historically, but doctrinally speaking there is great evidence of a parallel going forward prophetically into the ministry of Jesus Christ. Let's begin in chapter 1 and, by the way, hopefully I've got all the information up on the screen, those of you online, it's going to be at the lower third. There's a lot of data here tonight as we just walk through the Song of Solomon.

Verses 5 and 6 talks about this character, that he is very comely and he is black, and that the inhabitants have done ill upon him. In fact, verse 6 of chapter 6 says, "Look not upon me because I am in this condition or I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me: my mother's children were angry with me." You know, it's interesting from the very beginning of the Song of Solomon makes it very clear that this character, those who should be in favor of him are actually contrary to him. You know, in Isaiah 52 there is this incredible section of Scripture, verses 14 through 17, that gives us a prophetic account of what the crucifixion actually looked like from a physical physiological perspective. It says that the visage or the appearance of Jesus Christ was worse than any other human, and when you begin to look at all that took place at the crucifixion, the beatings, the mocking, the whipping, the coming through the streets, the very fact that he had been up continuously for probably at least 72 hours, when he hung on that cross,

according to Isaiah 52 it did not even look like a human being was there. And yet here Song of Solomon begins by saying that he has this disposition, he has this appearance that's very negative, it's contrary, it's not appealing at all, and he has been rejected by the very people who should be in favor of him.

You know, the Gospel of John begins, chapter 1, verse 10, that Jesus Christ came unto his own but his own received him not, and it's really interesting when you look through the ministry of Jesus Christ, has it ever crossed your mind that the people who should have cheered for him the most criticized him the most. It was those who grew up in the synagogue, it was those who knew the Old Testament Scriptures. I mean, you think about it, there is no way that Jesus Christ could have been a self-fulfilled prophet. None of us get to choose the city we're born in, right? But yet the Scriptures say he would be born in Bethlehem and he fulfilled those Scriptures. By the age of two, he had gone into Egypt and he had come out. There is no way he could've orchestrated that on his own, yet the Scriptures pointed to it. In fact, when Herod who desired to end his life talked to the magi or the wise men, they pointed him, "The Scriptures say this..." The very Scriptures that the men, the Pharisees and the Sadducees and the scribes claimed to believe pointed to Jesus but they refused to believe he was the Messiah. And who was it that ultimately said, "Crucify him and let his blood be upon us and our children"? It was his own family of Jews.

So here at the very beginning of Song of Solomon, we have this individual who's gone through great physical peril, he's been rejected by his own. When we roll into chapter 2, some of you may start singing that old hymn, "The lily of the valley." It says, "I am the rose of Sharon. I am the lily of the valley. As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters." This individual, this Beloved is compared to the lily and because of that we have to go back into the book of Hosea, Hosea a part of that section known as the minor prophets. He's really what we call the lifestyle prophet. Hoses didn't do a whole lot of "Thus saith the Lord," the Lord spoke through Hosea and his mannerisms and his words and his interaction between him and Gomer, his wife, and buying her out of slavery and redeeming her there in chapter 6. But when you get to chapter 14 of Hosea, the very end of this incredible book of the Bible, that the Lord is referred to as the lily of the desert. Why is that important? If you've ever been to Israel, one thing you will know is this: they have more rocks than they know what to do with. It is a rocky place. It is a hilly place. In fact, in a lot of parts in the Middle East, in fact, the country of Turkey, it is actually contraband to steal a rock. In Israel the tour guides are giving you rocks, "Please take the rocks," because they're everywhere. But one thing that's interesting is that lily of the valley, remember that old song we used to sing back in the day? That lily will grow in any condition, in any climate, in any place in the Middle East. The reason he's called the rose of Sharon, he's called the lily of the valley, is referring to the fact that he is the Messiah for all people, at all places, at all times. And here this Beloved, this character is referred to, this imagery of the lily, one who loves the daughters. John 3:16, "For God so loved the world he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life."

By the time we come down to chapter 2, verse 6, there's an interesting statement that is made about the Beloved, made about the bridegroom. It says, "His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me." This imagery that we see all throughout the Old Testament even into the New Testament regarding the left hand and the right hand, and if you've ever been to the Middle East, if you've ever been in the Eastern culture, let me go ahead and verify something or warn you if you're about to go, if they'll ever release us to travel again, is do not extend your left hand for any reason whatsoever. The left hand is the dirty hand. The left hand is the nasty hand. The left hand is the non-respected hand. It is the right hand of authority. That's why in Matthew 25, Jesus says, "To those on my right hand, go to the kingdom prepared from everlasting. Those on my left hand, go into the lake of fire prepared for the devil and his angels." Why is that significant? Because this Beloved is referred to, this bridegroom is having the right hand, the left hand, that a decision must be rendered when it comes to how we respond to this bridegroom. The bride had to respond. When he says, "Come up here," do I go or do I stay? This is going to be important as we walk through the rest of what we know as the Song of Solomon.

Now that being said, as we enter into chapter 3, this is where 2 Timothy 2:15 is so critical. It says, "Study to show yourselves approved unto God, a workman that be not ashamed, rightly dividing the word of God." What we're going to address are three distinct entities that are all referenced by the person of whom we know as the bride. Now I'm going to walk through this in a timescale but let's just walk through it systematically or let's begin with what you and I now know as the church, the body of Christ. We know that formerly we were established at Pentecost. We know as we studied this morning there's coming a time where the voice of the Lord is going to shout, those who are dead in Christ and alive in Christ will be caught up to be with the Lord, but very strategically in Ephesians 5 in a passage that we often hear read at wedding ceremonies where it talks about the role of the wife and the role of the husband, and I like to remind the husband at the wedding that even though we like to focus on the role of the wife, the husband's role is three times as long as the role of the wife's. But nonetheless, when you get to the end in verse 32 it says, "Behold, I show you a mystery." And it's speaking about the church and the fact that the church, the body of Christ is not just composed of Jews, nor is it composed just of Gentiles, but it is actually composed of both.

Why is that important to chapters 3 and 4 and the first part of chapter 5 of Song of Solomon? Did you know that Solomon's bride was a Gentile? She was a Gentile bride. She was not Jewish, and so when you and I address what we know as the church or the body of Christ, when we look back on 2,000 years can we not agree that the majority of the body of Christ has been Gentile in nature? The majority of the body of Christ has come from a Gentile background and perspective. Now I want to be clear, the church is composed of any and all who confess and cry out on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ but we would have to agree that the Gentiles are the predominant ones. Don't you find it interesting that the bride in chapter 3 and 4 is clearly mentioned as what we know as a Gentile.

In chapters 3 and 4, verses 6 respectively, we studied this this morning, the Beloved in reference to the bride is described as coming with frankincense and myrrh, and as I alluded to this morning, when the magi or the wise men come at what we know as the Christmas story in the Gospel of Matthew, they bring gold, frankincense and myrrh. Now those are not only elements that physically and historically would have gotten Mary and Joseph and Jesus to and from Egypt but doctrinally speaking they represented that he was prophet, he was priest, and he was king. Do you find it interesting that the one element that is not addressed in his description to the bride is the gold or the king? Jesus Christ in our, I guess relating to him right now, he is, he is our priest. He is our intermediary. In 1 Timothy 2:5 it says there's only one man who can stand between us and God and that is the man Christ Jesus. According to Hebrews 10 and Hebrews 7, he is the one priest that doesn't have to make sacrifices on a regular daily basis because he made one sacrifice and then he sat down.

Jesus Christ is our priest, okay, and he's also, he's a prophet. Hebrews 1:1 says, "God in sundry times and diverse manners in times past spoke unto us by the prophets but now he speaks unto us by Jesus Christ." Jesus Christ is a prophet for all of us. He speaks truth into our lives. He is our priest. He is our intermediary between us and God. And even though I know what we mean when we say it, but the gold actually doesn't apply to the church. Jesus Christ is king when he returns at the end of the Bible with his body. We do not establish a kingdom apart from him. Now that's very important when we're walking through a picture of the body of Christ, particularly in Song of Solomon, that it could have easily mentioned gold, frankincense and myrrh but only frankincense and myrrh, that we, the body of Christ, would possess the offices and would possess the relationship of prophet and priest but not king.

A little side bar here. That's how we as believers get in a lot of trouble is when we try to establish a kingdom without the king being Jesus Christ. That's how a lot of the atrocities that have been attributed to Christianity throughout the ages, the Crusades for one, because a kingdom was attempted to be established without the king being present. The role of the body of Christ is to prophesy the need for Jesus Christ to be the priest in people's lives.

Chapter 4, verses 1 through 7, the description. Remember the picture I showed you this morning of this gorgeous young lady that's described here in chapter 4 who has hair like goats, teeth like sheep, she has a neck like an ivory tower? I've never seen a greeting card for Valentine's with this description at all. It is a picture not just of the outside but more importantly the inside of who this character, who this bride is, more than an outward appearance, an inward reality. You know what's interesting? You and I look at that description and it's not appealing at all, and I understand from a physical perspective, but she is described by the Beloved without spot. There's no error in her. There's no taintedness in her.

Why is that significant? That little book of Jude, that one chapter book of the Bible right before the book of Revelation, verse 24, it says one day Jesus will present us faultless to the Father. He took on our iniquities. He took on our fault. He took on our transgressions.

He took on all of that which is so uncomely. And so this description that we have, it's very intriguing to look at all the aspects of how she, the bride, is described. Do you find it interesting that there's no error at all, there's no mistake, there's no frailty, there's no problems just as the church is through Christ?

When you get to verses 10 through 16 of chapter 4, you have the response of the bride to the Beloved. In verse 10 she says that he is better than any other, and I know we love to say that and that's kind of one of those Sunday school answers that Jesus is better than anything else. I'd rather have Jesus than silver or gold. I'd rather have him than riches untold. I surrender all, all to Jesus I surrender. I could sing all those great invitation songs and hymns but at the end of the day, do we really mean that even though we believe that? The bride says, "He is better than anything else."

Verse 15, we alluded to this this morning, she refers to him as possessing living waters. Just as Jesus told us in John 4 when he was with the woman at the well, that the water that she drew from would one day go away, but the water that he had to offer would be living and without end.

But it's verse 16 that I want to call your attention to in light of what we know as the Second Coming. It says, "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." I put on the outline the aspect of a wind or what we'd call the "rapture," and I know when we use that term "rapture" there's some people that get kind of sideways about that because the word is not actually in the Bible but the word means "to be caught up." In Acts 8, Philip witnesses to the Ethiopian eunuch, then he is caught up to go to another place. 1 Thessalonians 4 says there's a day coming when the voice of the Lord declares those who are dead in Christ and alive in Christ will be caught up to meet him in the air. And here it says, "O wind, come, take me."

There is this crying out of the bride that the Beloved is better, he possesses living waters, and she cries for him to catch her up to be with him, and as we studied this morning in chapter 2, twice the Beloved says, "My love, arise and come to me."

In chapter 5, verse 1, it says, "I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse: I have planted my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." You see, in chapter 5, verse 1, whom we know as the bride of chapter 3 and 4 has come unto the Beloved. She is with him as it describes in the garden. She is enjoying communion with him. She is enjoying his company.

Why is that important and here's where we have to go back to 2 Timothy 2:15? When we get into chapters 5 and 6, the bride and the Beloved are going to continue their communication, here's the thing I want you to notice" from a doctrinal perspective it's different. The bride of chapter 3 and 4 has desired the company of the Beloved, she has said that he is better, he possesses living waters, she cries for him to call her up, and when you get to chapter 5, verse 1, she, the bride, is with him. It's interesting when we

pick up the story in verse 2. It says, "I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, 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. I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them? My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him. I rose up to open to my beloved; and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock." Listen to verse 6, "I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone." Now do you find that interesting? In verse 1 of chapter 5, they're enjoying their time in the garden, all is good, everything she desired is happening and next thing you know, he's gone, he can't be found.

Where is he even though he is desired and he is sought after? And this is where we really get into what I would call the Second Coming aspects of what we know as the Song of Solomon and I put it on the outline, the possibility of "tribulational saints." Now let me back it up for just a minute and give a little background here. You and I today as it stands are a part as believers of the body of Christ. Beginning at Pentecost the Holy Spirit was poured out and from that time up until today any who call on the name of the Lord are his sons, his daughters, his children, his family, his bride, and his body. But according to 1 Thessalonians 4, 1 Corinthians 15 and other and sundry passages, there is a time coming where the dead in Christ and the alive in Christ will be caught up together with him and Jesus Christ said in Matthew 24 there's a day coming worse than any other day in history since the creation of the world, and Jesus Christ called it the Great Tribulation, a reference to the ninth chapter of the book of Daniel where the people of God specifically the Jewish people, what we might call the Israelites, the tribes of Judah, undergo a series of events for according to Daniel 9, for seven years. The first 3 ½ years of that tribulation period is somewhat a time of peace according to Daniel 9. There is a contract or a covenant that is signed with whom we know as the Antichrist allowing them to work alongside each other, to exist and to help each other. But midway through this Great Tribulation, there is an event referred to in Daniel and in 2 Thessalonians 2 as the abomination of desolation where whom we know as the Antichrist goes into the temple of God and declares that he is God, and then the last part of that seven years, forgive me for saying it but it's biblically true, it is just hell on earth.

Now why is that important? Because what we see as far as the interaction of his people with himself in the tribulation, it's very different than what we see as far as the church is concerned. Now lest you find that a stretch, can we all agree that being a part of the church is different than being a part of the Old Testament saints? Did any of you bring your turtledoves tonight to sacrifice? No. Why? Because in the Jewish temple expression you had to bring a sacrifice, you had to bring atonement, you had to bring those things to be right with God. Thankfully Jesus Christ is our Lamb who was slain and we don't have to. You know, when you study that end part of the Bible, that Great Tribulation, it talks about a temple again, it talks about courts again, it talks about sacrifice again, it talks about the 12 tribes again. We don't have to worry about the 12 tribes today. People say, "What tribe are you a part of?" I'm a part of Jesus' tribe, okay? I don't need to worry about those things but when you look at these Second Coming passages, it is relevant

again. Why is that important? Because in chapter 5, verse 6, there's the absence of the Beloved. There's no answer. It's almost as if she's crying out saying, "I'm really interested now." But he doesn't reply.

In 2 Thessalonians 2, for the sake of time just allow me to allude to it versus turning to it, it talks about this Antichrist figure, this son of perdition, this man of sin whom the Bible refers to as the beast. It says that the only thing holding him back is what the Bible refers to as the restrainer, and when the restrainer is removed, then the mystery of iniquity can take over. The only power, the only authority that can withhold the enemy himself is the Spirit of God and one day when those are dead in Christ and alive in Christ, when we are caught up to be with him, guess how and why we're caught up. Because it is the Spirit of God that dwells within us, we are his temple.

I don't want to chase too many rabbits tonight but you know in the history of Israel there's never been more than one temple and in Revelation 11, if they're going to build a temple in Jerusalem, why would there need to be a temple of the Holy Spirit within you? There's never competing temples. There was a temple in Jerusalem, now you and I, the church, are the temple of the Holy Spirit. There's coming a day where it's almost as if we return to the Old Testament except Jesus called it the Great Tribulation.

There is an absence of the Beloved. In verse 7 there is a watchman or one who is looking out for them who turns on them. I described that, that's exactly what the Antichrist does. He makes a covenant with the people of God during this time period. He tells them, "Hey, it's okay. I'm on your side. Let's work hand-in-hand." And then when he goes into that temple and declares he is God. Do you know what Jesus said in verse 15 of Matthew 24? On that day, run for the hills. Get out, not of Dodge, get out of Jerusalem and get out now.

He says, "Woe unto you who have little children and pray that it's not on the Sabbath day." Now that's interesting. Why would Jesus say pray it's not on the Sabbath day? How does that impact you and I? It doesn't but it sure would impact a law-abiding Jew who's trying to do his best to bring the proper sacrifice to the temple, would it not? And so therefore you have this language, this imagery of this watchman.

In verse 8 of chapter 5 it says, "How shall I find him? How shall I know?" Now we alluded to this, this morning. Chapter 5, verses 10 through 15, there is this physical description of the Beloved and I know historically it is Solomon and I understand that, but doctrinally speaking there are a lot of folks who have gone back and said, "That's a pretty accurate description of what Jesus Christ would have looked like." He would have been ruddy in nature, strong in nature, dark hair, dark eyes. He was born within the Jewish context of genealogical studies.

Why is that important? How often, and I'm being sarcastic here, in the Scriptures were the Jewish people good at following the right guy? Let's go back to the Old Testament for a moment. You know they wanted a king, did they not? What was it about Saul that they loved? He was head and shoulders above everybody else. When David was anointed by

Samuel, his own dad said, "Nah, that can't be the guy. There's no way. He doesn't look right." Well, Jesus showed up on the scene, as a whole they rejected him, right? He did not appear, he did not look the way they wanted him to yet, you know, it's ironic he did everything they desired him to do. He walked on water. He multiplied food. He healed the sick and the lame. Everything that Isaiah 61 said the Messiah would do, he did right in front of them but he did not look the part.

I must confess to you that one of my favorite books and subsequent movies that my children and I watched again this week is what we know as "Moneyball." If you're not familiar with "Moneyball," it's a baseball movie. It's about the Oakland A's of the early 2000s, the poorest of all the ball clubs, who implemented a new strategy to try to compete with the rich ball clubs. One of the reasons that I love the story of "Moneyball" is that Billy Beane, who was the general manager of the A's at the time, broke with tradition and tradition was that they selected players based on how they appeared and not based on what they actually produced and there's a difference. There's this great scene where they're sitting around the table and they're discussing who are they going to draft, and he mentions a guy's name and one of the scouts says, "Oh, he looks real good, looks good in jeans, has got a good-looking girlfriend." And Billy Beane says, "What does that have to do with playing baseball?" In other words, humanity gets so caught up in what they see they don't see the substance.

Why is that important? They can't find him because they're looking for someone who appears the way they want him to look. Did you know right now you can go to YouTube, social media sites, there are rabbis in Jerusalem who right now are praying for the appearance of the Messiah. There is one rabbi who claims that he meets with him once a week. I promise you he doesn't look like this passage we just read. They have a history and a propensity, they're going to follow the Antichrist because he looks the way they want him to look, and here in chapter 5, they can't find him because he doesn't look the way they want him to.

In chapter 6, verse 8, it's what I call the remnant. It says, "There are threescore," or 60, "queens, and fourscore," or 80, "concubines, and virgins without number." You know, those are identifiers that are never used to describe the church. We're never described in that terminology but the Jewish people are. Those are terminology that the Bible uses to describe those within the Jewish faith but never the church. Matthew 25 has that famous parable of the 10 virgins. Remember the ones that don't have the oil and they come back and they're not prepared to meet their husband when he returns? The Second Coming imagery again.

You get to chapter 7, this is where I want to call your attention to something. We're not going to read the totality here. Chapter 7 is a description of a woman. In the context historically of Song of Solomon, it's the same woman, okay? This is Solomon's bride. But doctrinally speaking, I want you to notice that it is a very different description of the one in chapter 4. Here it talks about her belly, it talks about her navel, it talks about these different things, and you cannot take the two images and put them together. In fact, this morning I showed you kind of that funny image of chapter 4, what appears to be

somewhat this hideous woman that's described. You know, what's funny is you don't ever see anybody drawing chapter 7 because we just assume that it's the same person but as you begin to walk through, it cannot be the same person because she's described very differently than the one in chapter 4.

Now why is that important for our study tonight? Because whom we know as the saints of the tribulation are described very differently than what we call the saints of the church. Romans 10 says whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. When you get in that tribulational period in Revelation 12, it says they loved Jesus and did his commandments. That's kind of a different description. And so what we see here are two ladies both with a relationship to the Beloved but they're different. Now historically it's still the bride of Solomon so don't mess that up, but doctrinally speaking I think the Bible is giving us evidence that chapters 3 and 4 and chapter 5, verse 1, that's what we know as the church. Moving onward in chapters 5, 6 and 7, these are these tribulational saints. In fact, when you get to verses 10 through 12, it talks about all this agricultural imagery and, you know, when you go into that context known as the tribulation, when you look at the Second Coming passages, you know there's a lot of agricultural imagery. It talks about reaping and harvesting and gathering the wheat of the field. You know that's never a reference to the church? The church isn't utilized in an agricultural sense at all. The Jewish people are and the tribulational saints are but the church as a whole is never referenced as an agricultural entity needing to be harvested. We don't have to be harvested but those in those days do.

By the time you get to chapter 8, verses 3 and 4, again it talks about the left hand and the right, and let's talk about those "tribulational saints." You do realize that they have a decision to make as well for as they walk through that period of time that Jesus called worse than any other, they must make a decision, "Do I follow this leader of the world who is forcing me to take a certain mark, we call it the mark of the beast, without which I cannot buy, I cannot sell, I cannot do commerce, I cannot live life, or do I believe in Jesus of Nazareth and most likely lose my own physical life?" You know that's an important question to ask. In today's world, now I know that martyrdom is real, I know persecution is real, but what the church today is dealing with is nothing compared to what these folks will deal with. In fact, in Revelation 6 it talks about the martyrs that are under the throne of God, in other words, the propensity of people that lose their life during what we know as the tribulation is greater than those whose lives are spared. Again, a decision must be made.

In conclusion tonight, I mentioned that there is one historical bride of Solomon but I think there's evidence of a variety of doctrinal brides, if you'll allow me to use that word, what we call the church and what we might call these tribulational saints. I want you to notice verses 8 and 9 of chapter 8. Notice the first word, "We." That's an interesting pronoun to use for a bride. It says, "We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts: what shall we do for our sister in the day when she shall be spoken for? If she be a wall, we will build upon her a palace of silver: and if she be a door, we will inclose her with boards of cedar." Then in verse 10 it says, "I am a wall." Do y'all find that interesting the changing of pronouns here? That here is this one who we've just spoken of, what I

believe is a reference to these tribulational saints, saying "We." Well, who would "we" be? Well, I think that would be a reference not only to the woman of chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 but also the woman of 3 and 4, and I put on here and a question mark: could it be, or could it be speaking of what you and I would call the millennial saints? I know we've tossed around a lot of language tonight and forgive me for the fire hydrant of information, but there is coming a day where Jesus Christ is going to descend to the earth with his army, that's you and I, his people behind him, he's going to establish a kingdom on the earth according to Revelation 20 for a thousand years, whom we know as Satan will be bound in the bottomless pit for a thousand years, and those who rejected the mark, those who lasted through that horrific time period known as the Great Tribulation are going to enter into this kingdom that we call the millennium because six times in seven verses it's called a thousand years. The Bible says in the book of Isaiah that they will have children that will still be young even when they're hundreds of years of age.

If there's one thing I know, it is this: we know very little about those millennial saints. A lot of times people like to ask questions, particularly on Wednesday night, what's that gonna look like? How long will people live? How do they render this? How do they make a decision? Whatever it may be. And there's one thing I know, it's that we don't know a whole lot. Notice it says there in verse 8 that she is absent of some critical parts that the others possess. You know, the difference in a millennial saint than any other saint is this: they have never known the opportunity to be tempted into sin. I mean, right now we're in the book of Job, the enemy whom we know as Satan, he's running to and fro on all the earth and many of you will testify he's made a good wreck of things, has he not? In the Great Tribulation, he makes an incredible wreck of things but during the millennium he's bound for a thousand years. There is finally world peace that humanity has always desired.

As we conclude tonight, though, I do want to take you to Revelation 20 for just a moment. I know there's not a whole lot mentioned about these millennial saints. I believe in Song of Solomon she is called the little sister that is not like us. But in Revelation 20, I want to begin in verse 7, the thousand years of Jesus' reign is going to come to a conclusion. Now I want to talk about the "brides" that we've talked about in the passage tonight. The church, the body of Christ, has been reigning with Christ during these thousand years. These tribulational saints that were there on the earth when the Lord descended, they were the "subjects of the reign," they were prospering in the earth. And then there were these that were born and are alive in the millennium that have never known temptation. Verse 7, it says, "when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." The reason I wanted to take you to that passage in conclusion tonight is that you and I, I believe, have a great privilege of having the opportunity of being a part of the body of Christ. I think the Bible speaks that even in the midst of a time period that Jesus called the Great Tribulation there is the opportunity to be classified as a saint or a believer in the Lord. And though we don't know a whole lot,

the Bible speaks of those even in the millennium that will be born during a time of great peace and no opportunity for "temptation from the tempter," but at the end of the day every single one of us no matter when we're born and what age or stage that we're around, we must render a decision. In this day, choose you this day whom you will serve. We must make a decision is it Jesus or is it something else? In what we know as the tribulation it's the Antichrist or Jesus, you pick. And at the end of the millennium do you find it interesting that Satan, yes, will come and he will deceive humanity again.

You see, it doesn't matter when, where or how, we must all render a decision. I believe that the Song of Solomon shows us a prophetic picture of the days ahead, how the Lord works with his people at different stages and different ages, but even at different times there is one commonality, we must render a verdict for whom we believeth on, Jesus Christ or somebody else. And as you continue to read the book of Revelation 20, the consequences are very grave for those who would choose otherwise.

As we've been in a time of a COVID world, particularly here on Sunday nights, we have not had a formal physical response invitation time but for those of you here in person, even those of you watching online, let me remind you that we have several phone numbers that are available at all times, at all hours. The easiest one is our text message number. It's 334-231-2313. At any time if you just send a text and say, "Hey, I need to pray with somebody. I need to talk with somebody. Can somebody help me?" 334-231-2313. We would be glad to talk to you, to pray with you, address whatever situation that has come up in your life or any decision that needs to be rendered.

But as we close tonight, let us not only be grateful that we have the privilege of being the body of Christ but let us also be mindful that all people in all stages must render a verdict for Jesus Christ.