

THE CHURCH RESERVED FOR CHRIST

(Part Two)

TEXT: Song of Solomon 4:9-15

INTRODUCTION: Whoever the “bridegroom” is in the literal, historical context of this great love-poem, he is praising his “spouse” in this passage because she has reserved herself for him alone. How can we not see Christ here in His exclusive ownership of His “Bride,” the Church? Christ is to be found “*in all the Scriptures*” (Luke 24:27). That includes the Song of Solomon. After receiving praise from the spouse in earlier verses, the rustic lover is heaping praise upon her. He returns the compliment, as it were, and says in effect, “You have praised me. I will praise you.” Christ sees His own beauty in the Church, and He values her for her love, her graces, her words, her thoughts, and her works. Shall we not as members of the Bride of Christ respond to His calling us, “*my sister, my spouse*” by saying, “*My brother, my husband*”? He is our “brother,” our near-Kinsman, Who has purchased us with His own blood. Everything we are and have belong to Him.

OUTLINE: What praise does Christ heap upon the Church that should encourage us to individually keep ourselves only for Him?

I. The Church Is SPECIAL. (“*my sister, my spouse*”)

A. “*My sister*” – His by **birth** (Matt. 12:50)

B. “*My spouse*” – His by **choice**

1. Christ paid a dear price for us (Eph. 5:25)

2. Christ puts His own beauty upon us (Ps. 45:11; Rev. 21:2).

3. Therefore He values us

a. For our love (“*how fair is thy love...*”)

b. For our graces (“*The smell of thine ointments [is much better] than all spices*”)

c. For our words (“*Thy lips...drop as the honeycomb*”)

d. For our thoughts (“*honey and milk are under thy tongue*”)

e. For our works (“*and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon*”)

II. The Church is SECURE. (“*a garden inclosed...a spring shut up, a fountain sealed*”)

A. The Lord has “*set apart him that is godly for himself*” (Ps. 4:3).

1. He hides us (Col. 3:3).

2. He guards us (John 10:28, 29; Isa. 54:17).

B. It is the Lord Himself Who preserves us (Isa. 27:3; 49:15; John 15:1).

III. The Church is SEPARATE. (A “garden” is a plot separated from the common ground around it).

A. We are called out from the world (v. 8; 2 Cor. 6:17).

B. Separation is not isolation, but following the example of Christ (Heb. 7:26).

C. Separation implies reservation (“*a garden inclosed...a spring shut up, a fountain sealed*”)

CONCLUSION: We are to be separated from the world because we belong to Jesus! We are “**reserved**” for Him. But our sense of security must not translate into indifference and indolence. We are “*hid with Christ*,” but Christ is not to be hid in us. “We are not to bear fruit for the market, but for the Master’s table” (Spurgeon). God does not put His plants in a greenhouse, but in the open air. The Church is not a country club but a rescue squad. Verse 15 teaches us that what we are to Christ before God we should become before men. Whatever we do among men, however, let us be sure that **‘all for Jesus’** is our motto.

