

NOTES ON THE SONG OF SOLOMON (1:2-4)

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The Banquet (1:2-2:7)

[The Shulamite]

1:2 Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth –

1. She does not identify “Him”! For there is no need to identify Him. The church of Christ desires the kiss of only Him. She is not a harlot desiring the kiss of many men.
 2. She desires “the *kisses* of his mouth”. One kiss is not nearly enough! As all our gospel-duty is summed up in our kissing Him with the kiss of submission (Psalm 2:12), so is all His gospel-grace summed up in Him kissing us with the kiss of love. Therefore, Christ’s church desires to be kissed often by Him.
- ... **for your love is better than wine.** | (The Hebrew word here translated “love” is plural, and is better translated “loves”.) God gave wine to men to gladden their hearts (Psalm 104:15). But Christ’s love to His church is even better! It is:
1. *divine* – for “God is love” (1 John 4:8, 16) – and Christ is God!
 2. *eternal* – for Christ tells His church that “I have loved you with an *everlasting* [or *eternal*] love” (Jeremiah 31:3). His love to her is everlasting *backward into the past*, for He loved her from old eternity, when He first embraced her and she was “accepted in the Beloved” (Ephesians 1:6). His love to her is everlasting *in the present*, for He says to saints of every age “therefore with loving kindness I have drawn you” (Jeremiah 31:3b), and saints of every age confess Him as “Him who loves us” (Revelation 1:5 – Greek text has present tense). His love to her is everlasting *forward into the future*, for throughout eternity she will be embraced by Him in heaven.
 3. *immutable*. Wine either improves with age or turns sour. But Christ’s love to His church is ever the same, for “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8).
 4. *pure*. The best wine may have dregs and lees (Isaiah 25:6). But there are none in Christ’s love to His church, for His love to her is as pure as He Himself is – “and in Him there is no sin” (1 John 3:5).
 5. *immeasurable* – for “the love of Christ ... passes knowledge” (Ephesians 3:19). And He gives His love to His church copiously, “because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts” (Romans 5:5 – and Christ is God).
 6. *free*. Men purchase wine. But Christ’s love cannot be bought. Rather, He assures His people that “I will love them *freely*” (Hosea 14:4). His love is as freely bestowed to His church as the sunshine that brightens our days and the air that we breathe.
 7. *medicinal*. As the wine of the Good Samaritan healed wounds of the *body* (Luke 10:33f), so does Christ’s love heal wounds of the *heart*. This also is indicated in the text just cited (Hosea 14:4), where Christ’s promise “I will love them freely” is joined with “I will heal their backsliding.” Also, in Christ is found the greatest proof that “love covers all sins” (Proverb 10:12).

8. *longsuffering* – for “Love suffers long and is kind” and “bears all things” (1 Corinthians 13:4, 7). This is good to know when Christ’s wife needs patience from Him.
9. *unfailing* – for “Love never fails” (1 Corinthians 13:8). Christ will never cease to love His church. And nothing will ever separate her from His love (Romans 8:35-39): “35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written [in Psalm 44:22]: ‘For Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.’ 37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. 38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
10. *sacrificial and saving* – for “Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish” (Ephesians 5:25-27).

1:3 Because of the fragrance of your good ointments, ...

1. Christ’s ointments are *many* and *great* – as indicated by the plurality in “your good ointments”.
 - i. As oil was used for anointing to a sacred office (prophet, priest, king), so are Christ’s people told “you have an anointing from the Holy One” (1 John 2:20, 27).
 - ii. As oil was used for brightening the countenance (Ecclesiastes 9:8; Matthew 6:17), so has Christ given to us “the oil of joy for mourning” (Isaiah 61:3).
 - iii. As oil was used for healing wounds (Luke 10:34), so has Christ exhorted His people to “anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see” (Revelation 3:18) – through obeying the gospel.
 2. But the emphasis here is on Christ’s *perfuming* ointments – as indicated by their “fragrance”. Christ’s fragrance is mentioned repeatedly is this Song:
 - i. “A bundle of myrrh is my beloved to me” (1:13);
 - ii. He is “perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all the merchant’s fragrant powders” (3:6);
 - iii. “His cheeks are like a bed of spices, banks of scented herbs” (5:13a);
 - iv. “His lips are lilies, dripping liquid myrrh” (5:13b).
- ... **Your name is ointment poured forth; ...**
1. Christ’s “name” is whom and what He is – as in “The name of Jehovah is a strong tower” (Proverb 18:10).
 2. Christ is “ointment poured forth” – copiously, as it were – through the preaching of His gospel, through which believers receive “the fragrance of His knowledge” (2 Corinthians 2:14). If you believe Christ’s gospel, you know Him as the sweetest fragrance you ever smelled.
- Furthermore, Christ’s preachers are “the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading

to life” (2 Corinthians 2:15f). Gospel rejecters despise the fragrance of Christ diffused by Christ’s preachers. But gospel believers love it.

... **Therefore the virgins love you.** | These “virgins” are individual members of Christ’s church, His Shulamite. They became virgins when they first believed Christ’s gospel. And they have been sniffing and loving Him ever since.

1:4 Draw me away! ...

1. Christ’s people are not Freewillers claiming the inherent inclination and ability to desert sin and come to Him if and when they will to do so.
2. Rather, they believe Christ when He says “you are not willing to come to Me” (John 5:40) and “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him” (John 6:44, 65).
3. Christ’s church therefore implores “Draw me away!”
 - i. *From* what are we drawn? From Satan’s prison, sin’s bondage, worldly pleasures, and all that is contrary to Christ.
 - ii. *With* what are we drawn? Jesus says “With lovingkindness I have drawn you ... with gentle cords, with bands of love” (Jeremiah 31:3 & Hosea 11:4). No one is forcibly dragged to Jesus with hard chains or harsh ropes.

[The Daughters of Jerusalem]

... **We will run after you.** ... | Here note:

1. this pursuit’s *subjects*: “We will run after you.” Here is a pronoun change from the *first person singular* “me” to the *second person plural* “we”. The speakers are the same, for the church is a congregation of individuals. *We begin* running after Christ as *individuals*; we *continue* running after Christ as a *congregation*. And we do not wish to run after Him alone. We therefore exhort others to run with us.
2. this pursuit’s *object*: “We will run after Christ.” All who are drawn away to Christ from all that is contrary to Christ pursue Christ alone. And they never let Him out of their sight.
3. this pursuit’s *action*: “We will run after you.” No one ambles toward Christ, nor dawdles along the way. Even if we know it is a long-distance run, we treat it as a dash.
4. this pursuit’s *determination*: “We will run after you.” We will not be deterred in our pursuit of Christ. Rather, we will “run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith” (Hebrews 12:1f).
5. this pursuit’s *direction*: “We will run after you.” If Christ draws us, we will not – nay we cannot – run from Him.

[The Shulamite]

... **The king has brought me his chambers.** ... | When God’s chosen people cry to Christ “Draw me away” – He does! When Christ draws them away, they exclaim “We will run after you.” After they reach Him, they say “The king has brought me into his chambers.” Here note that:

1. Christ is here identified as “the king”.
 - i. In His relationship to the *world*, He is “the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords”

(1 Timothy 6:15; cp. Revelation 17:14 & 19:16). And He will let them have no other to be so.

- ii. In His relationship to the *church*, He is “King of the saints” (Revelation 15:3). And she desires no other to be so.
2. Christ brings His church into “his chambers”. The Hebrew word here translated “chambers” denotes an inward or innermost room. It generally means the bedroom (as in 3:4). Why would Christ usher His church into His bedroom? To consummate their marriage – of course! And He brings no other woman into His chambers.
 3. Christ’s church *willingly accompanied* Him into His bedroom – for this is implied in “The king has brought me into his chambers.” He royally ushered her into His bedroom. He did not have to force her to come with Him.

[The Daughters of Jerusalem]

... **We will be glad and rejoice in you.** ...

1. Our *gladness* is our *inward feeling toward* Christ.
2. Our *rejoicing* is our *outward expression regarding* Christ.
3. Our gladness and rejoicing are in *Christ alone!*
-- All these elements are expressed in Isaiah 61:10: “I will greatly rejoice [outwardly] in Jehovah, my soul [the inward part] shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.”

... **We will remember your love more than wine.** ...

1. “Wine” here represents what God gives to us to gladden our hearts – for “He [gives] wine that makes glad the heart of man” (Psalm 104:13f).
2. Christ’s love is *better* than wine – for it is remembered “more than wine”. Christ’s love to us is dearer to us than the greatest earthly treasure or pleasure.
3. Christ’s love is *commemorated with praises*. The Hebrew word here translated by the single word “remember” fails to fully express the meaning of this phrase. It would be better translated “We will *commemorate with praises* your love more than wine.” We commemorate with praises the wine God has given to us to gladden our hearts; but we will commemorate with *more* praises Christ’s love to us.
4. Compare this phrase with verse 2: “Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth – for your love is better than wine.” Then, the church desired to be kissed by Christ because she *assumed* that His love is better than wine. Now, having been kissed by Christ, the church praises His love because she *knows* it is better than wine.

[The Shulamite]

... **Rightly do they love you.** | Scholars are divided whether this phrase should be translated “Rightly do they love you” or “The upright love you.” Both translations are theologically correct. Let us join them together so that they read “The righteous rightly love Christ!” Do you?