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EXPLORING THE SCRIPTURES WEEK # 24 A GUIDEⁱ TO SONG OF SOLOMON

These 8 chapters, 117 verses and 2661 words in the Hebrew Bible called Song of Solomon are the 5th of the Hebrew Wisdom Books called the MEGILLOTH. Each were read at one of the Jewish Feasts. Esther at Purim, Lamentations at unleavened bread; Ecclesiastes at Tabernacles; Song of Solomon at Passover and Ruth at Pentecost!

But what does this difficult book teach us? There are four enduring views:

1. It sets forth the "glory of wedded love"; declaring the sacredness of marital relationship, and that marriage is a divine institution.
2. It sets forth the love of Jehovah for Israel. The prophets spoke of Israel as the wife of Jehovah.
These two interpretations have been set forth by the Scribes and Rabbis of Israel, and have been accepted by the church. However, there are two other interpretations.
3. It is a picture of Christ and the Church. The Church is the bride of Christ, a familiar figure of Scripture (2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:27; Rev. 21).
4. It depicts the communion of Christ and the individual believer.
The soul's communion with Christ is here set forth.

Many Christians would deny this little book a place in the canon of sacred Scripture, primarily on a charge of lack of modesty. Actually it is very modest when compared to Oriental poetry in general. It is insisted that there is nothing herein that would offend the most modest Oriental. We might add that neither will it offend the Occidental if they but come to see the aim and intent of the teaching therein.

Though there have been a variety of interpretations of "The Song," we shall only take into consideration one, That those who are "accepted in the beloved" have a path to follow. A path that may bring joy or sorrow while here. It is a very PRACTICAL BOOK.

There are three outstanding characters in the book., that of the Lord Jesus, then those who belong to Him., and the "daughters of Jerusalem" who typify those who are professing but not possessing Christians.

This is a difficult book to OUTLINE., there being so many conversations in so short a portion. Let us take a simple though not entirely satisfying one. It is that of Hudson Taylor's little book "UNION and COMMUNION".

- I. THE CHARACTERS ARE INTRODUCED (The Unsatisfied Life and Its Remedy) Section One (1:2-2:7) with the unsatisfied longings of an espoused one. Longings which could only be met by her unreserved surrender to the Bridegroom of her soul-we find that when the surrender was made, instead of the cross he had so much feared she found a King, e King of Love, who both satisfied her deepest longings, and found His own satisfaction in her.
 - A. First *she talks about him* and then *she talks about herself*. (1:3-4) These are the two most interesting persons in the world to one in love! Let there be a thousand people present, the lovers have eyes only for each other. The Shulamite reminds herself of *the magnificence of his presence*: "Because of the savor of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth." Darby translates it: "Thine ointments savor sweetly: Thy name is as an ointment poured forth." It is significant that God, for the most part and especially in the Old Testament, revealed Himself to men by means of His names. Elohim! Adonai! Jehovah! The Old

Testament saints fell in love with those names, especially the name Jehovah; and in so doing they fell in love with Him of whom the names so eloquently spoke. They wrote them down under the guiding impulse of the Holy Spirit again and again, this way and that:

1. Jehovah-jireh-The LORD Who Provides (Genesis 22:14)
2. Jehovah-Nissi-The LORD Our Banner-The LORD Who Protects (Exodus 17:15)
3. Jehovah-Shalom-The LORD Who Gives Peace (Judges 6:24)
4. Jehovah-Tsidkenu-The LORD Our Righteousness-The LORD Who Pardons (Jeremiah 23:6; 33:16)
5. Jehovah-Shammah-The LORD Who Is There-The LORD Who Is Present (Ezekiel 48:35)
6. Jehovah-Roi-The LORD My Shepherd-The LORD Who Pastors (Psalm 23:1)
7. Jehovah-Mekkadishkem-The LORD Who Sanctifies-The LORD Who Purifies (Exodus 31:13)
8. Jehovah-Ropheka-The LORD Who Heals-The LORD The Physician (Exodus 15:26)
9. Jehovah-Sabaoth-The LORD Of Hosts-The LORD Of All Power (I Samuel 1:3)
10. Jehovah-Elyon-The LORD Most High-The LORD Who Is Preeminent (Psalm 7:17; 47:2)

B. To the Old Testament saints the name Jehovah was an ointment poured forth shedding its fragrance over all. New Testament saints think of Him as JESUS. If ever there was a name that, as ointment poured forth," shed a fragrance over all of human life it is the name of Jesus!

1. It is the saving name: "Thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).
2. It is the sanctifying name. We are to do all things, in word and deed, in the name of the Lord Jesus (c.f. Colossians 3:1 7).
3. It is the sovereign name. "At the name of Jesus every knee should bow" (Philippians 2: 1 0). It is the name that charms our fears and bids our sorrows cease." It is the name that, as "music in the sinner's ears, brings life and health and peace."

There is no name so sweet on earth
 No name so sweet in Heaven,
 The name before His wondrous birth,
 To Christ the Savior given.

GEORGE W. BETHUNE

- C. THE SUPPLY OF LOVE [1:7] "And where do You *rest* the flock?"
1. How we need *food* and *rest*. These two things are found with the Good Shepherd. "He satisfied them with *BREAD* from heaven" (Psa. 105:40).
 2. He said, "Come unto me.... I will give you *REST*" (Mat. 11:28) "There remaineth therefore *A REST* to the people of God" (Heb. 4:9).
 3. "Bread of Heaven, feed me till I want no more."; "Jesus, I am resting, resting in the joy of what Thou art."
- D. EGYPTIAN CHARIOT HORSES 1:9 These wild horses from Egypt (which, as we know, is a type of the world) are now broken, trained, transformed and now pressed into royal service. In a study of I Kings 4:26 and 10:29 we observe that Solomon was quite a "horse-

trader". Evidently he loved horses. He had whole cities given over to stabling his horses (I Kings 9:19). Think of it, he bought 40,000 chariot horses from Egypt. That's a lot of horse flesh! He paid high prices for those handsome animals - 150 shekels a piece. (I Kings 10:28,29). Four things may be stated about these chariot horses as we would gather lessons for our souls:

1. *They Were A "Company"* vs-9 Though the bride of Christ is "one" yet she is made up of "a company'.... 1 Corinthians 12:20 But now indeed [there are] many members, yet one body. (NKJV)
2. *One Day These Horses Were Wild* vs.-9 Since they were originally Pharaoh's horses and from Egypt, they were from the world. In our lost estate we belonged to the world. Ephesians 2:1-3 And you [He made alive,] who were dead in trespasses and sins, 2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, 3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. (NKJV)
3. *But They Were Now Bought* Having been redeemed at a high cost they came under a new Master. Bless God for redemption through the Blood! 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit [who is] in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in

your body and in your spirit, which are God's. (NKJV)

4. *Now Harnessed And Enlisted* We, too, are in the chariot-service of our Monarch. "There is joy in serving Jesus." Philippians 1:1 Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: (NKJV)
- E. HER COMPARISON 1:12-14 Now the conversation shifts and it is the Shunamite who is speaking. The verses of this section have to do with *fragrance and beauty* for here we have spices with a strong and very sweet aroma as well as beautiful camphire (which was the henna flowers so abundant in Palestine). Let us take a moment to examine these three fragrances that were meant for her Bridegroom as He "sat at his table" (vs.-12)
1. *SPIKENARD* vs.-12 Spikenard was a fragrant ointment gathered from an East India plant. The spikenard was taken from its fibrous root. This spice is mentioned three times in the Song of Solomon (1: 12; 4:13,14) and twice in the New Testament (Mark 14:3; John 12:3). We recall that Mary brought her "very costly" box of spikenard to anoint the body of the Lord Jesus. Spikenard imported from India came in carefully sealed alabaster jars. Only when wealthy people had special guests would they break the seal of a costly jar to anoint their friends. What an act of devotion if was for Mary when she broke the alabaster box and poured it on His head (Mk. 14:3). Evidently this Shunamite broke her box of ointment "while the king was sitting at his table."

2. *MYRRH* vs.-13 Myrrh is mentioned several times in the Old Testament (Cf. Gen. 37:25; 43:1 1). It is also mentioned in the New Testament. Wise men brought it as a gift to Jesus at His birth (Mat. 2). Our Lord, after His death was embalmed with myrrh (John 19:39). Myrrh was a fragrant gum that exuded from Arabian trees. It was used as a composition with anointing oil (Ex. 30:23-25). Sometimes it was used as a purifying cosmetic (Esther 2:12). It was also used by Mary as an anointing ointment for Jesus.
3. *CAMPHIRE* (also called "henna flower") vs.-14. These flowers grew from a plant common in Palestine. The flowers were highly scented and yellow or white in color. The leaves of this plant were dried and ground into cosmetic dye powder. Women of Egypt dyed the palms of their hands a dark, dusky red with this. The powder was also used as an effective check to excessive perspiration - a deodorant, if you please! The dye from the yellow flowers was used to stain the hair and the beard.
4. What a wonderful lesson there is in all this for our own souls. [1:13-14] Let us, like the Shulamite, rejoice in our prospect! Let us hug to our hearts, like a bundle of myrrh, the treasured truths we have of the cross and the coming of our Lord, which point us back to His burial and forward to the bridal feast when we shall hold Him to our hearts, rejoicing in His person.

I'd rather have Jesus than silver or gold,

I'd rather be His than have riches untold, I'd rather have Jesus than houses or land,
I'd rather be led by His nail-pierced hand;
Than to be the king of a vast domain
And to be held in sin's dread sway;
I'd rather have Jesus than anything
This world affords today.

GEORGE BEVERLY SHEA

- F. The Lord Jesus laid aside His glory, the glory that He had with the Father before the worlds began, and stooped to be born into the human family by way of the virgin's womb. He entered His ministry in the face of ridicule, opposition, and unbelief to face Gethsemane, Gabbatha, Golgotha, and the grave. He was spat upon, beaten, scourged, crowned with thorns, and nailed to a cross. He died beneath the wrath and curse of God. He laid in death for three days and three nights while the entire universe held its breath. But He came bursting forth from the tomb! We ask ourselves why He should come thus, in all the enormous energy of His deity, to pay such a price for us. There is only one answer: He loves us!

Love found a way to redeem my soul,
Love found a way that could make me whole;
Love sent my Lord to the cross of shame,
Love found a way! O praise His holy name!

CONSTANCE B. REID

- G. The Provisions of Love in 2:3-4:
 1. Matchless Rest "sat" as Christ promised in Matthew 11:28-30 "Come to Me, all [you] who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you

- will find rest for your souls. "For My yoke [is] easy and My burden is light." (NKJV)
2. Total Security "shadow" as we are told in Psalm 91:1 He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. (NKJV)
 3. Overflowing Joy "delight" as we find in his presence Psalm 16:11 You will show me the path of life; In Your presence [is] fullness of joy; At Your right hand [are] pleasures forevermore. (NKJV)
 4. Abundant Supply "fruit" as Christ said in John 15:5 "I am the vine, you [are] the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. (NKJV)
 5. Individual Guidance "brought me" v. 4 as our Good Shepherd always will Psalm 23:3-4 He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake. 4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You [are] with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. (NKJV)
 6. Glorious Fellowship "banqueting" Revelation 3:20 "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. (NKJV)
 7. Consistent Victory "banner" (Conquest, Protection, Enlistment) as promised in 2 Corinthians 2:14 Now thanks [be] to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. (NKJV)

- II. THE LOVER COMES (Communion Broken, Restoration)
- The second section (2:8-3:5) showed failure on her part. She was lured back gain into the world, and soon found that her Beloved could not follow her there. Then with full purpose of heart going forth to seek Him and confessing His name, her search as successful and her communion was restored.
- A. I found him," she cried, "I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him, and would not let him go" (3:4). Again she begs Solomon's women to leave her alone, particularly to cease from their efforts to awaken affection for their chosen lord. All this speaks vividly to us. Our best defense against the approaches of the world is to talk openly and freely about the Lord Jesus. Others will soon get the message.
 - B. As C. F. Weigle puts it:

I would love to tell you what I think of Jesus,
 Since I found in Him a Friend so strong and true;
 I would tell you how He changed my life completely,
 He did something that no other Friend could do.

All my life was full of sin when Jesus found me,
 All my heart was full of misery and woe;
 Jesus placed His strong and loving arms around me
 And He led me in the way I ought to go.

C. F. WEIGLE

ⁱ This lesson was drawn from the following sources: **The Word of God; Baxter, Explore the Book; Scroggie, The Unfolding Drama; Christ in all the Scriptures; The Criswell Study Bible; Walk through the Bible; The Compact Guide to The Bible, Lehman Strauss, CHM.**