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Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me.

(Revelation 3:20-21)

What Jesus Wants

Jesus desires and deserves a Bride that is madly and passionately in love with Him! Those who would rather sit at His feet and listen to Him than anything else in the world. The Lord desires this from every single believer so much that He wrote an entire Book in the Old Testament dedicated to the theme – the Song of Songs.

Why the Song of all Songs?

Many commentators have interpreted this piece of biblical literature to be about a faithful love relationship between an anonymous shepherd boy and the Shulamite Maiden, which King Solomon, a type of the world, tries to breach with his allurements. Others have disregarded it altogether and wondered how it ever came to be accepted in the Canon of Scripture.

But spiritually mature saints have always considered the Song of Songs as “the heart of the Sacred Writings.”

This is because the Book is all about the realization of full and mature spiritual affections for the Bridegroom, which we said is the only thing that can truly satisfy His Heart. And for the believer it is the place where true happiness and fulfilment lies.

This explains why the Song of Songs is placed directly after another mysterious and controversial Book of the Bible – the Book of Ecclesiastes. This is no coincidence! It has rightly been described by some as “the antithesis of what is presented by the Book of Ecclesiastes.”

In Ecclesiastes, we find that people search for the wrong things, in the wrong way, and for the wrong reasons, leading one to believe that all under the Sun is Vanity of Vanities.

But in the Song of Songs people search for the right things, in the right way, and for the right reasons.

The Tracks of the Flock

The Maiden in the Song is in despair. She is saved but longs for deeper experiences of the Beloved. However, she realizes her service for the Lord imposed on her by her very own family members has been a hindrance to any advancement. She laments:

My mother's sons were angry with me; they made me keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard I have not kept! Tell me, you whom my soul loves, where you pasture your flock, where you make it lie down at noon.

(Song of Songs 1:6-8)

You will notice the first reference to the word *vineyard* is in the plural – “*vineyards*.” This refers to the Christian’s work for the Lord that has been assigned to him by man.

The second reference to the word, however, is in the singular – “*vineyard*” – and this points to the work which the Lord Himself had prepared for His child to do, but which he had neglected or put aside to fulfil these other duties.

Some commentators have interpreted the word “*vineyard*” to be a reference to the human soul. But either of these is correct, because the principle aim behind God’s perfect plan for every believer is his sanctification. Everything else is secondary.

Therefore, if you are outside of that plan there will be no inward growth, only stagnancy.

But having been disciplined and enlightened by the Holy Spirit, the woman in the Song now sees how all these man-ordained works have actually been a distraction from the Lord Himself.

Unfortunately, not all Christians understand this, and can become most violent and aggressive towards those that do. The situation is even worse when they are in a position of leadership! We read:

My mother's sons were angry with me . . .

Note it does not say, “my father’s sons,” but, “*my mother’s sons.*” The word *mother* here represents “the principle of promise which is founded upon God’s grace,” as in Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians:

But the other woman corresponds to the Jerusalem above; she is free, and she is our mother . . . Now you, my friends, are children of the promise, like Isaac.

(Galatians 4:26, 28)

This behaviour from those in positions of authority within the Body of Christ is very common and the reasons are many. But the main reason is due to an incorrect interpretation of the biblical instructions on submission to Church leaders and to each other.

The introduction of a doctrine called *spiritual covering* has made the practice of “*lording it over the sheep*” even worse in some Christian circles.

This is not the place to elaborate on this teaching. It is enough to say it is not biblical. Why? Because it establishes a hierarchy within the Church where every member must be under the authority of someone else and held accountable to them, instead of directly to the Head, Jesus Christ. And it is taught that if they are not under this “intermediary” authority, then they have no protection from Satan’s attacks.

In reality, it is those who exercise the doctrine of spiritual covering over others that are more vulnerable to the attacks of Satan. Why? Because it creates a “covering” that protects them from any form of criticism or correction from those under their authority, the very thing they might be in need of and the very means God often uses!

Last, this doctrine creates a situation where promotions are given exclusively to those who comply to these man-made rules and do not question the system. For those led by the Holy Spirit such a climate is drastic. Like the Maiden in the Song of Songs they cry:

Tell me, you whom my soul loves, where you pasture your flock, where you make it lie down at noon.

(Song of Songs 1:7)

I love the reply given by the Bridegroom. He says:

If you do not know, O fairest among women, follow the tracks of the flock, and pasture your kids beside the shepherds’ tents.

(Song of Songs 1:8-9)

The first thing to notice is how the Lord addresses the believer here. He calls her the “*fairest among women*,” showing she is the one of greatest attraction, because of her desire for Him and diligent seeking.

The “*tracks of the flock*” is a reference to the way taken by those believers of all generations who stand in the truth concerning the real Church of Christ. Like Enoch, they walk a path quite different from their contemporaries. They “*follow the Lamb*” rather than following men and find satisfaction in Him alone!

Fruit of a Perfect Union

For the sake of time we will skip over the remainder of the Maiden’s spiritual history described in the Song to the end result in the last few chapters. Here we see that through the grace and patient labour of the Holy Spirit she is brought to such maturity and oneness with Christ that any service done for Him is done free from every motive other than to please His Heart.

It is interesting that in the Book of Revelation we meet a whole group of saints with similar character. Only in this narrative we are given a glimpse of one of the means the Lord might have used to produce it, and perhaps some of the struggles and temptations the believer may have endured in those intervening chapters of the Song we skipped over. Follow me as we take a look.

Stopping Not at Vanity Fair

In chapter fourteen of Revelation the Apostle John introduces us to an extraordinary group of saints. We read:

Then I looked, and there was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion! And with him were one hundred forty-four thousand who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads.

(Revelation 14:1-2)

John introduces this group of 144,000 believers for the first time in Revelation chapter seven, where it is said they are marked with the Seal of God on their foreheads.

There are various suggestions as to who these are, whether literal Jewish converts or symbolic of the Spiritual Church, “*the Israel of God.*” It is not necessary to go into these details here. Our aim is to draw your attention to *what* they are rather than *who*.

We are told they have the Name of God on their forehead. In Scripture, the forehead often has to do with our thought life. Also, in Scripture, name denotes character, and the Greek word used here for *name* in this passage also means character.

The message is clear. Through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, these saints have reached a stage of spiritual maturity to the point that the full nature of Christ is formed in them! John continues his description of their character:

And I heard a voice from heaven like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder; the voice I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps, and they sing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders. No one could learn that song except the one hundred forty-four thousand who have been redeemed from the earth.

(Revelation 14:2-4)

This group of believers have a song that no one else could learn. Why? because it is of a personal nature; it is about the experience they had gone through in their struggle between good and evil and between the flesh and the Spirit. Finally, John tells us how such character was formed:

It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins; these follow the lamb wherever he goes.

(Revelation 14:4-6)

Here we are told these saints are one with the Lamb because they have not defiled themselves with women, but are virgins. Some commentators have interpreted this literally and conclude that these are all men.

If that were the correct interpretation, it would imply that sexual intercourse is something that defiles, when we know that this is not the case. Therefore, this has to have a symbolic meaning.

Often the term *woman* in Scripture is used to denote immorality, wickedness, apostasy and false religion. And that is exactly how it is used in Revelation itself, chapter seventeen.

So when John uses the plural – “*women*” – he is most likely referring to all the apostate Protestant Churches associated with the Whore of Babylon. In fact, in chapter seventeen she is called the “*mother of whores.*”

The 144,000 were transformed into the Image of Christ because they had not allowed themselves to be enticed by this great whore; they had either kept themselves from her altogether, or heeded the warning to “*come out of her*” and no longer hold to any of her perverted doctrines!

Summary

The Song of Songs describes the spiritual history of every single believer and the Bridegroom’s patience, love and kindness to those who will go on with Him.

In the beginning the Maiden had to learn not to get involved in too many works for the Lord, “*vineyards,*” before cultivating her “*own vineyard.*” We said that caring for her own vineyard implies living by the Spirit, and following *His* directions rather than following man.

Finally, we showed the Holy Spirit's ultimate goal was the believer's spiritual maturity, that is, released from all selfish motivations in doing works for the Lord and finding joy in satisfying His Heart alone, which alone can satisfy His Heart and best prepare you for sharing eternity with Him.

Dear Christian, may the King of Kings and Lord of lords stir you up to hunger and thirst for such things and use you to stir up others!