

The Song of Solomon describes the marital love that exists between a groom and his bride—historically, this has been understood in one of two ways—[1] allegorically—that is—the entire book is an allegory of Christ and the church—this of course was basically the view held to the church for the first 1500 years—yet—unfortunately it suffered from abuse and wild interpretations at times...

[2] Typically—that is—the entire book literally describes the love that existed between a groom and his bride—but—this intends to point to the love that Christ (our Groom) has for His bride (the church)—thus the book is to be taken literally as a description of marital love—but ultimately as a description of Christ and the church...

[a] The title, v1—"The song of songs, which is Solomon's"—that is—this is the song of ALL songs—it is—the greatest of Solomon's songs—from 1Kings 4:32 we learn—"his songs were one thousand and five"—thus—this song transcends them all—thus my point is this—if this is Solomon's greatest song—then surely it must depict the greatest of all subjects...

Edwards—"The name by which Solomon calls this song, confirms me in it that it is more than an ordinary love song, and that it was deigned for a divine song, and of divine authority; for we read, that Solomon's songs were a thousand and five; this he calls the Son of songs, that is, the most excellent of all his songs, which it seems very probable to me to be upon that account, because it was a song of the most excellent subject, treating of the love, union, and communion between Christ and his church; of which, marriage and conjugal love was abut a shadow..."

[b] Psalm 45—this is a miniature Song of Solomon—as it's quoted and applied to Christ in the NT—everything we find in Song of Solomon we find in Psalm 45 in a condensed form—thus whatever difficulties might be suggested from the Song of Solomon, must also be admitted and addressed in understanding Psalm 45...

[c] The NT—that is—the NT Scriptures everywhere teach—that Christ is a Heavenly Groom and the Church is His beloved Bride—furthermore, the NT expressly teaches that marriage was intended by God to reflect the love that exists between Christ and His church...

Now—before I come to examine this passage in greater detail—let me briefly examine it's context—in chapters 5-6 the bride, lovesick for her groom, seeks for him through the city and countryside—in chapter 7:1-9 the Groom describes His Bride and beginning with 7:10—chapter 8—we have various petitions from the Bride to her Groom for a closer and more intimate relationship—8:6 serves as the final and most famous of those petitions...

Thus—throughout this final chapter—we find some of the strongest statements and affirmations of love between Christ and His church, found in the entire Bible, MH—"The affections between Christ and his spouse are as strong and lively here, in this closing chapter of the song, as ever, and rather more so..."

- I. The Church's Request
- II. The Church's Reasons

I. The Church's Request

1. V6—"Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm"—this prayer is figurative and very beautiful...
2. The Hebrew word rendered "seal" refers to the image that would be carved into a ring to form a unique seal...
3. A wealthy man, let's say a royal man, would have a signet ring on his right hand, which bore his unique seal...
4. It fundamentally refers to something engraved into metal or a stone—she prayers—she would be set as a seal upon his heart and arm...

5. That is—her name would be engraved into his heart and arm—that his affections and power would be for her...
6. That is—she wanted him to remember her—or else, she wanted to know and be convinced of his love and power...
7. Gill—"She desires to have a fixed abiding place in his heart; to continue firmly in his love, and to have further manifestations of it; to be always remembered and supported by him; to be ever on his mind, and constantly under his care and protection; and to have a full assurance of interest in his love, and in his power, which is the sealing work of his Spirit..."
8. Now—some of the commentators point out—the possible connection between our text and the imagery found in v5...
9. V5—"who is this coming up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved"—that is—walking arm to arm...
10. JFB—"She was 'leaning' on Him, that is, her arm on His *arm*, her head on His *bosom*; so she prays now that before they part, her impression may be engraven both on His *heart* and His *arm*, answering to His *love* and His *power*..."
11. Now—I suggest that most likely—the imagery here is that of the High Priest—and his high priestly garments...
12. Ex.28:9-12—"Then you shall take two onyx stones and engrave on them the names of the sons of Israel: 10 six of their names on one stone, and six names on the other stone, in order of their birth. 11 With the work of an engraver in stone, *like* the engravings of a signet, you shall engrave the two stones with the names of the sons of Israel. You shall set them in settings of gold. 12 And you shall put the two stones on the shoulders of the ephod *as* memorial stones for the sons of Israel. So Aaron shall bear their names before the LORD on his two shoulders as a memorial [Ps.136:10-12; Isa.40:10-11]..."
13. Thus—I suggest within this prayer or petition—the bride or church—expressed a twofold desire—a deeper sense of his love and a clearer sight of his power...
14. [1] She desired a deeper SENSE of His love—that is—that she would know and be assured of His love for her...
15. Now—it's true that our names are already engraved upon Christ's heart and arm—but here she wants to know it...
16. This is what the church longs for—not that Christ would love her—but that she would come to know that love...
17. Eph.3:14-21—"For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, 17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the width and length and depth and height -- 19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. 20 Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, 21 to Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen..."
18. The similarities between this passage and text are obvious—what the church prays for herself, the apostle prays for her...
19. In short—that the Lord would seal her upon His heart and arm—or that they would come to know His love...
20. Now—obviously—these Christians already knew the love of Christ—but Paul wanted them to know it deeper...
21. [2] She desired a clearer SIGHT of His power—that is—that she would know and be assured of His power for her...
22. The church longed to know—that special love Christ has for His people—that powerful and effectual love...
23. Eph.1:15-19—"Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, 16 do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, 18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His

calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what *is* the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power..."

24. CHS—"She longs to see herself as supported, sustained, strengthened, defended, preserved, and kept by that same strong arm which put the stars in the sky and holds them there, that they should give their light for evermore. She longs that she may know the love of his heart, and that she may experience the power of his arm. Can we not, each of us, join the spouse in this prayer tonight? Oh! Lord, let me know that my name is engraved on thy heart, not only let it be there, but let me know it....Oh! let me know, my Lord, that I am thine, bound to thine heart, and let me know that I am thine, protected and preserved by thine arm. This is the prayer..."

II. The Church's Reasons

Now—before I go further—I have to admit that commentators are not in agreement as to who's love is being described—some say, the church's love is being described—she wanted to know more of His love because of the strong affection and devotion she had for Him—or else—the love of Christ for the church is described—which serves as further incentive to know and cherish His love—personally, I think both are true, though I want to give the priority to Christ's love for us, which results in our love to Him, 1Jn.4:19—"we love Him because He first loved us"...

Song 1:2-3—"Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth - For your love is better than wine. 3 Because of the fragrance of your good ointments, Your name *is* ointment poured forth; therefore the virgins love you [we love Him because He loves us]..."

A. It is STRONG love

1. V6—"Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is as strong as death"—death is powerful...
2. No mere man can defeat death—death's coming for you and me—it's a strong and mighty foe—a powerful enemy...
3. In fact—the case could be made that fewer things are stronger than death—WHO or WHAT can defeat death...
4. Well—I suggest love can—because love is strong as death—or it's in fact stronger than death—it defeated death...
5. Now—if we were to apply this phrase to our love for Christ—it would be very fitting and would rightly serve the text...
6. From the beginning of time—man has gone mighty works for Christ—often risking and even giving their lives...
7. For example—Abraham was willing to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac—and Daniel faced the hungry lions...
8. The apostles left everything and endured the severest persecutions—beatings, imprisonments, and martyrdom...
9. But brethren—what are these acts in comparison to those of our beloved Savior—whose love was as strong as death...
10. The love that Christ has for His bride is stronger than death—because He Himself endured death on their behalf...
11. Jn.10:11-14—"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. 12 But a hireling, *he who is* not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. 13 The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. 14 I am the good shepherd; and I know My *sheep*, and am known by My own [Matt.26:38-39; Eph.5:2]..."
12. [1] What He did—"the good shepherd gives His life for the sheep"—He protects His sheep from the danger...
13. What dangers were threatening the sheep?—there was Satan—who as a thief—"came to steal, kill, and destroy..."
14. But more than this—there was the penalty of divine justice—that demanded punishment because of our sins...

15. Thus Scripture portrays Christ's work on the cross [a] a conquering of Satan, [b] a satisfaction of divine justice...
16. [2] Why He did it—vv12-14 provide two closely related reasons why the good shepherd gives His life for the sheep...
17. [a] He owns the sheep—in vv12-13—our Savior contrasts the good shepherd with the hireling who flees when he sees danger approaching...
18. I hireling wasn't necessary a bad person—he's simply someone who was hired to care or to attend to the sheep...
19. He was in it for the money—this is in contrast to the shepherd who had a personal investment in his sheep...
20. [b] He loves the sheep, v14—"I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own..."

B. It is JEALOUS love

1. V6—"jealousy as cruel as the grave"—that is—love is jealous—which is as cruel or unyielding as the grave...
2. The Hebrew word rendered "cruel" literally means—"hard, cruel, severe obstinate, stubborn, or unyielding"...
3. I suggest that here it likely refers to—"an unyielding jealousy or zeal"—for the wellbeing and safety of another...
4. Albert Barnes—"Jealousy is here another term for *love*, expressing the relentless force and heat of this affection, which can neither yield nor share possession of its object..."
5. A person who loves another—inevitably will feel a jealousy for them—they will have a zeal to protect them...
6. For example—think of a mother with her child—because she loves her child—she will zealously protect them...
7. Thus—both the Hebrew and Greek words for "jealousy" and "zeal" are used interchangeably throughout Scripture..
8. Ps.69:9—"Because zeal for your house has eaten me up"—that is—jealousy for the glory God and salvation of sinners...
9. Now—we must be clear on this point—jealousy is usually viewed as something condemned by Holy Scripture...
10. And usually it is—jealousy is often described as something negative—that is the result of our carnal hearts...
11. But—the same Scriptures that condemn a sinful and carnal jealousy—also describe God as a jealous God....
12. There is a jealousy that is very wholesome and commendable—and is very consistent with the character of God...
13. James Durham—"Jealously may be taken in a good or evil sense: in a good sense, jealousy is the highest degree of love, or love at its height, and is the same with zeal: thus the Lord is said to be *jealous for his glory*"...
14. Jas.4:5—"Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"—that is—for us...
15. God is a jealous God—God the Father, Son, and Spirit—God is jealous both for His glory and for His people...
16. 2Cor.11:2-3—"For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ. 3 But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ..."
17. Zech.1:12-14—"Then the Angel of the LORD answered and said, O LORD of hosts, how long will You not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which You were angry these seventy years? 13 And the LORD answered the angel who talked to me, *with good and* comforting words. 14 So the angel who spoke with me said to me, Proclaim, saying, Thus says the LORD of hosts: I am zealous [jealous] for Jerusalem And for Zion with great zeal [jealousy]..."

C. It is FERVENT love

1. V6—"its flames are flames of fire, a most vehement flame"—the last part of this phrase is very difficult to translate...
2. The actual and literal Hebrew reads—"its flames are flames of fire...the flame of Jah"—that is—of the LORD...
3. "Jah" is short for Jehovah—in fact—this is the one and only time within this book—the name of God is used...
4. The Hebrew is actually an Hebrew idiom—intended to describe the most intense, fervent, and ardent flame...
5. Thus—the Old and New King James translations have rightly rendered it—"a most vehement flame"—the flame of God
6. Now—as it relates to our love—this simply teaches that all love in our heart for Christ is of divine origination...
7. But—as this phrase is applied to Christ and His love for us—it simply underscores its—intensity and purity...
8. CHS—"Some who look carefully at this phrase, think there is an allusion in this sentence to the fire which always burnt at the altar, and which never went out. You remember there were coals of fire which were always kept burning under the Levitical dispensation. The flame was originally kindled by fire from heaven, and it was the business of the priest perpetually to feed it with the sacred fuel...Now, the love of Christ is like the coals upon the altar which never went out. But the spouse has brought out a fuller idea than this. She seems to say, 'Its vehemence never decreases; it is always burning to its utmost intensity.' Nebuchadnezzar's furnace was heated seven times hotter, but no doubt it grew cool; Christ's love is like the furnace, but it is always at the seven-fold heat, and it always has within itself its own fuel. It is not like fire merely, but like coals of fire, always having that within itself which supports it..."

D. It is RELENTLESS love

1. V7—"Many waters cannot quench love, nor can the floods drown it"—nothing can prevent or put out love...
2. Now—again this phrase rightly describes the love that we have for Christ—begun in our hearts at our new birth...
3. My friends—if God by His Spirit has started a flame of love within your hearts for Christ—He will preserve it...
4. But—this phrase, like the others, is best applied to Christ's love for us—a love that endures all kinds of waters...
5. [1] The waters of Satanic opposition—from the very beginning Satan and his demonic hosts sought to put out this fire...
6. Do you remember what happened soon after our Savior was born—Herod put to death every male child two years and under...
7. Then our Savior began His public ministry—Satan tempted Him for 40 days in the wilderness with this world...
8. What was Satan attempting to do—but put out the flame of our Savior's love for His unworthy and beloved bride...
9. Then—he moved Judas to betray our Lord, and again, moved the people to arrest, beat, and finally crucify Him...
10. Rev.12:15—"So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood..."
11. [2] The waters of physical pain and shame—that is—the pain and shame associated with death by crucifixion...
12. Matt.16:21—"From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day..."
13. [3] The waters of His fathers wrath—these no doubt were mighty waters indeed—the billows of divine justice...

14. Ps.69:1-2—"Save me, O God! For the waters have come up to *my* neck. 2 I sink in deep mire, where *there is* no standing; I have come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me..."
15. Matt.26:38-39—"Then He said to them, My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me. 39 He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You *will*..."
16. [4] The waters of man's unworthiness—this I think, in my opinion, was the greatest flood of water that threatened to quench His love...
17. Simply put—think about the people that Christ loved—brethren—I don't mean to be impolite but look at us...
18. Christ came to die for His beloved bride—but His bride by nature is a very ugly bride—but He loved her anyway...
19. Oh brethren—let us rejoice in Christ's love for us—a love that will never cease—that will NEVER let us go...
20. All other loves end—even the best love that this world offers ends—for death separates us all sooner or later...
21. Oh but brethren—there is a one in the heavens whose love will never be quenched—not now—not for all eternity...
22. Let me illustrate—let's liken Christ and His love to the ark—that is—Noah's ark given by God for their salvation...
23. We read in Genesis 6—that the flood waters came from beneath and above the ark—it was surrounded by water...
24. This is similar to Christ—who was surrounded by the deep waters of Satan's opposition and God just wrath...
25. And—in some sense, the unworthy church, like Noah and his family, are stowed away within Christ by faith...

E. It is COSTLY love

1. V7—"If a man would give for love all the wealth of his house, it would be utterly despised"—it's of more value than the entire world...
2. My dear friends—where can we find such love—what can we do have this love—nothing—it's freely in Christ...
3. Now—you know—while Christ's love is free to us—it was very costly to Him—for He paid for it with His blood...

III. Summary Lessons

1. [1] Christ uniquely loves His church—this is—while Christ loves all men—He loves some, His Bride, uniquely...
2. Just like I love every women present—I don't any women here like I love my wife—that is a very special love...
3. Eph.5:25—"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself or her [His wife]..."
4. [2] Christians should know Christ's love—that is—we must pray—"set me as a seal upon your heart and arm..."
5. That is—we as Christians need to know—that Christ's heart and arm are for us—His LOVE and His POWER...
6. [3] Christians should return Christ's love—let us love Him with a strong, jealous, fervent, relentless, and costly love...