

**LOVING THE LORD AND LOVING ONE ANOTHER
FOR THE ORGANIC BUILDING UP OF THE CHURCH
AS THE BODY OF CHRIST**

(Friday—Second Morning Session)

Message Two

**Song of Songs—the Progressive Experience
of an Individual Believer’s Loving Fellowship with Christ
for the Preparation of the Bride of Christ**

EM Hymns 208

Scripture Reading: S. S. 1:2-4; 2:8-9; 3:8-10; 4:12-16; 6:10, 13; 7:11; 8:13-14

- S. S. 1:2 Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! / For your love is better than wine.
S. S. 1:3 Your anointing oils have a pleasant fragrance; / Your name is like ointment poured forth; / Therefore the virgins love you.
S. S. 1:4 Draw me; we will run after you
S. S. 2:8 The voice of my beloved! Now he comes, / Leaping upon the mountains, / Skipping upon the hills.
S. S. 2:9 My beloved is like a gazelle or a young hart. / Now he stands behind our wall; / He is looking through the windows, / He is glancing through the lattice.
S. S. 3:8 All of them wield the sword and are expert in war; / Each man has his sword at his thigh / Because of the night alarms.
S. S. 3:9 King Solomon made himself a palanquin / Of the wood of Lebanon.
S. S. 3:10 Its posts he made of silver; / Its bottom, of gold; / Its seat, of purple; / Its midst was inlaid with love / From the daughters of Jerusalem.
S. S. 4:12 A garden enclosed is my sister, my bride, / A spring shut up, a fountain sealed.
S. S. 4:13 Your shoots are an orchard of pomegranates / With choicest fruit; / Henna with spikenard,
S. S. 4:14 Spikenard and saffron; / Calamus and cinnamon, / With all the trees of frankincense; / Myrrh and aloes, / With all the chief spices.
S. S. 4:15 A fountain in gardens, / A well of living water, / And streams from Lebanon.
S. S. 4:16 Awake, O north wind; / And come, O south wind! / Blow upon my garden: / Let its spices flow forth; / Let my beloved come into his garden / And eat his choicest fruit.
S. S. 6:10 Who is this woman who looks forth like the dawn, / As beautiful as the moon, / As clear as the sun, / As terrible as an army with banners?
S. S. 6:13 Return, return, O Shulammitte; / Return, return, that we may gaze at you. / Why should you gaze at the Shulammitte, / As upon the dance of two camps?
S. S. 7:11 Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the fields; / Let us lodge in the villages.
S. S. 8:13 O you who dwell in the gardens, / My companions listen for your voice; / Let me hear it.
S. S. 8:14 Make haste, my beloved, / And be like a gazelle or a young hart / Upon the mountains of spices.

I. The subject of Song of Songs, a poem, is the history of love in an excellent marriage, revealing the progressive experience of an individual believer’s loving fellowship with Christ for the preparation of His bride in six major stages:

- A. In the first stage of Song of Songs, the lover of Christ is drawn to pursue Him for satisfaction (1:2—2:7); the Lord wants His seeker to have a personal, affectionate, private, and spiritual relationship with Him:

- S. S. 1:2 Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! / For your love is better than wine.
S. S. 1:3 Your anointing oils have a pleasant fragrance; / Your name is like ointment poured forth; / Therefore the virgins love you.
S. S. 1:4 Draw me; we will run after you
S. S. 1:5 I am black but lovely, O daughters of Jerusalem, / Like the tents of Kedar, like the curtains of Solomon.
S. S. 1:6 Do not look at me, because I am black, / Because the sun has scorched me. / My mother's sons were angry with me; / They made me keeper of the vineyards, / But my own vineyard I have not kept.

S. S. 1:7 Tell me, you whom my soul loves, Where do you pasture your flock? / Where do you make it lie down at noon? / For why should I be like one who is veiled / Beside the flocks of your companions?

S. S. 1:8 If you yourself do not know, / You fairest among women, / Go forth on the footsteps of the flock, / And pasture your young goats / By the shepherds' tents.

S. S. 1:9 I compare you, my love, / To a mare among Pharaoh's chariots.

S. S. 1:10 Your cheeks are lovely with plaits of ornaments, / Your neck with strings of jewels.

S. S. 1:11 We will make you plaits of gold / With studs of silver.

S. S. 1:12 While the king was at his table, / My spikenard gave forth its fragrance.

S. S. 1:13 My beloved is to me a bundle of myrrh / That lies at night between my breasts.

S. S. 1:14 My beloved is to me a cluster of henna flowers / In the vineyards of En-gedi.

S. S. 1:15 Oh, you are beautiful, my love! / Oh, you are beautiful! Your eyes are like doves.

S. S. 1:16 Oh, you are beautiful, my beloved; / indeed, pleasant! Indeed, our couch is green.

S. S. 1:17 The beams of our house are cedars; / Our rafters are cypresses.

S. S. 2:1 I am a rose of Sharon, / A lily of the valleys.

S. S. 2:2 As a lily among thorns, / So is my love among the daughters.

S. S. 2:3 As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, / So is my beloved among the sons: In his shade I delighted and sat down, / And his fruit was sweet to my taste.

S. S. 2:4 He brought me into the banqueting house, / And his banner over me was love.

S. S. 2:5 Sustain me with raisin cakes, / Refresh me with apples, / For I am sick with love.

S. S. 2:6 His left hand is under my head, / And his right hand embraces me.

S. S. 2:7 I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, / By the gazelles or by the hinds of the fields, / Not to rouse up or awaken my love / Until she pleases.

1. *Draw me* is personal (1:4); the Lord said, "I drew them with cords of a man, / With bands of love" (Hosea 11:4a); this indicates that God loves us with His divine love not on the level of divinity but on the level of humanity; the cords of a man through which God draws us include Christ's incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension; it is by all these steps of Christ in His humanity that God's love in His salvation reaches us in a personal way (Rom. 5:8; 1 John 4:9-10).
 - S. S. 1:4 Draw me; we will run after you
 - Rom 5:8 But God commends His own love to us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
 - 1 John 4:9 In this the love of God was manifested among us, that God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might have life and live through Him.
 - 1 John 4:10 Herein is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son as a propitiation for our sins.
2. *Kiss me* (S. S. 1:2) is affectionate; after believing in Christ to receive Him as the divine life (John 1:4,12), we need to love Christ in a personal and affectionate way that we may pursue Him and enjoy Him as our satisfaction; Psalm 2:12 commands us to "kiss the Son"; kissing Christ is the enjoyment of Christ.
 - S. S. 1:2 Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! / For your love is better than wine.
 - John 1:4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.
 - John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the authority to become children of God, to those who believe into His name,
 - Psa 2:12 Kiss the Son / Lest He be angry and you perish from the way; / For His anger may suddenly be kindled. / Blessed are all those who take refuge in Him.
3. In her pursuing of Christ the seeker is brought by Him into her regenerated spirit as the Holiest of all (his chambers—S. S. 1:4) to have fellowship with Him; His chambers indicate a private relationship with the Lord.
 - S. S. 1:4 Draw me; we will run after you
4. Furthermore, because Christ visits us in our regenerated spirit as His inner chambers, our relationship with Him must be spiritual; He visits us in our spirit privately, coming to us in a spiritual way, not in a physical way.
5. All the spiritual principles are contained in this first stage of the seeker's overcoming life in Song of Songs; the lessons that follow are not new, but they are old lessons

repeated in a deeper way; regeneration brings the gene of God into us, and all the experiences of our whole Christian life are in this gene—1 John 3:9.

1 John 3:9 Everyone who has been begotten of God does not practice sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been begotten of God.

- B. In the second stage of Song of Songs, the lover of Christ is called to be delivered from the self through her oneness with the cross of Christ—2:8—3:5:

S. S. 2:8 The voice of my beloved! Now he comes, / Leaping upon the mountains, / Skipping upon the hills.
S. S. 2:9 My beloved is like a gazelle or a young hart. / Now he stands behind our wall; / He is looking through the windows, / He is glancing through the lattice.
S. S. 2:10 My beloved responds and says to me, / Rise up, my love, / My beauty, and come away;
S. S. 2:11 For now the winter is past; / The rain is over and gone.
S. S. 2:12 Flowers appear on the earth; / The time of singing has come, / And the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land.
S. S. 2:13 The fig tree has ripened its figs, / And the vines are in blossom
S. S. 2:14 My dove, in the clefts of the rock, / In the covert of the precipice, Let me see your countenance, / Let me hear your voice; / For your voice is sweet, / And your countenance is lovely.
S. S. 2:15 Catch the foxes for us, / The little foxes, / That ruin the vineyards / While our vineyards are in blossom.
S. S. 2:16 My beloved is mine, and I am his; / He pastures his flock among the lilies.
S. S. 2:17 Until the day dawns and the shadows flee away, / Turn, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young hart / On the mountains of Bether.
S. S. 3:1 On my bed night after night / I sought him whom my soul loves; / I sought him, but found him not.
S. S. 3:2 I will rise now and go about in the city; / In the streets and in the squares / I will seek him whom my soul loves. / I sought him, but found him not.
S. S. 3:3 The watchmen who go about in the city found me
S. S. 3:4 Scarcely had I passed them / When I found him whom my soul loves; / I held him and would not let go / Until I had brought him into my mother's house / And into the chamber of her who conceived me.
S. S. 3:5 I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, / By the gazelles or by the hinds of the fields, / Not to rouse up or awaken my love / Until she pleases.

1. Song of Songs 2:8-9 speaks of the vitality of resurrection; in these verses Christ is likened to a gazelle or a young hart “leaping upon the mountains, / Skipping upon the hills”; mountains and hills refer to difficulties and barriers, but nothing is too high or too great to stop the resurrected Christ; we need to seek for and know Christ’s mountain-leaping and hill-skipping presence.

S. S. 2:8 The voice of my beloved! Now he comes, / Leaping upon the mountains, / Skipping upon the hills.

S. S. 2:9 My beloved is like a gazelle or a young hart. / Now he stands behind our wall; / He is looking through the windows, / He is glancing through the lattice.

2. The lover of Christ falls into introspection, which becomes a seclusion as a wall that keeps her away from the presence of Christ (v. 9b); hence, Christ encourages her to rise up and come out of her low situation to be with Him (v. 10).

S. S. 2:9b ... Now he stands behind our wall; / He is looking through the windows, / He is glancing through the lattice.

S. S. 2:10 My beloved responds and says to me, / Rise up, my love, / My beauty, and come away;

3. The lover of Christ also hears the Lord telling her that the time of dormancy (winter) is past and that the trials (rain) are over and gone (v. 11); He also tells her that the springtime has come; thus, she is entreated and encouraged by the Lord with the flourishing riches of resurrection (vv. 12-13).

S. S. 2:11 For now the winter is past; / The rain is over and gone.

S. S. 2:12 Flowers appear on the earth; / The time of singing has come, / And the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land.

S. S. 2:13 The fig tree has ripened its figs, / And the vines are in blossom

4. It is by the power of resurrection, not by our natural life, that we, the lovers of Christ, are enabled to be conformed to His death by being one with His cross (vv. 14-15); the reality of resurrection is the pneumatic Christ as the consummated Spirit, who indwells and is mingled with our regenerated spirit; it is in such a mingled spirit that we participate in and experience the resurrection of Christ, which enables us to be one with the cross to be delivered from the self and to be transformed into a new man in God's new creation for the fulfillment of God's economy in the building up of the organic Body of Christ (Rom. 8:2, 4, 29; Gal. 6:15; 2 Cor. 5:17).

S. S. 2:14 My dove, in the clefts of the rock, / In the covert of the precipice, Let me see your countenance, / Let me hear your voice; / For your voice is sweet, / And your countenance is lovely.

S. S. 2:15 Catch the foxes for us, / The little foxes, / That ruin the vineyards / While our vineyards are in blossom.

Rom 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life has freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death.

Rom 8:4 That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit.

Rom 8:29 Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers;

Gal 6:15 For neither is circumcision anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creation is what matters.

2 Cor 5:17 So then if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away; behold, they have become new.

C. In the third stage of Song of Songs, the lover of Christ is called to live in ascension as the new creation in resurrection—3:6—5:1:

S. S. 3:6 Who is she who comes up from the wilderness / Like pillars of smoke, / Perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, / With all the fragrant powders of the merchant?

S. S. 3:7 There is Solomon's bed; / Sixty mighty men surround it, / Of the mighty men of Israel.

S. S. 3:8 All of them wield the sword and are expert in war; / Each man has his sword at his thigh / Because of the night alarms.

S. S. 3:9 King Solomon made himself a palanquin / Of the wood of Lebanon.

S. S. 3:10 Its posts he made of silver; / Its bottom, of gold; / Its seat, of purple; / Its midst was inlaid with love / From the daughters of Jerusalem.

S. S. 3:11 Go forth, O daughters of Zion, / And look at King Solomon with the crown / With which his mother crowned him / On the day of his espousals, / Yes, on the day of the gladness of his heart.

S. S. 4:1 Oh, you are beautiful, my love! / Oh, you are beautiful! Your eyes are like doves behind your veil; / Your hair is like a flock of goats / That repose on Mount Gilead.

S. S. 4:2 Your teeth are like a flock of shorn ewes / That have come up from the washing, / All of which have borne twins, / And none of them is bereaved of her young.

S. S. 4:3 Your lips are like a scarlet thread, / And your mouth is lovely; / Your cheeks are like a piece of pomegranate / Behind your veil.

S. S. 4:4 Your neck is like the tower of David, / Built for an armory: / A thousand bucklers hang on it, / All the shields of the mighty men.

S. S. 4:5 Your two breasts are like two fawns, / Twins of a gazelle, / That feed among the lilies.

S. S. 4:6 Until the day dawns and the shadows flee away, / I, for my part, will go to the mountain of myrrh / And to the hill of frankincense.

S. S. 4:7 You are altogether beautiful, my love, / And there is no blemish in you.

S. S. 4:8 Come with me from Lebanon, my bride; / With me from Lebanon come. / Look from the top of Amana, / From the top of Senir and Hermon, / From the lions' dens, / From the leopards' mountains.

S. S. 4:9 You have ravished my heart, my sister, my bride; / You have ravished my heart with one glance of your eyes, / With one strand of your necklace.

S. S. 4:10 How beautiful is your love, my sister, my bride! / How much better is your love than wine, / And the fragrance of your ointments / Than all spices!

S. S. 4:11 Your lips drip fresh honey, my bride; / Honey and milk are under your tongue; / And the fragrance of your garments / Is like the fragrance of Lebanon.

- S. S. 4:12 A garden enclosed is my sister, my bride, / A spring shut up, a fountain sealed.
 S. S. 4:13 Your shoots are an orchard of pomegranates / With choicest fruit; / Henna with spikenard,
 S. S. 4:14 Spikenard and saffron; / Calamus and cinnamon, / With all the trees of frankincense; / Myrrh and aloes, / With all the chief spices.
 S. S. 4:15 A fountain in gardens, / A well of living water, / And streams from Lebanon.
 S. S. 4:16 Awake, O north wind; / And come, O south wind! / Blow upon my garden: / Let its spices flow forth; / Let my beloved come into his garden / And eat his choicest fruit.
 S. S. 5:1 I have come into my garden, my sister, my bride; / I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; / I have drunk my wine with my milk. / Eat, O friends; / Drink, and drink deeply, O beloved ones!

1. To live in ascension is to live continually in our spirit; when we live in our spirit, we are joined to the ascended Christ in the heavens—Eph. 2:22; Gen. 28:12-17; John 1:51; Rev. 4:1-2; Heb. 4:12, 16 and footnote 1.

- Eph 2:22 In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.
 Gen 28:12 And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.
 Gen 28:13 And there was Jehovah, standing above it; and He said, I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie, I will give to you and to your seed.
 Gen 28:14 And your seed will be as the dust of the earth, and you will spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and in your seed will all the families of the earth be blessed.
 Gen 28:15 And, behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go and will cause you to return to this land, for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.
 Gen 28:16 And Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, Surely Jehovah is in this place, and I did not know it.
 Gen 28:17 And he was afraid and said, How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.
 John 1:51 And He said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, You shall see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.
 Rev 4:1 After these things I saw, and behold, a door opened in heaven, and the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, Come up here, and I will show you the things that must take place after these things.
 Rev 4:2 Immediately I was in spirit; and behold, there was a throne set in heaven, and upon the throne there was One sitting;
 Heb 4:12 For the word of God is living and operative and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit and of joints and marrow, and able to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart.
 Heb 4:16 Let us therefore come forward with boldness to the ¹throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace for timely help.

note 1 Undoubtedly, the throne mentioned here is the throne of God, which is in heaven (Rev. 4:2). The throne of God is the throne of authority toward all the universe (Dan. 7:9; Rev. 5:1). But toward us, the believers, it becomes the throne of grace, signified by the expiation cover (the mercy seat) within the Holy of Holies (Exo. 25:17, 21). This throne is the throne of both God and the Lamb (Rev. 22:1). How can we come to the throne of God and the Lamb, Christ, in heaven while we still live on earth? The secret is our spirit, referred to in v. 12. The very Christ who is sitting on the throne in heaven (Rom. 8:34) is also now in us (Rom. 8:10), that is, in our spirit (2 Tim. 4:22), where the habitation of God is (Eph. 2:22). At Bethel, the house of God, the habitation of God, which is the gate of heaven, Christ is the ladder that joins earth to heaven and brings heaven to earth (Gen. 28:12-17; John 1:51). Since today our spirit is the place of God's habitation, it is now the gate of heaven, where Christ is the ladder that joins us, the people on earth, to heaven, and brings heaven to us. Hence, whenever we turn to our spirit, we enter through the gate of heaven and touch the throne of grace in heaven through Christ as the heavenly ladder.

2. “King Solomon made himself a palanquin/Of the wood of Lebanon./Its posts he made of silver,/Its bottom, of gold;/Its seat, of purple;/Its midst was inlaid with love / From the daughters of Jerusalem”—S. S. 3:9-10:
- a. By the Spirit’s transforming work in us, we become the moving vessel of Christ, the carriage of Christ, the “car” of Christ, for the move of Christ in and for the Body of Christ—cf. 2 Cor. 2:12-17.
 - 2 Cor 2:12 Furthermore, when I came to Troas for the gospel of Christ and a door was open to me in the Lord,
 - 2 Cor 2:13 I had no rest in my spirit, for I did not find Titus my brother; but taking leave of them, I went forth into Macedonia.
 - 2 Cor 2:14 But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in the Christ and manifests the savor of the knowledge of Him through us in every place.
 - 2 Cor 2:15 For we are a fragrance of Christ to God in those who are being saved and in those who are perishing:
 - 2 Cor 2:16 To some a savor out of death unto death, and to the others a savor out of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?
 - 2 Cor 2:17 For we are not like the many, adulterating the word of God for profit; but as out of sincerity, but as out of God, before God we speak in Christ.
 - b. We are rebuilt with the Divine Trinity so that our external structure is the resurrected and ascended humanity of Jesus, and our interior decoration is our love for the Lord—S. S. 3:9-10.
 - S. S. 3:9 King Solomon made himself a palanquin / Of the wood of Lebanon.
 - S. S. 3:10 Its posts he made of silver; / Its bottom, of gold; / Its seat, of purple; / Its midst was inlaid with love / From the daughters of Jerusalem.
 - c. Our inner being should be “inlaid with love” (v. 10); loving the Lord will keep us in the realm of having Christ as our humanity, safeguarding our humanity in the constraint of His affection (2 Cor. 5:14).
 - S. S. 3:10 Its posts he made of silver; / Its bottom, of gold; / Its seat, of purple; / Its midst was inlaid with love / From the daughters of Jerusalem.
 - 2 Cor 5:14 For the love of Christ constrains us because we have judged this, that One died for all, therefore all died;
 - d. Through our loving the Lord in a personal, affectionate, private, and spiritual way, our natural being is torn down, and we are remodeled with Christ’s redeeming death (posts made of silver), God’s divine nature (base), and Christ’s kingship as the life-giving Spirit ruling within us (seat of purple)—S. S. 3:10; cf. Rom. 8:28-29; 2 Cor. 4:16-18.
 - S. S. 3:10 Its posts he made of silver; / Its bottom, of gold; / Its seat, of purple; / Its midst was inlaid with love / From the daughters of Jerusalem.
 - Rom 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.
 - Rom 8:29 Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers;
 - 2 Cor 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart; but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.
 - 2 Cor 4:17 For our momentary lightness of affliction works out for us, more and more surpassingly, an eternal weight of glory,
 - 2 Cor 4:18 Because we do not regard the things which are seen but the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.
3. Through her living in Christ’s ascension as the new creation in resurrection, the lover of Christ becomes mature in the riches of the life of Christ so that she can become a garden to Christ for His private enjoyment (S. S. 4:12-15); she is prepared to give forth Christ’s fragrance in any circumstance or environment; she wants the difficult environment

(north wind) and the pleasant environment (south wind) to work on her as a garden that its fragrance may be spread (v. 16).

S. S. 4:12 A garden enclosed is my sister, my bride, / A spring shut up, a fountain sealed.
S. S. 4:13 Your shoots are an orchard of pomegranates / With choicest fruit; / Henna with spikenard,
S. S. 4:14 Spikenard and saffron; / Calamus and cinnamon, / With all the trees of frankincense; / Myrrh and aloes, / With all the chief spices.
S. S. 4:15 A fountain in gardens, / A well of living water, / And streams from Lebanon.
S. S. 4:16 Awake, O north wind; / And come, O south wind! / Blow upon my garden: / Let its spices flow forth; / Let my beloved come into his garden / And eat his choicest fruit.

D. In the fourth stage of Song of Songs, the lover of Christ is called more strongly to live within the veil through the cross after resurrection—5:2—6:13:

S. S. 5:2 I sleep, but my heart is awake. / A sound! My beloved is knocking. / Open to me, my sister, my love, / My dove, my perfect one; / For my head is drenched with dew, / My locks with the drops of night.
S. S. 5:3 I have put off my garment; / How can I put it on again? / I have washed my feet; / How can I dirty them again?
S. S. 5:4 My beloved put his hand into the opening of the door, / And my inner parts yearned for him.
S. S. 5:5 I rose up to open to my beloved; / And my hands dripped with myrrh, / My fingers with liquid myrrh, / Upon the handles of the bolt.
S. S. 5:6 I opened to my beloved, / But my beloved had withdrawn; he was gone. / My soul failed when he spoke; / I sought him, but found him not; / I called him
S. S. 5:7 The watchmen who go about the city found me. / They struck me; they wounded me; / The keepers of the walls took my veil from me.
S. S. 5:8 I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, / If you find my beloved, / What shall you tell him? / That I am sick with love.
S. S. 5:9 What is your beloved more than some other's beloved, / O you most beautiful among women? / What is your beloved more than some other's beloved, / That you adjure us so?
S. S. 5:10 My beloved is dazzling white yet ruddy, / Distinguished among ten thousand.
S. S. 5:11 His head is the finest gold; / His locks are wavy, / As black as a raven.
S. S. 5:12 His eyes are like doves / Beside the streams of water, / Bathed in milk, / Fitly set.
S. S. 5:13 His cheeks are like a bed of spices, / Mounds of sweetly fragrant herbs; / His lips are lilies, / Dripping with liquid myrrh.
S. S. 5:14 His hands are tubes of gold, / Set with beryl; / His belly is an ivory work, / Overlaid with sapphires.
S. S. 5:15 His legs are pillars of white marble, / Set upon bases of gold; / His appearance is like Lebanon, / As excellent as the cedars.
S. S. 5:16 His mouth is sweetness itself, / And he is altogether desirable. / This is my beloved, and this is my friend, / O daughters of Jerusalem.
S. S. 6:1 Where has your beloved gone, / O you most beautiful among women? / Where has your beloved turned, / That we may seek him with you?
S. S. 6:2 My beloved has gone down to his garden, / To the beds of spices, / To feed in the gardens / And gather lilies.
S. S. 6:3 I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine; / He pastures his flock among the lilies.
S. S. 6:4 You are as beautiful, my love, as Tirzah, / As lovely as Jerusalem, / As terrible as an army with banners.
S. S. 6:5 Turn your eyes away from me, / For they overwhelm me. / Your hair is like a flock of goats / That repose on Mount Gilead.
S. S. 6:6 Your teeth are like a flock of ewes / That have come up from the washing, / All of which have borne twins, / And none of them is bereaved of her young.
S. S. 6:7 Your cheeks are like a piece of pomegranate / Behind your veil.
S. S. 6:8 There are sixty queens and eighty concubines / And virgins without number.
S. S. 6:9 My dove, my perfect one, is but one; / She is the only one of her mother; / She is the choice one of her who bore her. / The daughters saw her, and they called her blessed; / The queens and the concubines, / They also praised her.

- S. S. 6:10 Who is this woman who looks forth like the dawn, / As beautiful as the moon, / As clear as the sun, / As terrible as an army with banners?
- S. S. 6:11 I went down to the orchard of nuts / To see the freshness of the valley, / To see whether the vine had budded, / Whether the pomegranates were in bloom.
- S. S. 6:12 Before I was aware, / My soul set me among the chariots of my noble people.
- S. S. 6:13 Return, return, O Shulammitte; / Return, return, that we may gaze at you. / Why should you gaze at the Shulammitte, / As upon the dance of two camps?
1. By living within the veil, the lover of Christ is transformed into the heavenly bodies; she looks forth like the dawn, she is as beautiful as the moon, and she is as clear as the sun—v. 10:

S. S. 6:10 Who is this woman who looks forth like the dawn, / As beautiful as the moon, / As clear as the sun, / As terrible as an army with banners?

 - a. The path of the overcomers is like the light of dawn, shining brighter and brighter until the full day—Prov. 4:18; John 1:5.
 - b. The light of dawn, the sunrise, signifies both Christ in His coming and our being revived every morning; the Christian life is like the dawning of the sun—Luke 1:78; Prov. 4:18; Psa. 110:3; Judg. 5:31.

Prov 4:18 But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, / Which shines brighter and brighter until the full day.

John 1:5 And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

Luke 1:78 Because of the merciful compassions of our God, in which the rising sun will visit us from on high,

Prov 4:18 But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, / Which shines brighter and brighter until the full day.

Psa 110:3 Your people will offer themselves willingly / In the day of Your warfare, / In the splendor of their consecration. / Your young men will be to You / Like the dew from the womb of the dawn.

Judg 5:31 May all Your enemies so perish, O Jehovah. / But may those who love Him be like the sun / When it rises in its might. And the land had rest forty years.
 2. In the maturity of Christ’s life, the lover of Christ becomes the Shulammitte (the feminine form of “Solomon”), signifying that she has become the same as He is in life, nature, expression, and function (but not in the Godhead) as the reproduction and duplication of Christ to match Him for their marriage—S. S. 6:13; 2 Cor. 3:18.

S. S. 6:13 Return, return, O Shulammitte; / Return, return, that we may gaze at you. / Why should you gaze at the Shulammitte, / As upon the dance of two camps?

2 Cor 3:18 But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.
 3. The Shulammitte is likened to the dance of two camps, or two armies (Heb. *mahanaim*), in the sight of God; after Jacob saw the angels of God, the two armies of God, he named the place where he was Mahanaim and divided his wives, children, and possessions into “two armies”—S. S. 6:13; Gen. 32:1-2:

S. S. 6:13 Return, return, O Shulammitte; / Return, return, that we may gaze at you. / Why should you gaze at the Shulammitte, / As upon the dance of two camps?

Gen 32:1 And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him.

Gen 32:2 And Jacob said when he saw them, This is God's camp. So he called the name of that place Mahanaim.

 - a. The spiritual significance of the two armies is the strong testimony that we more than conquer, we “super-overcome,” through Him who loved us, according to the principle of the Body of Christ—Rom. 8:37; 12:5.

Rom 8:37 But in all these things we more than conquer through Him who loved us.

Rom 12:5 So we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.
 - b. God does not want those who are strong in themselves; He wants only the feeble ones, the weaker ones, the women and children; those who are counted worthy to

be overcomers will be the weaker ones who depend on the Lord—1 Cor. 1:26-28; 2 Cor. 1:8-9; 12:9-10; 13:3-5.

1 Cor 1:26 For consider your calling, brothers, that there are not many wise according to flesh, not many powerful, not many wellborn.

1 Cor 1:27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world that He might shame those who are wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world that He might shame the things that are strong,

1 Cor 1:28 And the lowborn things of the world and the despised things God has chosen, things which are not, that He might bring to nought the things which are,

2 Cor 1:8 For we do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, of our affliction which befell us in Asia, that we were excessively burdened, beyond our power, so that we despaired even of living.

2 Cor 1:9 Indeed we ourselves had the response of death in ourselves, that we should not base our confidence on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead;

2 Cor 12:9 And He has said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in weakness. Most gladly therefore I will rather boast in my weaknesses that the power of Christ might tabernacle over me.

2 Cor 12:10 Therefore I am well pleased in weaknesses, in insults, in necessities, in persecutions and distresses, on behalf of Christ; for when I am weak, then I am powerful.

2 Cor 13:3 Since you seek a proof of the Christ who is speaking in me, who is not weak unto you but is powerful in you.

2 Cor 13:4 For indeed He was crucified out of weakness, but He lives by the power of God. For indeed we are weak in Him, but we will live together with Him by the power of God directed toward you.

2 Cor 13:5 Test yourselves whether you are in the faith; prove yourselves. Or do you not realize about yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you, unless you are disapproved?

E. In the fifth stage of Song of Songs, the lover of Christ shares in the work of the Lord—7:1-13:

S. S. 7:1 How beautiful are your footsteps in sandals, / O prince's daughter! / Your rounded thighs are like jewels, / The work of the hands of a skilled artist.

S. S. 7:2 Your navel is a round goblet / That never lacks mixed wine; / Your belly is a heap of wheat, / Fenced in by lilies.

S. S. 7:3 Your two breasts are like two fawns, / Twins of a gazelle.

S. S. 7:4 Your neck is like a tower of ivory; / Your eyes, like the pools in Heshbon / By the gate of Bath-rabbim; / Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon, / Which faces Damascus.

S. S. 7:5 Your head upon you is like Carmel, / And the locks of your head like purple. / The king is fettered by your tresses.

S. S. 7:6 How beautiful and how pleasant in delights / You are, O love!

S. S. 7:7 This your stature is like a palm tree, / And your breasts are like the clusters.

S. S. 7:8 I said, I will climb the palm tree; / I will take hold of its branches; / And let your breasts be like clusters of the vine, / And the fragrance of your nose like apples,

S. S. 7:9 And the roof of your mouth like the best wine

S. S. 7:10 I am my beloved's, / And his desire is for me.

S. S. 7:11 Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the fields; / Let us lodge in the villages.

S. S. 7:12 Let us rise up early for the vineyards; / Let us see if the vine has budded, / If the blossom is open, / If the pomegranates are in bloom; / There I will give you my love.

S. S. 7:13 The mandrakes give forth fragrance, / And over our doors are all choice fruits, / New as well as old. / These, my beloved, I have stored up for you.

1. In verse 4 the Spirit reviews the loving seeker's beauty in her submissive will (neck) wrought by the Spirit's transforming work through sufferings for the carrying out of God's will, in the expression of her heart, which is open to the light, clean, full of rest, and accessible (eyes like pools—cf. 1:15; 4:1; 5:12), and in her spiritual sense of high and sharp discernment (nose—cf. Phil. 1:9-10; Heb. 5:14).

S. S. 7:4 Your neck is like a tower of ivory; / Your eyes, like the pools in Heshbon / By the gate of Bath-rabbim; / Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon, / Which faces Damascus.

- S. S. 1:15 Oh, you are beautiful, my love! / Oh, you are beautiful! Your eyes are like doves.
- S. S. 4:1 Oh, you are beautiful, my love! / Oh, you are beautiful! Your eyes are like doves behind your veil; / Your hair is like a flock of goats / That repose on Mount Gilead.
- S. S. 5:12 His eyes are like doves / Beside the streams of water, / Bathed in milk, / Fitly set.
- Phil 1:9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in full knowledge and all discernment,
- Phil 1:10 So that you may approve by testing the things which differ and are more excellent, that you may be pure and without offense unto the day of Christ,
- Heb 5:14 But solid food is for the full-grown, who because of practice have their faculties exercised for discriminating between both good and evil.
2. Song of Songs 7:11 shows that Christ's lover wants to carry out with her Beloved the work that is for the entire world (fields) by sojourning from one place to another (lodging in the villages); this indicates that she is not sectarian in carrying out the Lord's work but keeps the work open, so that others can come to sojourn there and she can go to sojourn elsewhere; this is to keep one work in one Body.
- S. S. 7:11 Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the fields; / Let us lodge in the villages.
3. To share in the work of the Lord is to work together with Him (2 Cor. 6:1a); to work with Him, we need the maturity in life, we need to be one with the Lord, and our work must be for His Body (Col. 1:28-29; 1 Cor. 12:12-27).
- 2 Cor 6:1a And working together with Him, ...
- Col 1:28 Whom we announce, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom that we may present every man full-grown in Christ;
- Col 1:29 For which also I labor, struggling according to His operation which operates in me in power.
- 1 Cor 12:12 For even as the body is one and has many members, yet all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ.
- 1 Cor 12:13 For also in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and were all given to drink one Spirit.
- 1 Cor 12:14 For the body is not one member but many.
- 1 Cor 12:15 If the foot should say, Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body, it is not that because of this it is not of the body.
- 1 Cor 12:16 And if the ear should say, Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body, it is not that because of this it is not of the body.
- 1 Cor 12:17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were the hearing, where would the smelling be?
- 1 Cor 12:18 But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, even as He willed.
- 1 Cor 12:19 And if all were one member, where would the body be?
- 1 Cor 12:20 But now the members are many, but the body one.
- 1 Cor 12:21 And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.
- 1 Cor 12:22 But much rather the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary.
- 1 Cor 12:23 And those members of the body which we consider to be less honorable, these we clothe with more abundant honor; and our uncomely members come to have more abundant comeliness,
- 1 Cor 12:24 But our comely members have no need. But God has blended the body together, giving more abundant honor to the member that lacked,
- 1 Cor 12:25 That there would be no division in the body, but that the members would have the same care for one another.
- 1 Cor 12:26 And whether one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or one member is glorified, all the members rejoice with it.
- 1 Cor 12:27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.
4. The Shulammitte works as Solomon's counterpart, taking care of all the vineyards (S. S. 8:11), the churches and the believers on the whole earth; we must have a work that is for

the entire world; this is what Paul did by establishing local churches and then working to bring them into the full realization of the Body of Christ—Rom. 16:1-24.

S. S. 8:11 Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon: / He let out the vineyard to keepers; / Each was to bring a thousand shekels of silver for its fruit.

Rom 16:1 I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a deaconess of the church which is in Cenchrea,

Rom 16:2 That you receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints and assist her in whatever matter she may have need of you; for she herself has also been the patroness of many, of myself as well.

Rom 16:3 Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus,

Rom 16:4 Who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles;

Rom 16:5 And greet the church, which is in their house. Greet Epaenetus, my beloved, who is the firstfruits of Asia unto Christ.

Rom 16:6 Greet Mary, one who has labored much for you.

Rom 16:7 Greet Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

Rom 16:8 Greet Ampliatius, my beloved in the Lord.

Rom 16:9 Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys, my beloved.

Rom 16:10 Greet Apelles, approved in Christ. Greet those of the household of Aristobulus.

Rom 16:11 Greet Herodion, my kinsman. Greet those of the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord.

Rom 16:12 Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa, who labor in the Lord. Greet Persis, the beloved sister, one who has labored much in the Lord.

Rom 16:13 Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother as well as mine.

Rom 16:14 Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers with them.

Rom 16:15 Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints with them.

Rom 16:16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.

Rom 16:17 Now I exhort you, brothers, to mark those who make divisions and causes of stumbling contrary to the teaching which you have learned, and turn away from them.

Rom 16:18 For such men do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own stomach, and through smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.

Rom 16:19 For the report of your obedience has reached to all; therefore I rejoice over you, but I want you to be wise as to what is good and guileless as to what is evil.

Rom 16:20 Now the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

Rom 16:21 Timothy, my fellow worker, greets you, as well as Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my kinsmen.

Rom 16:22 I, Tertius, who write this epistle, greet you in the Lord.

Rom 16:23 Gaius, my host and host of the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer, greets you, and Quartus the brother.

Rom 16:24 See note 1. (Some ancient MSS add v. 24, The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.)

5. Song of Songs 7:12 says, “Let us rise up early for the vineyards; / Let us see if the vine has budded, / If the blossom is open, / If the pomegranates are in bloom; / There I will give you my love”; at this time she is able to relate the Lord’s work to the Lord Himself; now she can express her love to the Lord at the place of His work.

F. In the sixth stage of Song of Songs, the lover of Christ is hoping to be raptured (8:1-14); she is coming up from the wilderness (the earthly realm) by “leaning on her beloved” (v. 5):

S. S. 8:1 O that you were like a brother to me, / Who nursed at my mother's breasts! / If I found you outside, I would kiss you, / And none would despise me.

S. S. 8:2 I would lead you and bring you / Into my mother's house, / Who has instructed me; / I would make you drink spiced wine / From the juice of my pomegranate.

S. S. 8:3 His left hand would be under my head, / And his right hand would embrace me.

- S. S. 8:4 I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, / Do not rouse up or awaken my love / Until she pleases.
- S. S. 8:5 Who is this who comes up from the wilderness, / Leaning on her beloved? / I awakened you under the apple tree: / There your mother was in labor with you; / There she was in labor and brought you forth.
- S. S. 8:6 Set me as a seal on your heart, / As a seal on your arm; / For love is as strong as death, / Jealousy is as cruel as Sheol; / Its flashes are the flashes of fire, / A flame of Jehovah.
- S. S. 8:7 Many waters cannot quench love, / Nor do floods drown it. / If a man gave all the substance of his house for love, / It would be utterly despised.
- S. S. 8:8 We have a little sister, / And she has no breasts: / What shall we do for our sister / On the day when she is spoken for?
- S. S. 8:9 If she is a wall, / We will build on her a battlement of silver; / And if she is a door, / We will enclose her with boards of cedar.
- S. S. 8:10 I am a wall, and my breasts are like towers; / Then I was in his eyes like one who has found peace.
- S. S. 8:11 Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon: / He let out the vineyard to keepers; / Each was to bring a thousand shekels of silver for its fruit.
- S. S. 8:12 My vineyard, which is mine, is before me. / You will have the thousand, O Solomon; / And those who keep its fruit, two hundred.
- S. S. 8:13 O you who dwell in the gardens, / My companions listen for your voice; / Let me hear it.
- S. S. 8:14 Make haste, my beloved, / And be like a gazelle or a young hart / Upon the mountains of spices.

1. *Leaning on her beloved* implies that, like Jacob, the socket of her hip has been touched, and her natural strength has been dealt with by the Lord—Gen. 32:24-25.

Gen 32:24 And Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until the break of dawn.

Gen 32:25 And when the man saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was dislocated as he wrestled with Him.
2. *Leaning on her beloved* also implies that she finds herself pressed beyond measure, and this seems to last until the wilderness journey is over—2 Cor. 1:8-9; 12:9-10; 13:3-4.

2 Cor 1:8 For we do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, of our affliction which befell us in Asia, that we were excessively burdened, beyond our power, so that we despaired even of living.

2 Cor 1:9 Indeed we ourselves had the response of death in ourselves, that we should not base our confidence on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead;

2 Cor 12:9 And He has said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in weakness. Most gladly therefore I will rather boast in my weaknesses that the power of Christ might tabernacle over me.

2 Cor 12:10 Therefore I am well pleased in weaknesses, in insults, in necessities, in persecutions and distresses, on behalf of Christ; for when I am weak, then I am powerful.

2 Cor 13:3 Since you seek a proof of the Christ who is speaking in me, who is not weak unto you but is powerful in you.

2 Cor 13:4 For indeed He was crucified out of weakness, but He lives by the power of God. For indeed we are weak in Him, but we will live together with Him by the power of God directed toward you.
3. She asks her Beloved to set her as a seal on His heart of love and as a seal on His arm of strength; at this point she is conscious of her powerlessness and helplessness, and she realizes that everything depends on God's love and preserving power—S. S. 8:6-7.

S. S. 8:6 Set me as a seal on your heart, / As a seal on your arm; / For love is as strong as death, / Jealousy is as cruel as Sheol; / Its flashes are the flashes of fire, / A flame of Jehovah.

S. S. 8:7 Many waters cannot quench love, / Nor do floods drown it. / If a man gave all the substance of his house for love, / It would be utterly despised.
4. The lover of Christ asks Him who dwells in the believers as His gardens to let her hear His voice—v. 13; cf. 4:13—5:1; 6:2:

S. S. 8:13 O you who dwell in the gardens, / My companions listen for your voice; / Let me hear it.

- S. S. 4:13 Your shoots are an orchard of pomegranates / With choicest fruit; / Henna with spikenard,
- S.S. 4:14 Spikenard and saffron; / Calamus and cinnamon, / With all the trees of frankincense; / Myrrh and aloes, / With all the chief spices.
- S.S. 4:15 A fountain in gardens, / A well of living water, / And streams from Lebanon.
- S.S. 4:16 Awake, O north wind; / And come, O south wind! / Blow upon my garden: / Let its spices flow forth; / Let my beloved come into his garden / And eat his choicest fruit.
- S.S. 5:1 I have come into my garden, my sister, my bride; / I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; / I have drunk my wine with my milk. / Eat, O friends; / Drink, and drink deeply, O beloved ones!
- S. S. 6:2 My beloved has gone down to his garden, / To the beds of spices, / To feed in the gardens / And gather lilies.
- a. This indicates that in the work that we do for the Lord as our Beloved, we need to maintain our fellowship with Him, always listening to Him—Luke 10:38-42.
- Luke 10:38 Now as they went, He entered into a certain village, and a certain woman named Martha received Him into her home.
- Luke 10:39 And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at the Lord's feet and was listening to His word.
- Luke 10:40 But Martha was being drawn about with much serving, and she came up to Him and said, Lord, does it not matter to You that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to do her part with me.
- Luke 10:41 But the Lord answered and said to her, Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things;
- Luke 10:42 But there is need of one thing, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.
- b. Our lives depend on the Lord's words, and our work depends on the Lord's commands; the central point of our prayers should be our longing for the Lord's speaking—Rev. 2:7; 1 Sam. 3:9-10; cf. Isa. 50:4-5; Exo. 21:6.
- Rev 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.
- 1 Sam 3:9 And Eli said to Samuel, Go and lie down, and if He calls you, you shall say, Speak, O Jehovah; for Your servant is listening. And Samuel went and lay down in his place.
- 1 Sam 3:10 Then Jehovah came and stood by and called as at the other times, Samuel! Samuel! And Samuel said, Speak, for Your servant is listening.
- Isa 50:4 The Lord Jehovah has given me / The tongue of the instructed, / That I should know how to sustain the weary with a word. / He awakens me morning by morning; / He awakens my ear / To hear as an instructed one.
- Isa 50:5 The Lord Jehovah has opened my ear; / And I was not rebellious, / Nor did I turn back.
- Exo 21:6 Then his master shall bring him to God and shall bring him to the door or to the doorpost, and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him forever.
- c. Without the Lord's words, we will not have any revelation, light, or subjective knowledge of Christ as the mystery of God and of the church as the mystery of Christ (Col. 2:2; Eph. 3:4-5; 5:32); the life of the believers hinges totally upon the Lord's speaking (vv. 26-27).
- Col 2:2 That their hearts may be comforted, they being knit together in love and unto all the riches of the full assurance of understanding, unto the full knowledge of the mystery of God, Christ,
- Eph 3:4 By which, in reading it, you can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ,
- Eph 3:5 Which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in spirit,
- Eph 5:32 This mystery is great, but I speak with regard to Christ and the church.

- Eph 5:26 That He might sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing of the water in the word,
 Eph 5:27 That He might present the church to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that she would be holy and without blemish.

II. As the concluding word of this poetic book, the lover of Christ prays that her Beloved would make haste to come back in the power of His resurrection (gazelle and young hart) to set up His sweet and beautiful kingdom (mountains of spices), which will fill the whole earth—S. S. 8:14; Rev. 11:15; Dan. 2:35:

- S. S. 8:14 Make haste, my beloved, / And be like a gazelle or a young hart / Upon the mountains of spices.
 Rev 11:15 And the seventh angel trumpeted; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever.
 Dan 2:35 Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed all at once, and they became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

- A. Such a prayer portrays the union and communion between Christ as the Bridegroom and His lovers as the bride in their bridal love, in the way that the prayer of John, a lover of Christ, as the concluding word of the Holy Scriptures, reveals God’s eternal economy concerning Christ and the church in His divine love—Rev. 22:20.
 Rev 22:20 He who testifies these things says, Yes, I come quickly. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!
 B. “Come, Lord Jesus!” is the last prayer in the Bible (v. 20); the entire Bible concludes with the desire for the Lord’s coming expressed as a prayer.
 C. “When He comes, faith will be turned to facts, and praise will replace prayer. Love will consummate in a shadowless perfection, and we will serve Him in the sinless domain. What a day that will be! Lord Jesus, come quickly!” (Watchman Nee, *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, vol. 23, “The Song of Songs,” p. 126).

Excerpts from the Ministry:

PURSUING CHRIST FOR SATISFACTION

This series of messages covers the living of a Christ-seeker as depicted in Song of Songs. Such a living is expressed in the following stages of the seeker’s experience:

- (1) Attracted by Christ’s love, charmed by His name, and captivated by His person to pursue Him and be led into the church life.
- (2) Called to remain in the cross that she may be freed from her introspective self for the fulfilling of her Beloved’s purpose concerning her in the divine life.
- (3) Called to live in ascension and even within the veil to experience the stronger cross that she may be one with God in her spirit even before rapture.
- (4) Conformed, ultimately, to be the wonderful Shulammitte, who, as the duplication of Solomon, is the greatest and ultimate figure of the New Jerusalem as the counterpart of Christ.

We have interpreted nearly every sign in Song of Songs in the life-study of this book (see *Life-study of Song of Songs*). Now we have the burden to help all of us, through God’s mercy, apply what we have seen. In our application we will cover only the first six chapters of Song of Songs. I believe that after we pick up the way to apply this interpreted book, we will be able to see for ourselves the “crystals” in the last two chapters.

MAN BEING CREATED WITH A SEEKING HEART FOR GOD

The first “crystal” in this book is to pursue Christ for satisfaction. God created us for the

accomplishment of His eternal economy in His own image with the intention that we could become Him in life and nature but not in the Godhead. For this purpose He created us with a spirit to receive Him. Many people do not realize that God also created us with a seeking heart for Himself so that He could be our satisfaction.

Man fell away from God, and sin through Satan came in to frustrate man from receiving God for his satisfaction. Yet the desire for God, the seeking for God, still remains in man's heart. History tells us that over the past six thousand years many wise, great, philosophical, and thoughtful men have given the same testimony that nothing can fully satisfy man. Regardless of what they could get from the world, what they could attain, or what they could obtain, nothing can satisfy them because within them there is a seeking heart for God (Eccl. 3:11). This is why the wise King Solomon, after his many human experiences, concluded, "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity" (1:2). Everything under the sun is vanity of vanities if one does not have God. God purposely created within man a desire for Himself. The monks in Buddhism and the nuns in Catholicism have this desire, but they do not have the proper understanding of how to seek God. God has given man a heart that is seeking after Him for satisfaction.

PURSUING CHRIST

Song of Songs is a book in the Bible that tells us how we can be properly satisfied with God. There is no other way except by pursuing after Christ, because Christ is the very embodiment of the Triune God. He is the reality of God. He is God in reality, God's embodiment, coming to earth to give people the opportunity to receive Him for satisfaction.

Peter may be counted as the first one among the apostles, and Paul was a later one. They were seekers of God, but initially, they took the wrong way. Eventually, both Peter, a fisherman, and Paul, a learned scholar, found the way to seek Christ for satisfaction. Paul tells us in Philippians 3 that we have to pursue Christ to gain Him (vv. 12-14) because He is the most excellent way. All things other than Christ are dung (v. 8). Only Christ is excellent. Whatever we obtain or have obtained other than Christ is vanity. Paul says that it is dung. Do you like dung? But today many worldly people are gaining dung day after day. Dung is their food. Solomon says that they are pursuing vanity. Vanity of vanities is what they are eating. That is their food. Paul's desire was to gain Christ, and he instructs us how to gain Christ as he did.

In this chapter our point is that we have to pursue Christ for satisfaction. Song of Songs opens in this way: "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth!" (1:2a). The seeker longs for kisses, not just one kiss. The most impressive thing about weddings in the Western world is the time of kissing. The bridegroom opens the bride's veil to kiss her with his own mouth. He does not kiss the ears or the nose of the bride but her mouth. This is the most personal and affectionate thing. Here is a book in the Bible that opens in such a way: "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth!" This is what it means to pursue Christ.

According to the New Testament, God's ordained way for man to receive Him in this kind of personal and affectionate way is first to believe in Him. To believe in Him is to receive Him as the divine life into us so that we may have an organic union with God in the divine life. Regretfully, very few Christians know what believing in Christ means. They know that they need to take Him as their Savior and Redeemer, but they do not know that to believe in Christ is to receive Him as the divine life into us so that we can have an organic union with God in His divine life. This is the first step.

Now that we have received Christ into us, what does God want us to do? Many Christian teachers teach people in the wrong way. They say that after one has believed in Christ, he should do many things. This is wrong. According to the New Testament, after we believe in Christ, after we receive Him as the divine life into us, we have to love Him (see 1 Cor. 2:9 and footnote 3, Recovery Version). Paul says that the Lord's grace superabounded to him with faith and love in Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 1:14). Faith is to receive Christ, and love is to pursue Christ.

"Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth!" This word indicates that to some extent the seeker has obtained a part of Christ's love, but now she wants something more intimate. She wants to be kissed

not just with one kiss but with the kisses of His mouth. Someone who is affectionate with another may kiss him on the cheek, but this expression of affection is not the first category of love. On the wedding day who would want to see the bridegroom kiss his bride on the cheek? He is expected to kiss his bride on the mouth as the expression of his utmost affection.

In her desire to be kissed with the kisses of His mouth, the seeker goes on to say, “Your love is better than wine” (S. S. 1:2b). She does not say that His love is as good as wine but that it is better than wine. Wine cheers, but Christ’s love cheers us in an unrivaled way. No wine can compare with His unrivaled love. Nothing is so cheering as Christ’s love.

Verse 3 says, “Your anointing oils have a pleasant fragrance; / Your name is like ointment poured forth; / Therefore the virgins love you.” Christ’s name signifies Christ’s person, His being, and Christ is the compound Spirit signified by the anointing ointment in Exodus 30. “The last Adam became a life-giving Spirit” (1 Cor. 15:45b). This indicates that Christ’s name as His person is the anointing ointment. An ointment is always a compound. Christ is compounded with God, with man, with His death, with the effectiveness of His death, with His resurrection, and with the power of His resurrection. At least these six things are compounded together to be the anointing ointment, signifying Christ in His resurrection as the compound Spirit. If someone says your name, you respond because you are the person of that name. Christ’s charming name, His person, is the all-inclusive compound Spirit.

His love is attracting, His name is charming, and His person is captivating. He has drawn and captivated millions of His lovers to pursue after Him and is still doing the same today. Therefore, all His lovers would run after Him for their satisfaction. This is why the seeker prays, “Draw me; we will run after you” (S. S. 1:4a).

THE NEED FOR A PERSONAL AND AFFECTIONATE RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST

Dear saints, in this chapter I want to impress you with something particular. After you have received Christ as your life, you must have a very personal seeking after Christ. No one can represent you or do anything for you in this matter. It must be personal. Every believer’s relationship with Christ must be personal and affectionate.

God works in a personal and affectionate way, not in the way of a movement. Mao Tsetung gained the people of China by a movement, not by personal contact and affection. Even many in Christianity like to use the term *movement*. Some say that at John Wesley’s time in Oxford there was a movement. They also say that there was a great movement, a great revival, in Wales at the beginning of this century. This concept of having a movement is wrong. We do not want to have a movement in the Lord’s recovery. A person can be moved to join a movement and not have any personal contact with the Lord. Recently, we have stressed that God became a man that man may become God in life and nature but not in the Godhead. Although many responded to this truth, I was not very happy, because this response was a movement. In order to practice such a high truth, we need the personal and affectionate experience of Christ.

Since we have been born of God, we have become His children (John 1:12-13). John 3:6 says, “That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” Since God is Spirit and we were born of Him, what are we? That which is born of a cow is a cow. That which is born of Chinese is Chinese. Also, that which is born of God as the Spirit is spirit. This is logical. A paraphrased version of John 3:6 could read this way: “He who is born of God the Spirit is the spirit-God.” We were regenerated of God as the Spirit to be a spirit. As those who have been born of God, we are the children of God, the same as God in life and nature but not in the Godhead. Therefore, our relationship with God has to be personal and affectionate.

In these days I feel very much that there is a warm, intimate, close affection between me and my God. The seeker said, “Draw me.” She did not say, “Draw us.” *Draw me* is personal. We want a drawing from the Lord that is His personal and affectionate doing. We want Him to be with us in a personal and affectionate way. All the religions, including Christianity, present a portrait of God that is inaccurate.

They portray God merely as great, almighty, sovereign, majestic, and even unapproachable; no one can or even dares to touch God. To say that God is majestic is not wrong, but that is only one attribute of the Divine Being. Regardless of how great, sovereign, almighty, and majestic God is, when He wanted to build up His relationship with man, He took the personal, affectionate way. He took the way of becoming a man. If the Lord Jesus had come to Peter in a majestic way, Peter would have felt threatened. But He did not come to Peter as the majestic, untouchable God. Instead, He came to Peter as his countryman. Peter was a Galilean, and Jesus was also a Galilean. This is personal and affectionate.

The Lord Jesus lived among men for thirty-three and a half years. This was the way in which God came to build up His relationship with man. This is the personal, affectionate way recorded in the New Testament from the incarnation to the day of resurrection. On the morning of His resurrection the Lord's empty tomb was discovered by three sisters (Mark 16:1, 8). When they entered into the tomb, an angel gave them a message from the Lord, saying, "Go, tell His disciples and Peter" (v. 7). Peter's name mentioned in this way is personal and affectionate. Peter's intimate relationship with the Lord Jesus was particular, so it was stressed even by the angel. At the beginning of his contact with the Lord, Peter's response was not too personal, but gradually, Peter's transaction with the Lord became personal and affectionate.

The apostle John could recline on the Lord's bosom (John 13:23). How personal and affectionate that was! The very God, the very Lord whom we seek, sets up a feast and invites us to feast with Him (Rev. 3:20). We must have such a personal and affectionate contact with Him. If we mail someone a letter, that affects him in a certain way. But if we come to him with a personal visitation and an affectionate contact, that makes a great difference.

Hymns, #437 (stanzas 1 and 6 with the chorus) says,
Hast thou heard Him, seen Him, known Him?
Is not thine a captured heart?
Chief among ten thousand own Him;
Joyful choose the better part.
Captivated by His beauty,
Worthy tribute haste to bring;
Let His peerless worth constrain thee,
Crown Him now unrivaled King.

'Tis that look that melted Peter,
'Tis that face that Stephen saw,
'Tis that heart that wept with Mary,
Can alone from idols draw:

Only the face of tears that Peter saw, only the face of glory into which Stephen looked, and only the heart that wept with Mary can keep us away from the idols, the attractions, of this world. The Bible tells us that Jesus wept with Mary (John 11:35). Have you ever heard that God weeps? Many say that Jesus came to express God, but they mainly refer to the miracles that He did, not to the tears that He shed.

Dear saints, my burden in this chapter is to share that you have to start seeking the Lord in a personal and affectionate way. I want to stress these two words: *personal* and *affectionate*. The very God whom we pursue is personal and affectionate.

I have been in the Lord's fellowship for about seventy years, but there was one particular occasion when the Lord touched me in the most personal and affectionate way. In 1943 Japan invaded and occupied China. One day the military police of the invading Japanese army arrested me and imprisoned me for thirty days. Every day I was subjected to two very stern and strict examinations. At that time the Chinese knew how cruel the invading Japanese army was. They would kill a Chinese as they would a chicken. I do not believe that there were many Chinese who were arrested by the Japanese army and released after thirty days. All my relatives, friends, and brothers and sisters in the church were very concerned for my life.

On the first day of my imprisonment, the Japanese military police put me into a soldier's bedroom; that night the Lord gave me a dream, indicating to me that the Japanese army would not hurt me. The next day they began to interrogate me. They threatened to pour cold water upon me if I did not tell the truth. I said to myself, "You don't need to threaten me, because I will surely speak the truth. I am a man of truth." After many times of their testing, they could not find anything wrong with me. After fifteen days of being imprisoned, I was alone in my small cell in the night. I stood up and I can testify that the Lord was in my presence embracing me. I said with tears, "Lord, You know why I am here." This experience of the Lord was personal to the uttermost. In my whole life I never had a time like that in which the Lord was so personal to me. I was so personal and affectionate to Him, and He was the same to me.

We all need this kind of personal, affectionate, intimate contact with the Lord every day. This has become my habit. Every morning after rising up I go to my desk, and the first thing I say is, "Lord Jesus, I love You." I am not just a poor man praying to a merciful God, but I am contacting a Savior who is personal and affectionate to me, as I am personal and affectionate to Him. We all need to take heed to what the seeker says: "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth!" Right away her tone changes: "Your love is better than wine." This is a personal, intimate prayer. "Draw me; we will run after you." This is personal and affectionate. We need this kind of personal and affectionate seeking after Him, and we need to build up such a relationship with Him that is so personal and affectionate. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1994-1997*, vol. 3, "Crystallization-study of Song of Songs," pp. 254-260)

FELLOWSHIPING IN THE INNER CHAMBERS WITH CHRIST

In the first chapter we stressed two words: *personal* and *affectionate*. In saving us and in building up a relationship with us, God came to visit us personally and affectionately. How personal and affectionate Jesus was in the Gospels! But this was His visitation to His chosen people in the physical life. He was a man physically but was not yet the Spirit.

One day He told His disciples of His intention to die. They could not understand this. They thought that He had come to build up the kingdom of God and that they would be with Him on the throne. James and John wanted to sit at His right and left in His kingdom. When the other ten heard this, they were indignant, showing that they also were ambitious to be with the Lord on the throne (Matt. 20:20-28). They were in the physical realm.

Through His death and in His resurrection He became "another kind of Jesus." He was no longer physical, because He became a life-giving Christ, a life-giving Spirit. The last Adam, who was Jesus in the flesh, became a life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b). I would like to ask, "Are you still preaching and ministering a physical Jesus or a pneumatic Christ?" Mostly, those in Christianity preach a physical Savior, but the Bible unveils to us that this physical Savior, after He accomplished God's full redemption through His death, changed into a life-giving Spirit in resurrection. They do not believe that Christ has become another kind of person, not physical but spiritual.

When Christ was in the flesh, He could visit His disciples outwardly and openly, but there was no possibility for Him to visit His disciples inwardly and privately. Today Christ visits us privately and spiritually because He is the life-giving, compound, consummated, all-inclusive Spirit. He is the Spirit as the consummation of the processed and consummated Triune God, so He visits people secretly, privately, not openly.

THE KING, CHRIST, BRINGING US INTO HIS INNER CHAMBERS, OUR REGENERATED SPIRIT

First, in Song of Songs the Lord captivates His seeker, and she with all her companions follows Him. To pursue Christ for satisfaction is the first "crystal" in Song of Songs. The second crystal is the King bringing His seeker into His inner chambers. Song of Songs is a book of figures. In a figure of speech the king's inner chambers signify our regenerated spirit as Christ's inner chambers.

God created man so that man may become Him by His being received by man so that He can enter into and stay in man. For this reason God created us with a spirit. According to the New Testament teaching, our regenerated spirit is not only for us to have a means to receive Him but also for us to contain Him. Second Timothy 4:22 says, “The Lord be with your spirit.” Ephesians 3:16 says that we need to be strengthened into our inner man. The inner man is our regenerated spirit. Ephesians 2:22 shows that our spirit is a habitation, a dwelling place, to God. The real inner chambers to God are our spirit.

Regretfully, the majority of Christians in today’s Christianity do not believe that there is such a thing as the human spirit. They say that the human spirit is synonymous with man’s soul or heart. The Chinese translation of the Bible mixes up the heart, the soul, and the spirit by using the terms *spirit-soul* or *heart-spirit*. Not many Christians today know definitely that they have a spirit. When I came to the United States in the early 1960s, I began to teach concerning the human spirit. Many told me that before I taught this, they never knew that they had a spirit.

There are three verses in the New Testament that show the divine Spirit and the regenerated human spirit. John 4:24 says, “God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit.” In this verse are God the Spirit and our spirit, with which we worship God the Spirit. John 3:6 says, “That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” Romans 8:16 says, “The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.” I came to the United States with a burden to release all the high-peak truths. One among these is the human spirit. Another is that Christ, as the last Adam, became a life-giving Spirit. Christ as the life-giving Spirit dwells in our human spirit, and these two spirits are mingled together to be one spirit (1 Cor. 6:17).

In this chapter we want to stress the words *private* and *spiritual*. Christianity preaches the physical Jesus, but we preach the pneumatic Christ, the Christ who is the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:17). This One is private and spiritual. We have seen that the king’s chambers signify our spirit. He visits us in our spirit privately, and He comes to us in a spiritual way, not a physical way. He visits us privately as the all-inclusive consummated Spirit.

Christ the King brings His seekers into His chambers, that is, into their regenerated spirit, His dwelling place. Let us consider the application of this. When I was young, I was taught to pray to God as the heavenly Father. I was also told not to pray to the Spirit, because in the entire New Testament you cannot find a verse concerning praying to the Spirit. But the more we pray, the more we have the feeling that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are all in us (Eph. 4:6; 2 Cor. 13:5; Rom. 8:9). According to our experience, our spirit is the Holy of Holies—the dwelling place, the inner chambers, of the Triune God. In this first chapter of Song of Songs He and we have the private and affectionate fellowship.

The seeker in Song of Songs prayed, “Draw me; we will run after you” (1:4a). Then the king drew her and she followed, but she did not know where to go. The King knows where to go. We must go to our spirit. The inner chambers of Christ are His lovers’ regenerated spirits mingled with and indwelt by Him as the life-dispensing Spirit (Rom. 8:16; 2 Tim. 4:22; Rom. 8:11) and are the practical Holy of Holies in Christ’s lovers for their participation in and enjoyment of the pneumatic Christ as the consummated Triune God (Heb. 4:16).

After we were saved, we began to pray, and eventually, we realized that the heavenly Father, the Lord Jesus, and the Spirit are all in us. But at that time we did not know in what part of our being the Triune God dwelt. We did not know that we had a human spirit, but gradually we found out that the Triune God dwells in our regenerated spirit. The seeker followed the Lord, and He immediately brought her to her regenerated spirit to have fellowship with Him. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1994–1997*, vol. 3, “Crystallization-study of Song of Songs,” pp. 263-265)

BEFORE THE RAPTURE (8:5-14)

Song of Songs 8:5 says, “Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved? I raised thee up under the apple tree: there thy mother brought thee forth; there she brought thee

forth that bare thee.” This book speaks of the maiden coming up from the wilderness two times. The first coming up from the wilderness in 3:6 refers to her forsaking of a wandering life. There she began her absolute union with the Lord in His death, His life, and all His grace. Since then she steadily advanced, until she left the wilderness completely. Although in her latter experience she stopped once or twice, we dare not say that these stops were necessary, but surely we can say that they were excusable. Once we leave the wandering life, we leave it for good. Why then does the Lord speak about her coming up from the wilderness a second time, as if she is still in the wilderness?

We must pay attention to what the wilderness refers to. The wilderness for us is not just a wandering life, but the world itself. Not only is there a wilderness in the spiritual realm; there is also a wilderness in the fleshly realm. We must not only be delivered spiritually from the wilderness of wandering, but we must be delivered from this earthly wilderness as well. When the Lord reigns within us through the Holy Spirit, we begin to leave behind a fluctuating life. When we hear the call for the rapture, we will be delivered from the worldly environment. The cross of Christ delivers us from the spiritual wilderness, and the coming of Christ delivers us from the earthly wilderness. This is why there is a second coming up from the wilderness. This is being delivered from this earth.

The Holy Spirit once again asks a question through the mouth of a third party. “Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness?” It seems as if He sees a maiden coming up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved; the closer she gets, the clearer her identity becomes.

Here we see that the rapture that delivers us from the wilderness does not happen suddenly, but is a result of a step-by-step walk with the Lord. The rapture is the last step of our walk with the Lord. All that men see will be the instant change from earth to heaven. But this is merely the last step of the rapture. The beginning of the rapture does not happen then. When a believer is attracted by heaven and walking away from the world step by step, he becomes further and further away from the world, and there will be a clearer and clearer separation between him and the world. When the process is complete, he will find himself waking up before the face of the Lord. This is the way that Enoch was raptured. We must never be misled to think that the rapture is something that will happen suddenly or something that will instantly change our spiritual condition.

This is the time to prepare ourselves for the rapture. By leaning upon our Beloved, we constantly leave the world behind and come up again and again until the Lord comes to take us away.

“Leaning upon her beloved.” She seems to be powerless and unable to walk. “Leaning upon her beloved.” She makes herself a burden for her beloved to carry. “Leaning upon her beloved.” It is as if the hollow of her thigh has been touched. “Leaning upon her beloved.” She seems to find herself pressed beyond measure, and this seems to last until the wilderness journey is over. Only the Lord can prepare us for the rapture. A trusting life is indispensable. We should trust in Him helplessly until the Holy Spirit exclaims, “Who is this that cometh...leaning upon her beloved?”

The Lord answers and says that she is none other than the once-filthy sinner, who was seen by grace, called by grace, and saved by grace. Her mother is God’s grace. The grace of God does not refer just to God’s forbearance. His forbearance is only a small part of His grace. God’s grace also includes His plan and selection before the foundation of the world and His Son’s redemption and the work of the Holy Spirit in time. All these are God’s grace according to the Bible. When God’s grace seeks and finds a chosen sinner, it puts him under the shadow of Christ. There he is fed with life, and there he is brought forth. When he wakes up, he finds himself in the love of Christ.

The “apple” tree is the same bergamot orange in 2:3; it refers to Christ, who is full of affection. Who is this maiden? She is none other than a sinner saved by grace. Thank God that when she first opened her eyes to behold the world, the first thing she saw was the affectionate Christ. The first fact she discovered was that she was under the shadow of such an affectionate Christ. This was her origin. How fitting it is for her to remember this at the time of her spiritual maturity!

Verse 6 of chapter 8 says, “Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most

vehement flame.” When she recalls her original condition, she cannot help but be filled with humility. She cannot help but consider her emptiness, the vanity of her experience, the undependability of her mind, and the futility of her pursuit. Her only hope is the Lord. She realizes that whether she can endure to the end does not depend on her own endurance, but on the Lord’s preservation. No spiritual perfection can sustain a person until the Lord’s return. Everything depends on God and His preserving power. When she realizes this, she cannot help but exclaim, “Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm.” The heart is the place of love, while the arm is the place of strength. “Set me as permanently as a seal upon Your heart, and as indelibly as a seal upon Your arm. Just as the priests bore the Israelites upon their breasts and their shoulders, remember me constantly in Your heart and sustain me with Your arm. I know that I am weak and empty, and I am conscious of my powerlessness. Lord, I am a helpless person. If I try to preserve myself until Your coming, it will only bring shame to Your name and loss to myself. All my hopes are in Your love and power. I loved You before. But I know the undependability of that love. Now I look only to the love You have toward me. I held You once, and it seemed to be a powerful grip. But now I realize that even my strongest grip is just weakness. My trust is not in my holding power, but in Your holding power. I dare not speak of my love to You any longer. I dare not speak of my grasping of You any longer. From this point on, everything depends on Your strength and Your love.

“Your love is as strong as death. Who can shake death? No sighing of parents, no tears of wives, and no sorrow of friends can bring back a man from death. Death holds its captives and keeps them firmly, unrelentingly, and unshakably in its hand. If You love me, I will not be shaken, because Your love cannot possibly be weaker than death.

“If You love me, Your jealousy will follow. Your jealousy will be as cruel as Sheol. You will surely rebuke and surely seek for perfection. You will not allow anything to share my heart. Even if You owned a major part of me, You would not be satisfied. Your eyes cannot stand to see those who are Yours being defiled by the world or usurped by other loves. You are jealous; from the beginning of time You have been a jealous God (Exo. 20:5). Have not Your apostles told us about the jealousy of God (2 Cor. 11:2)? If You are jealous, who can withstand Your jealousy? What can withstand Your jealousy? You will destroy all Your enemies. You will remove all hindrances until You become the unique Lord, the God of all, and the unchallenged King. In this way, I will be protected, and my chastity will be preserved until I see Your face.”

Jealousy is as cruel as Sheol. What can be crueler than Sheol? A person may be the most lovable one, the most adorable one, or the most precious one, but when Sheol comes to claim a sinner, it will not care if such a one is lovable or adorable. No tears, sorrow, or pleading can move its heart. It does not know mercy and compassion. It has no sympathy or feeling. It is cruel. “Since I have consecrated myself to You as a chaste virgin, if You see anything in me that stirs up Your jealousy, You will surely deal with it at all cost until You completely prevail. There may be loving friends, close relatives, or dear lovers begging, pleading, and weeping, but You do not care for any of these things; You only care for Your own feeling. But this is the only way that I will be preserved.”

“The coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame.” Jehovah is a fire (Heb. 12:29). His love and jealousy are also like fire which burns up everything that can be burned. Everything that is not eternal, that can pass away, that is of the world, and that is of man will be burned away.

Song of Songs 8:7 says, “Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned.” “Many waters” signify trials that believers go through. “Floods” signify persecutions from the enemy. His love and the fire of His love will not be quenched by trials. His love and the fire of His love cannot be drowned by persecutions. If He loves us, no trial or persecution can do anything to us.

This love cannot be bought with money. In other words, it is irreplaceable. We cannot replace this love with the tongues of men and angels. We cannot replace this love with the gift of prophecy, the knowledge of mysteries, all knowledge, or all faith. Even if we doled out all our possessions to feed

others and delivered up our body so that we might boast, we would still be despised. These things are merely part of the treasures of a man's house. Trying to exchange love for these things will result in being despised. Since this is the case, we will not earn His love with more work, busy times, or toiling services. We can only offer ourselves to Him so that we will become the object of His love.

Verse 13 says, "Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice: cause me to hear it." "Thou" refers to the Lord. "The gardens" are plural in number. He is not only dwelling in the garden of the maiden (6:2) but dwelling in many other gardens as well. He is the Lord who dwells in the hearts of men. He is not only dwelling in the heart of one who follows Him absolutely, but He is dwelling in the hearts of all those whom He delights in. The maiden addresses Him according to this relationship. She says to Him, "The companions hearken to thy voice." The word "hearken" means that everyone is listening. All those who are seeking the Lord together with her adopt the same attitude. They have been dealt with, and they know the futility of speaking and the profit of hearkening. They know that they have to be slow to speak in order to be quick to hear. Both she and they are no longer as talkative as they once were; they no longer babble about their condition before the Lord as soon as they acquire some experience. That conduct is gone. They no longer insist on speaking like others do, and they no longer speak for the sake of speaking. Those who cannot stop talking about trivial things still have the earthly life reigning within them. But these are listening; they adopt the attitude of a hearer. They know that their lives depend on the Lord's words and their work depends on the Lord's commands. They will only listen, because they cannot and will not move by themselves any longer. Without the Lord's words, they will not have any revelation, light, or knowledge. The life of the believers hinges totally upon the Lord's speaking.

"O Lord, while we are waiting to hearken, make us hear. If those who seek find, and if those who knock have the door opened to them, make us hear, and make us able to hear. If Jehovah will not speak to us, we will be like those who are dead. What use is there in hearing something if it is not heard in a real way? Therefore, please allow us to hear Your voice, because only this can guide us until Your return." She has learned her lessons by now; therefore, she offers up such a profound prayer toward the end.

Song of Songs 8:14 says, "Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices." These words are the same as in 2:17. It is the same prayer, but the things that are referred to are not the same in both cases. This book mentions the wilderness two times, and in the same way, it mentions the Lord's coming as "a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices" two times. The first time on the mountains refers to His fellowship with the believers; it shows His longing for an absolute fellowship with the believers. But then the shadows had not fled and the day had not yet broken; that is, the Lord had not yet come. The emphasis was fellowship. Therefore, we saw Him upon the mountains of Bether; He was clearing away everything that was causing "separation." But the second refers to the Lord's second coming. This coming is in the future, and though it may be very near, no one knows when it will be. Unlike the case in chapter two, it does not have a time limit. The matter is not fellowship; therefore, this verse does not speak of the mountains of Bether but of the mountains of spices. It describes the condition of the Lord's coming and His kingdom. At that time, it will be a marvelous world, one like the mountains of spices.

Then the maiden's experience will be like a drop of water that has disappeared into the ocean; there will no more room for advancement, though the tide can always go deeper. All that is left in the world is just her body. Everything else has gone to another world. Therefore, she cannot help but cry, "Make haste, my beloved." "Come as quickly as the roe or a young hart. Just as a roe or a young hart appears on the mountains of spices, may You come in Your kingdom." Although the love is perfect, something is still lacking. When He comes, faith will be turned to facts, and praise will replace prayer. Love will consummate in a shadowless perfection, and we will serve Him in the sinless domain. What a day that will be! Lord Jesus, come quickly! (*The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, vol. 23, "The Song of Songs," pp. 116-121, 124-126)