

Song of Solomon Chapter 6

Those made acquainted with the excellences of Christ, and the comfort of an interest in him, desire to know where they may meet him.

Those who would find Christ, must seek him early and diligently.

Song of Solomon 6:1 "Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? whither is thy beloved turned aside? that we may seek him with thee."

The title is the same used by them, and by Christ before them (SOS 1:8).

And here repeated, to assure her that they were serious in asking this question, and that it was in great respect to her they put it.

And which, to the same sense, in other words, is expressed.

"Whither is thy beloved turned aside?"

Which way did he take?

On what hand did he turn, to the right or left, when he went from thy door?

They ask no longer who or what he was, being satisfied with the church's description of him.

By which they had gained some knowledge of him, and had their affections drawn out unto him.

And were desirous of knowing more of him and of being better acquainted with him, and to enjoy his company and presence.

Though as yet they had but little faith in him, and therefore could not call him "their" beloved, only "her" beloved.

And this question is put and repeated in this manner, to show that they were serious and in earnest.

Yea, were in haste, and impatient to know which way he went.

"That we may seek him with thee":

It was not mere speculation or curiosity that led them to put the above questions.

They were desirous to go into practice, to join with the church in the search of Christ.

To seek him with her in the word and ordinances; upon which they were determined.

Could they get any hint from her where he had gone, and where was it they were most likely to find him.

For so the words may be rendered, "and we will seek him with thee".

This they had resolved on among themselves, and only wanted directions which way to steer their course.

Or a grant to go along with the church in quest of her beloved.

This is speaking of the Bridegroom being gone away for a while.

This symbolizes the Lord Jesus, who is even now seated in heaven at the right hand of the Father.

He is building a home for His bride.

The world does not understand that He is gone away, and is coming back for His bride.

John 14:3 "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, [there] ye may be also."

They are constantly asking, "If He is coming back, why has He not already come"?

The bride is even now saying, "Come quickly Lord Jesus".

Verses 6:2-3

Christ's church is a garden, enclosed, and separated from the world.

He takes care of it, delights in it, and visits it.

Those who would find Christ, must attend him in his ordinances, the word, sacraments, and prayer.

When Christ comes to his church, it is to entertain his friends.

And to take believers to himself: he picks the lilies one by one; and at the great day he will send forth his angels to gather all his lilies, that he may be for ever admired in them.

The death of a believer is not more than the owner of a garden plucking a favorite flower; and He will preserve it from withering, yea, cause it to flourish for ever, with increasing beauty.

If our own hearts can witness for us that we are Christ's, question not his being ours, for the covenant never breaks on his side.

It is the comfort of the church, that he feeds among the lilies, that he takes delight in his people.

Song of Solomon 6:2 "My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies."

The spouse had hitherto been at a loss for her Beloved, but having diligently sought him, and inflamed both her own and others' affections with love to him by her just commendations.

Now at last she meets with a gracious answer from God, directing her where to find him.

Which also comes very seasonably.

Not only for her own relief and comfort, but also for the benefit of others, who inquired after him.

"To the beds of spices":

Of odoriferous plants; to which particular believers, planted regularly in the churches of Christ, may be compared.

For the excellency and fragrantcy of their graces; and among whom Christ delights to be (see SOS 4:13).

"To feed in the gardens":

To feed his flocks there: not on commons and in fields, but in gardens, which is unusual.

And by which are meant particular churches, where Christ feeds his people.

By his Spirit and by his ministers, word and ordinances, with himself, the bread of life.

With the discoveries of his love, better than wine; and with the doctrines and promises of the Gospel.

"And to gather lilies":

To crop them with the hand; lilies are liable to be cropped, hence Horace calls the lily "breve lilium", the short lived lily.

To these saints may be compared, for the glory, splendor, and beauty, they receive from Christ (see SOS 2:2).

There was a gathering of these at the death of Christ (Eph. 2:10).

And there is a gathering of them in effectual calling, and into a church state, and into nearer communion with Christ.

But here it seems to signify gathering them by death, when fully ripe, to enjoy everlasting fellowship with him.

The Garden of Eden was patterned after the garden in heaven, where the tree of life is.

Jesus is, even now, there waiting until the Father tells Him it is time to come and get His bride.

Song of Solomon 6:3 "I [am] my beloved's, and my beloved [is] mine: he feedeth among the lilies."

Expressive of interest in Christ, and union to him, and of her faith therein.

Which still continued, notwithstanding her unbecoming behavior toward Christ, and her many infirmities (SOS 5:2).

Aben Ezra connects the words with the preceding, "my beloved is gone", etc.

But though he is, and I am left alone, I know I am his, and he is mine.

Which throws a beauty upon the words, and declares the excellency and strength of her faith; for herein lies the glory and excellency of faith.

To believe in an unseen Christ: though it may be the Shekinah was with her, as the Targum has it.

Or Christ had now appeared to her, and was found by her, and therefore, like Thomas, says, "my Lord and my God".

"He feedeth among the lilies" (see notes on SOS 2:16).

The bride is not in despair.

She knows Her bridegroom is coming back.

All Christians who are the bride have taken on the name of their groom.

The name "Christian", starts with Christ.

Hebrews 8:10 "For this [is] the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:"

Revelation 21:3 "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God [is] with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, [and be] their God."

Verses 6:4-10

All the real excellence and holiness on earth center in the church.

Christ goes forth subduing his enemies, while his followers gain victories over the world, the flesh, and the devil.

He shows the tenderness of a Redeemer.

The delight he takes in his redeemed people, and the workings of his own grace in them.

True believers alone can possess the beauty of holiness.

And when their real character is known, it will be commended.

Both the church and believers, at their first conversion, look forth as the morning, their light being small, but increasing.

As to their sanctification, they are fair as the moon, deriving all their light, grace, and holiness from Christ.

And as to justification, clear as the sun, clothed with Christ, the Sun of righteousness.

And fighting the good fight of faith, under the banners of Christ, against all spiritual enemies.

Song of Solomon 6:4 "Thou [art] beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as [an army] with banners."

These are the words of Christ, who had now again manifested himself to his church.

Whereby he declares, that though he had for a season hid his face from her, yet still he retained a sincere and fervent affection to her.

And that, notwithstanding her manifold infirmities, she was yet beautiful in his eyes.

"As Tirzah":

A very pleasant city, as its very name signifies, and therefore made the royal seat of the kings of Israel.

Of which see (1 Kings 14:17; 15:31, 33; 16:6).

"Comely as Jerusalem":

Which was beautiful, both for its situation (Psalm 48:2), and for its goodly buildings, especially the temple (Lam. 2:15).

"Terrible as an army with banners":

To her enemies, though so lovely to Christ.

This shows that not a single person is meant all along, who could not with propriety be compared to an army.

But a collective body, as the church is.

And that the church on earth is militant, and, like a well-disciplined army, in good standing, and provided with proper officers and suitable armor.

And in a posture of defense, and ready to fight when attacked.

And so "terrible" to her enemies, Satan and his principalities, wicked men and false teachers.

Who are terrified by their having such a General at the head of them as Christ.

And being under such banners as his, and provided with such good weapons of warfare, as are mighty through God.

The bride of Christ is spoken of as all believers in Christ.

It is also spoken of as New Jerusalem.

The Scripture above, is the beginning of the groom speaking wonderful things to His bride.

Ephesians 5:27 "That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

The church is the city of God.

Song of Solomon 6:5 "Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me: thy hair [is] as a flock of goats that appear from Gilead."

Her eyes of faith and love; not through dislike of them, but as ravished with them.

His passions were so struck by them, and his heart pierced with them, that he could stand it out no longer against her (see SOS 4:9).

Some render the words, "turn away thine eyes from me".

This being the first time of meeting, after her ungrateful treatment of him, she might be filled with shame and confusion for it.

And therefore, hung down her head, or looked on one side.

Wherefore he encourages her to look him full in the face, with a holy confidence.

For such looks of faith are very agreeable to Christ (see SOS 2:14).

"For they have overcome me":

That is, her eyes, they had made a conquest of his heart.

Which does not imply weakness in Christ, but condescending grace, that he should suffer himself, as it were, to be overpowered by the faith and love of his people.

Who has conquered them and all their enemies.

Christ has a kind of pride as well as pleasure in his church.

He is proud of the beauty he has put upon her, and of the graces he has wrought in her; especially of her faith, when in exercise (see Matt. 8:10).

And by others, "they have made me fiercer"; not with anger and indignation, but with love.

There is a force, a fierceness in love, as well as in wrath.

"Love is strong as death, and jealousy is cruel as the grave" (SOS 8:6).

It is so in the church, and much more in Christ.

All which shows the power of faith, to which mighty things are ascribed (Heb. 11:1); and here the conquest of Christ himself.

"Thy hair is as a flock of goats that appear from Gilead":

This clause, and the whole following verse, are repeated from (SOS 4:1-2).

And this repetition is not vain nor absurd, but very agreeable to the nature of a pastoral and song of love, as being an effect and testimony of vehement affection.

And besides it confirms what was said before, and shows that the church's miscarriages, and Christ's desertion of her upon it, had not made him change his opinion of her, or affection to her.

In an earlier Scripture, we saw that the goats had long black hair.

The church of the Lord Jesus Christ is victorious, when Jesus is present.

Jesus is the victor.

No earthly power will be able to withstand the church.

The reason being the power of the Lord Jesus Christ in the church.

Even for the king the gentle eyes of the bride have an awe-striking majesty.

Such is the condescension of love.

Now from (SOS 6:5-7), the longest of the repetitions which abound in the Song.

Marking the continuance of the king's affection as when first solemnly proclaimed (SOS 4:1-6).

The two descriptions belong, according to some (Christian), expositors, to the Church of different periods.

In other words, to the primitive Church in the splendor of her first vocation, and to the Church under Constantine.

Other (Jewish), expositors apply them to "the congregation of Israel" under the first and second temples respectively.

Song of Solomon 6:6 "Thy teeth [are] as a flock of sheep which go up from the washing, whereof every one beareth twins, and [there is] not one barren among them."

Not vain repetition of (SOS 4:1-2).

The use of the same words shows His love unchanged after her temporary unfaithfulness (see Mal. 3:6).

We have touched on this before.

The teeth are white.

This just means they are very fruitful.

Song of Solomon 6:7 "As a piece of a pomegranate [are] thy temples within thy locks."

The same descriptions are given in (SOS 4:3; see notes there).

And these are repeated, to show the reality of the church's beauty, and for the sake of confirmation.

And that it still continued the same, notwithstanding her failings and infirmities.

And that Christ had the same esteem of her, and love to her, he ever had.

That part of the description, respecting the church's lips and speech (in SOS 4:3); is here omitted, though added (at the end of SOS 6:6); by the Septuagint.

This perhaps, is speaking of our mind stayed upon God.

God is not interested so much in a church with outward beauty, as He is in its inward beauty.

He does not want us to have a form of religion.

He wants us to love Him with all our heart, body, soul and mind.

Song of Solomon 6:8 "There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number."

In this verse and (SOS 6:9), the church is commended as she stood related to others.

And is compared with them, and preferred to them.

The words may be considered either as an assertion, "there are", etc. or as a supposition, "though there be", etc.

Yet Christ's church is but one, and excels them all.

"Queens" are principal and lawful wives of kings.

"Concubines", secondary or half wives, as the word signifies; who were admitted to the bed, but their children did not inherit.

"Virgins", unmarried persons, maids of honor, who waited on the queen.

The allusion is to the custom of kings and great personages, who had many wives, and more concubines.

And a large number of virgins to wait on them (see 1 Kings 11:3).

Or to a nuptial solemnity, and the ceremony of introducing the bride to the bridegroom, attended with a large number of persons of distinction.

"And virgins without number":

The multitudes of poor, weak, ignorant people, seduced by them.

And what figure to any extent these make, or pretensions to be the true churches of Christ, they are none of his, his spouse is preferred to them all.

Or rather true believers in Christ, of different degrees, are here meant.

Queens, those that have the greatest share of gifts grace, most nearness to Christ, and communion with him.

By "concubines", believers of a lower class, and of a more servile spirit, and yet sometimes are favored with, fellowship with Christ.

And by "virgins", young converts, who have not so large an experience as the former.

And this distribution agrees with (1 John 2:13).

And the rather this may be the sense, since each of these are said to praise the church in (SOS 6:9), who is preferable to them, and includes them all.

Threescore is speaking of 60.

Fourscore is speaking of 80.

The queens, concubines and virgins represent the different types of women.

The virgins represent the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Song of Solomon 6:9 "My dove, my undefiled is [but] one; she [is] the [only] one of her mother, she [is] the choice [one] of her that bare her. The daughters saw her, and blessed her; [yea], the queens and the concubines, and they praised her."

Of these titles (see SOS 2:14).

Christ's church is called one, in distinction from the many before mentioned.

And either designs her small number, in comparison of the nations of the world.

And of false churches, like one to sixty or eighty, and even to an innumerable company (see Eccl. 9:14; Luke 12:32).

Or else her unity in herself, being but one general assembly and church of the firstborn, made up of various particular congregated churches.

And "one body", consisting of various members, united together in affection, and partakers of the same grace, blessings, and privileges.

Actuated by "one Spirit", the Spirit of God (Eph. 4:4).

And having but "one Head", Christ Jesus (Eph. 4:15).

And it may signify that the church is the spouse of Christ.

Though other princes may have sixty queens, and eighty concubines, and virgins without number to wait on them (SOS 6:8).

Christ had but one, and was well pleased with her, and desired no other.

"She is the only one of her mother":

The Jerusalem above, the mother of us all.

Or the sense is, she was to Christ as a mother's only child, most tenderly beloved by him.

"She is the choice one of her that bare her":

Esteemed and loved best of all her mother's children.

The word may be rendered, "the pure" or "clean one".

So the church is, as clothed in "clean" linen, the righteousness of Christ.

Cleansed from sin in his blood; sprinkled with the clean water of the covenant, and of an unspotted conversation.

"The daughters saw her, and blessed her":

Yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her.

It may seem strange that concubines should praise a queen; but it was not unusual in the eastern countries; with the Persians.

As the queen admitted of many concubines by the order of her lord the king.

So, the queen was had in great veneration, and even adored by the concubines: which may respect either the great esteem the church had, or should have, in the world.

Even from the great men of it, as she will have in the latter day (Isa. 49:23).

Or which young converts have for her; who may more especially be meant by the "daughters" and "virgins", who (in SOS 6:1), call the church the "fairest among women".

These blessed her, and pronounced her happy, and wished all happiness to her.

They "praised her", spoke well of her, and commended her for her beauty.

Which was pleasing to Christ, and therefore observed by him.

Now we see the "virgins" separated out.

They are those who have never worshipped false gods.

They are pure.

The "concubines" here, speak of the unconverted world.

They are aware of Christianity, even though they never became the bride of Christ (Church).

The "queens" represent the natural Israelite that was in power, but was never converted to Christianity.

Galatians 4:26 "But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all."

Song of Solomon 6:10 "Who [is] she [that] looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, [and] terrible as [an army] with banners?"

Many Jewish allegorists interpret the whole as referring to the times of the second temple, and to the present dispersion of Israel, during which, God continuing to graciously grant His mercy.

Israel prays for final restoration, the coming of Messiah, and the glory of the latter day.

Christian interpreters have made similar applications to the now militant Church looking for the Second Advent, or to the ancient synagogue praying for the Incarnation.

"As the morning":

The glorious beauty of the bride bursts upon them like a second dawn, as she comes forth to meet them at the commencement of another day.

Special poetical words are used for "sun" (burning heat) and "moon" (white one).

The same terms are applied to sun and moon in (Isa. 24:23; 30:26).

"Fair as the moon":

Shining in the night, by light borrowed from the sun.

So the bride, in the darkness of this world, reflects the light of the Sun of righteousness (2 Cor. 3:18).

"Clear as the sun":

Being clothed with Christ, the sun of righteousness (Rev. 12:1).

And so, all fair and without spot.

"And terrible as an army with banners":

Fighting the good fight of faith, under the banners of Christ, against all spiritual enemies.

The queens and the concubines cannot believe the virgin is so precious to the Bridegroom.

Revelation 19:14 "And the armies [which were] in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean."

Matthew 13:43 "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."

Verses 6:11-13

In retirement and in meditation the Christian character is formed and perfected.

But not in the retirement of the idle, the self-indulgent, or the trifler.

When the Christian is released from the discharge of his duties in life, the world has no attractions for him.

His prayer is, that all things belonging to the Spirit may live and grow within him, and around him.

Such are the interesting cares and employments of him whom the world wrongly deems unhappy, and lost to his true interests.

In humility and self-abasement, the humble Christian would turn away from the sight of all; but the Lord delights to honor him.

Chiefly, however, may the reference be to the ministering angels who shall be sent for the soul of the Christian.

Their approach may startle, but the departing soul shall find the Lord its strength and its portion for ever.

The church is called the Shulamite.

The word signifies perfection and peace; not in herself, but in Christ, in whom she is complete, through his righteousness.

And has peace, which he made for her through his blood, and gives unto her by his Spirit.

Song of Solomon 6:11 "I went down into the garden of nuts to see the fruits of the valley, [and] to see whether the vine flourished, [and] the pomegranates budded."

This is very properly taken notice of in this song of love.

It being usual for newly married persons to get nuts, and throw them among children, to make pastime.

To signify, among other things, that they now renounced childish things.

These are the words of Christ, declaring to the church where he went, and what he employed himself about, when he departed from her (see SOS 6:2).

Of the garden, as it intends the church (see notes on SOS 5:12).

Into which he was invited to come, and did, as here (see SOS 4:16).

Here it is called a "garden of nuts", which may design a spot in it destined for this fruit.

And by "nuts", which grew in the garden, the church, true believers, may be designed.

Who, like them, have a mean outward appearance, but are valuable within, having the true grace of God in them.

And because of their different coverings, their outward conversation garments, the robe of Christ's righteousness, and the internal sanctification of the Spirit, which answer to the husk and shell, and the thin inward skin over the nut.

And because of their hardness in enduring afflictions and troubles, the shell may represent.

And because of their best and most excellent parts being hidden, even grace, the hidden man of the heart, signified by the kernel.

And which will not fully appear until the shell or tabernacle of the body is broken down.

And because of their safety from harm and pollution, amidst the storms of afflictions, persecutions, and temptations.

And pollutions of the world, the principle of grace, like the kernel, remains unhurt and undefiled.

And because of the multitude of believers, united and cleaving together, which is delightful to behold, like clusters of nuts in a nut garden.

"To see the fruits of the valley":

To observe the graces of his Spirit.

The acts, exercise, and growth of them in humble souls, among whom he delights to be (see Isaiah 57:15).

The Septuagint version is, "the shoots of the brook" or "river": and may denote the fertile soil in which believers are planted.

Even by the river of divine love; with which being watered, they flourish (Psalm 1:3).

"And to see whether the vine flourished":

Particular churches, or believers, compared to vines.

Who may be said to flourish, when they increase in numbers, and are fruitful in grace and good works (see SOS 2:13).

"And the pomegranates budded":

Of which (see SOS 4:13).

The budding, of them may design the beginnings, or first putting forth of grace in the saints.

Which Christ takes much notice of, and is highly pleased with.

The main message to be taken from this, is in the word "I".

It shows that she, of her own free, will followed her groom.

She was not a bond slave.

She had freedom of movement.

Christians come to Christ of their own free will.

God does not force us to accept Him.

He wants our love.

Song of Solomon 6:12 "Or ever I was aware, my soul made me [like] the chariots of Amminadib."

These are either the words of the church or of Christ, saying, "I know not" as the first clause may be rendered.

If the words of the church, the sense may be, that though she knew not where her beloved was gone, when he went from her, yet she ran about in search of him as swiftly as the chariots of Amminadib.

And when she did know that he was gone down into the garden, immediately, on a sudden, at an unawares, such was the strength of her love and affection to him.

Then she moved as swiftly after him as if she had been in one of those chariots.

And this may signify also her courage and resolution, that, notwithstanding all difficulties and discouragements she met with, she drove on as briskly and as courageously after him as ever Amminadib did, in one of his chariots, in the field of battle.

"Amminadib" means people of liberality.

This just means that she had freedom or liberty to go and do as she wished.

She went wherever she chose to go.

This is very important because of the freedom we have to receive the Lord, or to reject Him.

God does not want us to be like puppets on strings.

He wants our love.

He wants us to choose to be with Him.

Song of Solomon 6:13 "Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon thee. What will ye see in the Shulamite? As it were the company of two armies."

By whom the church is meant, so called from her being the spouse of Christ, the true Solomon.

It being common for the wife to have the same name with her husband.

Thus, with the Romans, if the man's name was Caius, the woman's name was Caia.

Is the name of Christ Solomon?

The church's name is Shulamite (THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, see Jer. 23:6).

The word from which this is derived signifies both perfection and peace.

And the church may be called the Shulamite from her perfection, not in herself, but in Christ, in whom she is complete, and perfectly comely through his righteousness.

And is also denominated from the peace which she has from Christ, and he has made for her through his blood, and he gives unto her by his Spirit.

And from what she does or should enjoy in her members, and from what she will be possessed of to all eternity.

Now the church, the Shulamite, is very importunately desired by the daughters of Jerusalem to return.

Which is said no less than four times, which shows how vehemently desirous they were of her company.

And perceiving she was about to go from them, most earnestly press her to return, or to "turn".

To turn herself, that her beauty and comeliness might be more plainly seen; for this is the end proposed by them.

"That we may look upon thee":

That they might still have more opportunity of viewing her, and more narrowly to examine her beauty, for which she was so much commended.

And that they might enjoy more of her company and conversation, which had been, and they might hope would be, more useful and instructive to them.

A question upon this follows;

"What will ye see in the Shulamite?"

Which question is put, either by the daughters among themselves; some wishing for her return.

And others asking what they expected to see in her, should she return.

Or rather it is put by the church herself; who asks the daughters, what they expected to see in her.

A poor, mean, unworthy creature, not fit to be looked on, having nothing extraordinary, nor indeed valuable or of worth, in seeing of her?

Which question is thus answered;

"As it were the company of two armies":

Either by the daughters, declaring what they expected to see in the church.

Either such a glorious and joyful meeting between Christ and her, as is often between great persons, attended with singing and dancing.

So, the word for company is rendered by the Septuagint "choroi", a "company" of those that dance and sing (see Psalm 68:24).

Or such an appearance as an army makes at the reception of their prince, when it is divided into two bands, for the sake of greater honor and majesty.

Or rather this answer is returned by the church herself; signifying that nothing was to be seen in her but two armies, flesh and Spirit, sin and grace, continually warring against each other.

Which surely, she thought, could be no desirable and pleasing sight to them (see Rom. 7:23).

I believe the "Shulamite" here, is speaking of the bride of Christ (the church).

Those in attendance are calling her back.

She is the church.

The two armies could be speaking of Flesh (sin), and Spirit (grace).

Luke 15:10 "Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

Song of Solomon Chapter 6 Questions

1. Who is gone away for a while?
2. Who does this symbolize?
3. What is the bride saying now?
4. My beloved is gone down into his _____.
5. What was the garden of Eden patterned after?
6. Why is the bride not in despair?
7. The tabernacle of God is with _____.
8. Besides the Christians, what is called the bride of Christ?
9. What have we learned about goat hair?

10. Why can the world not defeat the church?
11. What is verse 7 speaking of?
12. How does He want us to love Him?
13. How many is threescore?
14. How many is fourscore?
15. What do "queens", "concubines", and "virgins" speak of?
16. In verse 9, who is separated out?
17. Who are they?
18. What does verse 11 show us?
19. What does "Amminadib" mean?
20. Why is this important?
21. Who is the "Shulamite"?