

**Outlines of the Messages
for the International Chinese-speaking Conference
February 10, 2024**

GENERAL SUBJECT:

**FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT, FINISHING THE COURSE,
KEEPING THE FAITH, AND LOVING THE LORD'S APPEARING
IN ORDER TO RECEIVE THE REWARD OF CHRIST
AS THE CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS**

Message Four

**Loving the Lord's Appearing by Maintaining Our Love for Him
according to the Intrinsic Significance of Song of Songs**

MC, SC Hymns: 556

Scripture Reading: S. S. 1:2-4; 2:8-9; 3:9-10; 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—The king has brought me into his chambers— / We will be glad and rejoice in you; / We will extol your love more than wine. / Rightly do they love 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. 3:9 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 Shulammite; / Return, return, that we may gaze at you. / Why should you gaze at the Shulammite, / 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—
Rev. 19:7-9; Matt. 25:6-13; Rev. 3:18-22; Zech. 4:1-6, 11-14; 1 John 4:19; Psa. 110:3; 119:140:**

- Rev 19:7 Let us rejoice and exult, and let us give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.
- Rev 19:8 And it was given to her that she should be clothed in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints.
- Rev 19:9 And he said to me, Write, Blessed are they who are called to the marriage dinner of the Lamb.

And he said to me, These are the true words of God.
 Matt 25:6 But at midnight there was a cry, Behold, the bridegroom! Go forth to meet him!
 Matt 25:7 Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their own lamps.
 Matt 25:8 And the foolish said to the prudent, Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.
 Matt 25:9 But the prudent answered, saying, Perhaps there will not be enough for us and for you; go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.
 Matt 25:10 And as they were going away to buy, the bridegroom came; and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast. And the door was shut.
 Matt 25:11 And later the rest of the virgins came also, saying, Lord, lord, open to us!
 Matt 25:12 But he answered and said, Truly I say to you, I do not know you.
 Matt 25:13 Watch therefore, for you do not know the day nor the hour.
 Rev 3:18 I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined by fire that you may be rich, and white garments that you may be clothed and that the shame of your nakedness may not be manifested, and eyesalve to anoint your eyes that you may see.
 Rev 3:19 As many as I love I rebuke and discipline; be zealous therefore and repent.
 Rev 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, then I will come in to him and dine with him and he with Me.
 Rev 3:21 He who overcomes, to him I will give to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat with My Father on His throne.
 Rev 3:22 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.
 Zech 4:1 Then the angel who spoke with me returned and roused me as a man is roused from his sleep.
 Zech 4:2 And he said to me, What do you see? And I said, I see that there is a lampstand all of gold, with its bowl on top of it and its seven lamps upon it, with seven pipes for each of the lamps on top of it;
 Zech 4:3 And there are two olive trees beside it, one to the right of the bowl and one to the left.
 Zech 4:4 And I answered and spoke to the angel who spoke with me, saying, What are these, sir?
 Zech 4:5 And the angel who spoke with me answered and said to me, Do you not know what these are? And I said, No, sir.
 Zech 4:6 And he answered and spoke to me, saying, This is the word of Jehovah to Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says Jehovah of hosts.
 Zech 4:11 Then I answered and said to him, What are these two olive trees on the right of the lampstand and on its left?
 Zech 4:12 And I answered a second time and said to him, What are the two olive branches that are by the side of the two golden spouts, which empty the gold from themselves?
 Zech 4:13 And he spoke to me, saying, Do you not know what these are? And I said, No, sir.
 Zech 4:14 And he said, These are the two sons of oil, who stand by the Lord of the whole earth.
 1 John 4:19 We love because He first loved us.
 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.
 Psa 119:140 Your word is very pure, / And Your servant loves it.

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 (1:2, 4); all the spiritual principles are contained in this first stage of the seeker's overcoming life; the lessons that follow are not new, but they are old lessons repeated in a deeper way.

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—The king has brought me into his chambers— / We will be glad and rejoice in you; / We will extol your love more than wine. / Rightly do they love 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.

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 (vv. 10-13).
- 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;
- 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 turtle dove is heard in our land.
- S. S. 2:13 The fig tree has ripened its figs, / And the vines are in blossom
3. 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); in our mingled spirit 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. 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—S. S. 3:9-10; cf. 2 Cor. 2:12-17.

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.
 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.

3. 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.

4. 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 (4:12-15); she is prepared to give forth Christ's fragrance in any circumstance or environment (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, / Fittingly 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?

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—v. 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.

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. 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.

2. 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.
3. 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 Ampliatus, 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.)

- 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; 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—v. 13.

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

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—v. 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. "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.