

**Look How Lovely She Is**  
Song of Solomon 1:9-11; Zephaniah 3:17  
July 21, 2019  
Greg L. Price

The Song of Solomon is the greatest of all love songs; for it not only sets forth our supreme love as Christians for the Lord Jesus Christ (Song 1:7), but also exalts the greatest expression of love the world has ever known: the divine love of Jesus Christ for chosen sinners who wanted nothing to do with Him, who were lost in their own sin and rebellion against Him, deserved His everlasting wrath and condemnation, and who had many lovers in this world whom they followed and served (self, pleasure, money, work, people, power, fame, music, sex, booze, drugs, etc.).

It is one thing for the creation to praise the beauty and glory of the Lord Jesus (of which He is fully worthy), but it is unimaginable that the Lord of glory would praise the beauty He sees in His elect bride (of which we are completely unworthy)—a beauty that is not hers by nature, but a beauty that far excels any other in all of creation—a beauty with which He has adorned His elect bride by His amazing grace. In the Song of Solomon, Jesus sings a love song of the beauty He beholds in you and me whom He chose and redeemed out of His infinite, eternal, and unchangeable love.

Let not the love of Jesus Christ become common to you (“Yeah, I have heard this so many times”). There is nothing more precious to the bride of Christ who has been saved by grace through faith alone in Jesus alone than His love that He throws over you like a net thrown around fish and irresistibly draws you to Himself. This is your comfort in all that you face in this life and your hope when darkness would swallow you alive. This is that to which faith clings: the unbreakable cords of Christ’s love.

The main points from our text are: (1) The Praise of Jesus for His Bride (Song 1:9-10); (2) The Promise of Jesus to His Bride (Song 1:11).

**I. The Praise of Jesus for His Bride (Song 1:9-10).**

A. The chosen bride of Jesus Christ had been misled to work in the vineyards of unfaithful followers of Christ and had suffered under the heat of their persecution and unfaithfulness (Song 1:5-6). Therefore, she appeals to her beloved Husband (Jesus Christ) that He tell her where she can feed and hear His voice in His pure gospel, doctrine, and commandments; for otherwise she fears that she will turn aside to follow unfaithful companions and pastors (Song 1:7). The Lord Jesus (the Heavenly Husband) speaks with His great love for His bride and directs her to walk in the faithful footsteps of the flock who have gone before her, and to feed beside the tents of faithful shepherds (Song 1:8).

B. The Lord Jesus continues now with His loving instruction to His bride; and in spite of her being black from the heat of persecution and from her own weaknesses, He expresses His own praise for the beauty He has wrought in her. He comes to her to encourage her that she is beautiful to Him in spite of her suffering, weaknesses, and shortcomings. Dear husbands, let us not be silent in praising our beloved wives before others for the ways in which they show forth their love and beauty within the home (Proverbs 31:28). Jesus praises you, His bride, in spite of your weaknesses, should we, as husbands, not follow in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus? Criticism is all too often that which is most heard coming from us as husbands (and of wives). But where is the loving praise for the work that is well done? Just as Jesus initiates that love to us, so must we do with our wives. That’s what a Christian husband does—he follows Jesus. Jesus here praises His bride, let us as husbands do the same.

C. Now as we hear in Song 1:9 that to which the Lord compares His beloved bride, we in this modern technological age might be tempted to ask, “He compares His beloved to horses? How is likening His bride to horses praise and commendation of her?”

1. Note first that this is indeed intended to be a compliment of praise bestowed upon the bride, for Jesus addresses her, “O my love” (used 9 times in Song of Solomon). He would not address her as His love and then liken her to something that was cheap and worthless. The word for “love” here literally means “companion”. For this is what marital love does—it makes the one loved his/her companion—to commune with—to be near—to walk with—to live with—to be faithful to—and to age with even unto death. The love of Jesus for you, dear Christian, is not a secret love, but a public love—it is not a distant love, but is a companion love—the love of One who will never leave you nor forsake you. It is the love of One who will not be near only in the good times, but who will walk with you into the fiery furnace and into the lion’s den. It is the love of One who will not betray you and only be near you when you walk in faith, but also when you falter in doubt—not only when you are strong, but when you are weak. It is both a dying love (sacrificial) and undying love (that will never end). That is the companion love that the Lord Jesus has for you, beloved Christian.

2. We cannot judge the value and beauty of what Jesus says here by our present standards of what we consider to be valuable and beautiful. Horses were not only greatly prized and valued in the ancient world, but the most strong and beautiful horses of that time were those from Egypt (2 Chronicles 1:16-17). There were not creatures in the ancient world that were more beautiful and valuable to kings and princes than horses. They were a symbol of power and strength (Job 39:19). We still measure the power of an engine in a vehicle by “horse-power”. The Lord Jesus rides forth in great power and victory over His enemies upon a white horse (Revelation 19:11). That was how the ancient world viewed the horse (let alone a company of Pharaoh’s horses).

a. Thus, the Lord Jesus is not belittling His bride when He likens her to a company of Pharaoh’s beautiful and powerful horses, but is rather showing how valuable His beloved bride is in His eyes. We might tend to see beauty and strength in the architecture of a home or building, or in a magnificent bridge, or in the beautiful design of a landscaped yard, or in a classic car from the past, but in the ancient world, it was the horse that exemplified beauty and strength.

b. And that is how the Lord Jesus sees you whom He has loved and chosen from all eternity, redeemed by His own blood, and freely adorned with all the grace, beauty, and strength to live for Him and stand for Him in this wicked world. Dear ones, I will rather believe Christ’s evaluation of me than the evaluation of any man (even my own). The world may see you as ugly and weak (you may even see yourself that way), but the Lord Jesus sees you as beautiful and mighty in the beauty of His grace and salvation and in the power of His resurrection might. It is all His beauty and His power that He sees in you that is attractive to Him; for in yourself you are both ugly and deathly weak due to sin. Trust not in yourself, but in the beauty and power of Jesus Christ. You who trust in Jesus Christ may fall and stumble, but you will not remain there; for you are more than conquerors through Christ who loved you, and He has already fought and won the battle for you. You cannot give up. You cannot quit. The infinite horse-power of Jesus Christ lives within you.

D. The Lord Jesus is not finished in praising and commending the beauty of you, His beloved bride (Song 1:10).

1. Here the Lord further reveals the beauty of you, His beloved bride, by way of that with which He has given to you and adorned you. This verse emphasizes that none of that which the bride has that makes her beautiful is that which she brought with her to Jesus Christ. You had nothing in yourself but your sin and rebellion, your pollution, and condemnation before a holy God. You were like a naked, new born child that was left to die because you were unwanted (Ezekiel 16:4-5). Then the Lord Jesus passed by and out of His infinite love and compassion He rescued and saved you (Ezekiel 16:6). Jesus, the King, then made you His own royal bride and decked you with all manner of beautiful ornaments and valuable jewelry (Ezekiel 16:8-14).

Your beauty is the beauty of Christ's election, redemption, forgiveness and righteousness, sanctification, glorification, His truth, and all His graces and all His ordinances. There is no place for pride here. From beginning to end, it is the glory and beauty of the Lord alone that is seen in you and me. There is no place for taking what Christ has given and altering and changing it to suit you—this pollutes the simplicity, purity, and beauty of the Lord.

2. Notice it is not simply the cheeks and the neck that are comely or beautiful, but it is the "rows of jewels" and the "chains of gold" that adorn the cheeks and neck that beautify the bride. All that is needed to make you beautiful in the sight of the Lord is given to you by the Lord Jesus. You do not have to come up with your own beauty treatment or with the beauty treatment offered by some pastor or church.

a. You need to put off every day the deeds of the flesh like a smelly corpse rather than carrying it on your back with you (Galatians 5:19-21). You need rather to adorn yourself every day with the most exquisite and beautiful clothing of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). That is simply to say that you are to die to self and to live to Christ. The Christian may struggle with sin, but the Christian loves the beauty of holiness and desires it more than sin, and prays more and more to grow in Christ's beauty (faith in Jesus Christ and love for the Lord is evidenced by keeping His commandments, 1 John 5:3). There is so little regard for God's Law even within the Visible Church. Love does not replace the Moral Law. Love summarizes and fulfills the Ten Commandments making them full. Without the God's Moral Law we would not understand what it is to love God or to love our neighbor.

b. Moreover, the beauty of the church collectively is found in that beauty treatment that is given to her by Jesus alone in the Scripture, not that which is added by man's creativity and innovation. It is either the beauty treatment of the Lord that a church will use or the ugly treatment of man that a church will use. For what man adds to worship and the ordinances of Christ "uglifies" the church (whether it be songs not found in the inspired pages of the Psalter, whether it be adding instruments to worship that like the sacrifices were part of Levitical worship of the Old Testament, whether it be entertaining the congregation rather than preaching on behalf of Jesus Christ, whether it be in adding symbols in worship other than the two appointed by the Lord—baptism and the Lord's supper, etc.), but what Jesus gives in His Word by way of His authority is alone the beauty treatment that beautifies the church—and not only that which is outward in worship but that which is inward by way of faith in and love for Jesus Christ, exalting the Lord God Almighty and humbling yourself before Him. Dear ones, your preparation to worship the Lord is adorning yourself with His jewels which He sees as beautiful in His sight.

## **II. The Promise of Jesus to His Bride (Song 1:11).**

A. Not only does the Lord Jesus adorn His bride with the beauty of such graces and ordinances, but He also promises that He will continue to add to the beauty of His bride now and for all eternity which is signified in the "borders of gold" and the "studs of silver".

1. Note here that the pronoun changes from "I" (the Lord Jesus) in Song 1:9 to "We" (the Holy Trinity) in Song 1:11. It is not only the work of the Lord Jesus in beautifying His beloved bride, but it is the work of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, all working together to decree, accomplish, and apply redemption and salvation to you, His beloved bride, from beginning to end ("Salvation is of the LORD" Jonah 2:9). This is a declaration that the one true God of the Bible eternally exists as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (the same in substance, equal in power and glory). Just as in Genesis 1:26 ("Let us make man in our image") we see the plurality of the Divine Persons in the One God at work in the original creation of man, so we see here in Song 1:11 the plurality of the Divine Persons in the One God at work in the new creation of man. The same Hebrew verb for "make" is used in Genesis 1:26 and here in Song 1:11.

2. The Lord Jesus promises that whatever His bride needs at any point here on earth or in the glories of heaven, He will make for her. Those who are His bride and have been beautified by His grace and

ordinances will never lack what they need but will be perfected in all of His beauty and glory. That which Jesus begins, He will complete and perfect in you, dear struggling Christian. You need never fear that there will not be sufficient grace for you. That supply of grace can never run dry. As often as you come to draw from the fountain of Christ's grace, there is never a gallon, quart, pint, ounce, or drop less than when you knelt beside that fount and drank from it. Why do you then act as though there is not enough grace for you in your present need? Why do you wait for some miraculous manifestation to come to that overflowing fountain of grace? Almighty God has promised you that He will make for you His all sufficient grace for every need that you have. That grace may not remove that mountain out of your path or quench the fiery furnace, but it will give you Jesus, the Lover of your soul, so that you will be able to bear it and bring Him glory in it. That is His promise to you.

B. Dear ones, whatever the pain, heartache, loneliness, suffering, trial, and battle with temptation you are facing today, your Jesus, your Savior, your Companion, and your King reveals to you that He rejoices in you whom He has chosen in love and whom He has redeemed in love, and whom He has justified in love, and whom He is sanctifying in love, and whom He shall glorify in love. As a lover will sing and compose songs of love for the one loved, so does Jesus do for you (Zephaniah 3:17). He sings not of your grace, but of His amazing grace in you, which is beautiful beyond all words and more beautiful than all of the glory of the earth.

If your sense and apprehension be made judge of His love, there is a graven image made presently, even a changed god and a foe-god, who was once a Friend-God" (*Rutherford's Letters*, Letter CCXCV, p. 594).

Trust not you feelings. Trust the Song of Jesus in the Song of Songs. Let His song direct your feelings. Let not your feelings direct His Love Song.

Copyright 2019 Greg L. Price.