

# Whither is thy Beloved?

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An exposition based on text from Solomon's Song 6:1

- ★ The preciousness of the Beloved.
- ★ The manner of seeking for the Beloved.
- ★ The place and direction of seeking.



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*'Whither is thy Beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? whither is thy Beloved turned aside? that we may seek Him with thee.'*

*Solomon's Song 6:1*

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**W**e may well presume that those who posed this question were the same who had queried *'What is thy Beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? what is thy Beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us?'* (Solomon's Song 5:9).

It is fitting to stress that the object of our pursuit will determine both the manner and intensity of the search.

That the Beloved is so precious to the seeker in this instance is plainly obvious. Which is why the inquirers put this question to the Shulamite woman: *'What is thy Beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? what is thy Beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us?'* (Solomon's Song 5:9).

The Shulamite woman then describes her Beloved (Song:5:10-16). And it is obvious by the manner of her narration and especially by the subject matter of her description she convinces her inquirers. Indeed so convinced are they that they are induced to join in the search. They were convinced that this Beloved is more than another beloved.

Yes, Christ is so pleasant, so fair, so lovely, so enchanting, that it is worthwhile putting apart all the other beloveds; for He is more than another beloved; that is to say, He is not just another beloved but He is worth more than all the beloveds. He is the only Beloved and begotten Son of God. He is the chiefest among ten thousands. Yea, He is altogether lovely.

But unlike the daughters of Jerusalem, the seeker has already tasted the Beloved and discovered that He is good. She could have easily concurred with the Psalmist *'O taste and see that the LORD is good'* (Psalm 34:8a). Indeed He is gracious. His love is better than wine. His countenance is comely. His voice is sweet.

Hence it is worth seeking Him despite the fact that the search may be fraught with hazards. The watchmen that went about the city had smitten her and wounded her. The keepers of the walls took away her veil. (Solomon's Song 5:7).

One cannot find Him easily as the Shulamite had

experienced. *'By night on my bed I sought Him Whom my soul loveth: I sought Him, but I found Him not'* (Solomon's Song 3:1). Surely finding Him is not a bedtime affair. *'I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek Him Whom my soul loveth: I sought Him, but I found Him not'* (Solomon's Song 3:2). Indeed finding Christ is a very difficult thing. As in the case of the Shulamite woman, the process might involve humiliation, pain, weariness and much failures. In the days of His earthly stint, our Lord was sought arduously by many. Though their task was near impossible, yet these because of their desperateness and their sheer necessity surmounted and overcame all odds to procure an access and clinch an audience with our Lord. For instance many overlooked the terrible inconveniences of finding Him in the deserts and finding Him there, they stayed on without so much as caring for their meals and sleep. Zacchæus perched precariously on the sycamore tree just for a glance of our Lord's appearance. The woman with the issue of blood steered her way through the throng just to touch the hem of our Lord's garments. Some removed roof tiles to find a way... others crossed stormy seas to find our Lord. Should anything stop us from finding Him?

The Lord is a rewarder of those that diligently seek Him (*Hab 11:6b*). *'Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness'* (*James 4:8,9*). *'Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought His judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD's anger'* (*Zephaniah 2:3*). *'Seek the LORD, and ye shall live'* (*Amos 5:6a*). *'Seek ye Me, and ye shall live'* (*Amos 5:4*). *'Seek ye the LORD while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near: Let the wicked forsake His way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon'* (*Isaiah 55:6,7*). *'And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the LORD; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive'* (*Jeremiah 29:13,14*). Thank the gracious God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Scriptures are replete with exceeding great and precious promises that give us assurance and hope to augment the process of our

seeking.

The preciousness of the Beloved makes it worthwhile for us to suffer anything, yea, gallows and swords, mockings and scourgings, bonds and imprisonment, faggots and stakes, yea, death itself. Christ Jesus is the Desire of all nations (*Haggai 2:7*). He is the Fountain of life and all blessings. He is the Great Deliverer. The Messiah has come but have you found Him as Nathaniel did and as the Samaritan woman did? He knows all about us as the Samaritan woman testified. Christ is the Great Physician and He Himself is the prescription, the Balm of Gilead. He can heal all our diseases and plagues. He can mollify our wounds and sores. He can Himself pour ointment and nurse us back to health. Come, whosoever thou art; come and seek His face. You will find rest to your weary souls. He is the Sabbatical Rest and He alone gives true rest (*Matthew 11:28*). Come and He will refresh your parched, thirsty souls. He is the Well of living water and when you have drunk of this well, you will never thirst again. Christ Jesus Himself cried, *'If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water'* (*John 7:37b,38*).

For if you find Him, it is the salvation of your souls. If you discover Him and embrace Him, He will deliver you from the power of depravity that is the lot and portion of all the sons and daughters of Adam upon the face of whole earth. If He will turn you, you shall be turned. You shall be delivered from all your captivities. He will save you eternally. Who is the Beloved? I say this is the Beloved that is more than another beloved.

But where can we find Him? This is the actual poser of our text. Shall we seek Him diligently but in a place where He cannot be found? Can the Lord be found in the land of the heathens? Is Christ to be found in Egypt? *'Shall Christ come out of Galilee?'* (*John 7:41b*). Is the Lord to be found in Bethel, or Jericho, or Jordan?

We must seek the Lord in the right places and at the right time if He is to be found effectually. Now is the time to seek. This is the day of salvation. Seek Him now if He is to be found.

But whither? *'Whither is thy Beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? whither is thy Beloved turned aside? that we may seek Him with thee'* (*Solomon's Song 6:1*). *'Where is He that is born King of the Jews?'* (*Matthew 2:2*) asked the wise men from the east. And the shepherds too came seeking Him. And so also sought the Greeks (*John 12:20-22*). And all men are seeking Him. The Gentiles are thronging to

Him. But where is He?

The answer to this poser is vital and we need a reassuring answer if we are to accomplish the purpose of our pursuit effectually. And the answer comes directly from the mouth of our Lord Himself:

*'Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me.'*  
(John 5:39)

Are we to go to Jerusalem? Are we to travel to Bethlehem by Israel's airline? No, Christ directs us to the Scriptures by the flight of faith. And especially the Old Testament Scriptures.

For though Christ is shrouded therein with mystery, yet if we uncover that shroud we shall see Christ in His transcendent glory and power and beauty. And blessed are those who find Him thus. For He will bring us to the banqueting house, where His banner over us is love (Solomon's Song:2:4).

I hope that we will depart from this assembly not merely with a plethora of knowledge. Fools a thousand times are we if we descend down the hill with our heads puffed up with knowledge and our hearts only barely affected. But such a possibility may very well become a reality. We must have the ardent desire of the psalmist. *'One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in His temple'* (Psalm 27:4). Or we must be like the apostle: *'Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ'* (Philippian 3:8).

It is good to know that the Song of Solomon follows the book of Ecclesiastes. Ecclesiastes speaks of the law of God and the fear of God and it evokes our sense of divine duty so as to avoid messing our life. But the Song speaks of the mutual love of Christ and the church. It is known as the nuptial song. It is a necessary and beautiful complement to Ecclesiastes.

The divine skill and wisdom that marks this sequence in arrangement typifies a great truth of the Old Testament Scriptures. Against the background of the law and the knowledge and consciousness that we end up failing to attain its glory so miserably, there is always the mercy and forgiveness of God awaiting those who would only seek Christ by faith. This constitutes the double-fold thread that make up the fabric of true religion. A sense of our need and utter failure to comply to the duty in the law

generated by the fear of God and the assurance of God's love in forgiving our sins through the blood of Jesus and the grace to live a life of faith. True religion has love as its essence: The love of God to sinners and the love of the redeemed for Christ, for the Father and for the Holy Spirit. Love for Christ is the forum by which we are taught to love the Father and the Spirit. Christianity is not a set of rules; it is the Spirit-energized love in men for God the Father through a loving Christ, the Beloved of our soul. Wherefore we must find Christ afresh, we must love Him with the love of our espousals (*Jeremiah 2:1*), even with our first love (*Revelation 2:4*).

Christ must be discovered with vitality and vigour. The terrain of the Old Testament Scriptures must be surveyed and scanned. Up the summits of the hills, down the glens, across the vast deserts, through the thick of the woods, upon the formidable seas, in the orchards, by rivers, brooks and lakes, in the byways and highways, in the alleys, indeed all through the sacred leaves of the Old Testament, so that Christ may be found in the full spectrum of His glory. Christ must be found in a lively manner so that divine life, power and wisdom may also be appropriated.

Yea, when the Shulamite woman tells us that her Beloved is gone down into the garden, to the bed of spices, it may well be figuratively alluding to the Holy Scriptures.

In the same fashion behind the principles of the tabernacle design, the keeping of the feasts, the nature of the Jewish offerings, the elements that make up the sacerdotal array, there is embedded the Gospel — the love of the Incarnate Son of God for the elect. Veiled in the shroud of the law is the glory and power of the Person of Christ as manifested in the atoning work. The Old Testament Scriptures is full of Christ the Redeemer and Saviour. It remains for us by the diligence and love of faith to unfold Christ and Him crucified by the key of the Gospel. Surely this exercise will issue in edification and blessing to our souls. But it needs to be emphasized this laborious task of searching the Scriptures to find Christ is an exercise in love. For He is our Beloved, the only Beloved, more than another beloved. Amen. **W**



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