

– Continued from page 1 –

Consider: *“Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice with the wife of your youth. As a loving deer and a graceful doe, let her breasts satisfy you at all times; and always be enraptured with her love”* (Proverbs 5:18-19). If this is obviously promoting a robust sex-life within the divinely sanctioned confines of matrimony, it should come as little surprise the same inspired penman wrote a drama about his lover.

Dispensing with the complications of twisting romantic poetry into absurd Christological allegory makes it simpler to appreciate a profoundly lyrical love story. Marriage was established by God in the beginning when He told man and woman to *“become one flesh”* (Genesis 2:24). Therefore, intercourse within marriage is holy (Hebrews 13:4). Celebrating that is good.

More awkward than frank appreciation for matrimonial ecstasy is knowing the true meaning of the Song of Songs while hearing its lyrics sampled in hymns praising Jesus. Faith Is the Victory’s “His banner over us is love” and God Be with You’s “Keep love’s banner floating o’er you” are not instantly off-putting since there are varieties of love – romantic, brotherly, and spiritual. Even so, the lyric has been lifted from an obviously romantic context: *“He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love. Sustain me with cakes of raisins, refresh me with apples, for I am lovesick. His left hand is under my head, and his right hand embraces me. I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or by the does of the field, do not stir up nor awaken love until it pleases”* (Song of Songs 2:4-7). The love flying over this Shulamite is making her weak, she is being held by her Beloved, and she urges other young women to abstain from this love until the proper time. That’s a weird love to promote in the context of these hymns. Fortunately, the allusions to this text in hymns appear in verses that can be omitted easily.

Stranger still is calling Jesus the *“Rose of Sharon”* or the *“Lily of the Valley”* because these are terms of romantic endearment in the Song. Applying them to Christ is similar to calling Him “Sweetheart,” “Darling,” or “Honey.” That might not be wrong, per se, but most Christians will find it uncomfortable and certainly unnecessary. Even if one were to accept the notion that the Song of Songs is an allegory for the love of Christ and the church, it would still be inaccurate to apply these terms of endearment to the Lord because they are spoken by the woman! The Shulamite says, *“Behold, you are handsome, my beloved! Yes, pleasant! Also our bed is green. The beams of our*

– Continued on page 3 –

DO YOU UNDERSTAND? WILL YOU OBEY?

Author Unknown

Someone observed: “You may not understand all you read in the Bible, but you can obey what you do understand.” That statement is true.

The Bible, while difficult to understand in a few places, really has a very simple story to tell. It teaches us about God in a down-to-earth, easy to digest sort of way. Its commands are explained so that a person with little or no formal education can still comprehend and comply. Simply put, you can know and obey the will of God. The only remaining question is: Will you do it?

– Continued from page 2 –

houses are cedar, and our rafters of fir. I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys” (Song of Songs 1:16-2:1). To this, the Beloved, the man, replies, *“Like a lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters”* (2:2). Thus, even if the debunked theory of allegory fits the theme of the Song, *“the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys”* would be Christ’s bride, the church, and not Christ Himself. No matter what, it is not accurate. Unfortunately, these misapplied lyrics pervade the hymns and cannot be skipped if the songs are sung at all.

Since *“psalms and hymns and spiritual songs”* are for *“teaching and admonishing one another”* (Colossians 3:16), accuracy counts in music. Some songs are better left out, no matter how enjoyable their tunes.

Regardless of the misapplied lyrics in hymns, the Song of Songs was inspired for a reason, namely to extol marital love. *“Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does”* (1st Corinthians 7:3-4). Or, as the Song puts it: *“I am my beloved’s, and my beloved is mine”* (Song of Songs 6:3).

**"WHAT MUST I DO
TO BE SAVED?"**

ACTS 16:30

LEARN THE GOSPEL

John 6:45; Romans 10:17

BELIEVE IN CHRIST

Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16

CONFESS CHRIST

Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 3:19; 17:30

BE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST

Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-6

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"THE ASSEMBLING OF
OURSELVES TOGETHER"**

HEBREWS 10:24-25

SUNDAY

Worship @ 10:00 a.m.

Studies @ 11:45 a.m.

WEDNESDAY

Studies & Worship @ 7:00 p.m.

75 Sherrod Boulevard
Belén, New Mexico

Seekers Welcome.
Members Expected.

**"IF A MAN IS OVERTAKEN IN
ANY TRESPASS...
RESTORE SUCH A ONE"**

GALATIANS 6:1

CONFESS TRESPASSES

James 5:16; 1st John 1:9

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 8:22

PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS

Acts 8:22

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

"A WORD FITLY SPOKEN"

PROVERBS 25:11

"The secret of joy is Christ in me –
not me in a different set of
circumstances."

– Elisabeth Elliot

GIVE ME THE BIBLE

KDNF 840AM

Sunday @ 9:00 a.m.

"WHOLE COUNSEL"

ACTS 20:27

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 33

AUGUST 17TH, 2025

POETRY, NOT ALLEGORY

Bryan Matthew Dockens

Although scholars have shifted their approach in recent decades, a long-standing perspective on *"the Song of Songs, which is Solomon's"* was that it is an allegory of Christ's love for His bride, the church. This view was preferred simply because some found it awkward to include romantic poetry in Scripture. They wanted it to have a deeper meaning, but that is not warranted.

An oft-repeated theme throughout the book, occurring three times in its eight chapters, is the *"charge"* laid upon *"the daughters of Jerusalem"* by the Shulamite to *"not stir up nor awaken love until it pleases"* (Song of Songs 2:7; 3:5; 8:4). This is an admonition toward chastity that deserves appreciation for its straightforwardness. If the Song is some elaborate figure for Christ and the church, it would be difficult to apply an intentional delay to love.

If the Beloved's admiration for the Shulamite's bodily features, including breasts, waist, breasts, navel, curvy thighs, and breasts again (Song of Songs 7:1-9) causes the reader to squirm, that is understandable, but hardly a reason to reassign its meaning and application. There would be a lot more to blush about trying to figure how these anatomical parts factor into Christ's love for the church. Instead, it is better to accept that some Scripture, including other of Solomon's writings, are rather frank about marital satisfaction.
– Continued on page 2 –

RIO GRANDE VALLEY CHURCH OF CHRIST

505-864-0282

rgvcoc@gmail.com

Box 989, Belén, NM 87002

www.RGVChurchOfChrist.org

75 Sherrod Boulevard

Facebook.com/RGVChurchOfChrist