

Session 10 Jesus Praises Her after Her Season of Testing (Song 6:4-10)

For additional study material pertaining to this session, see mikebickle.org

I. REVIEW: THE BRIDE’S CRY FOR THE INCREASE OF GOD’S PRESENCE

- A. The Bride prayed for both the north winds of adversity and the south winds of blessing to come to the garden of her heart, that the spices of grace, or God’s presence, might flow from her to others.
¹⁶Awake, O north wind, and come, O south! blow upon my garden, that its spices may flow out. Let My Beloved come to His garden and eat its pleasant fruits... (Song 4:16)
- B. The King called the Bride to intimacy by coming to her as the “Jesus of Gethsemane” (5:2) and asking her to open her heart to Him to experience new depths of intimacy with Him.
²It is the voice of my Beloved! He knocks, saying, “Open for Me...My love...My perfect one; for My head is covered with dew, My locks with the drops of the night.” (Song 5:2)
- C. The Bride responded in obedience (5:3-5), which was followed by a twofold test. First, the King tested her by withdrawing His presence from her (5:6). Next, He allowed the spiritual authorities to mistreat her and take her ministry away (5:7). The Bride responded to Him with love (5:8, 10-16).
*⁶I opened for my Beloved, but my Beloved had turned away and was gone...I sought him, but I could not find him...⁷The watchmen...struck me, they wounded me...took my veil away from me.
⁸Daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my Beloved...tell Him I am lovesick...¹⁰My beloved is white [radiant, NIV]...and chief among ten thousand...¹⁶Yes, He is altogether lovely. (Song 5:10-16)*
- D. The daughters ask her two questions. The essence of the first is, “Why do you love Him so much more than others (5:9)? He took His presence from you (5:6), and let the leaders wound you (5:7).”
⁹What is your Beloved more than another beloved, that you so charge us? (Song 5:9)
- E. The second question they asked her was in essence, “How can we know Him like you?” (6:1).
¹Where has your Beloved turned aside, that we may seek Him with you? (Song 6:1)

II. THE KING REVEALED THE PLACE THE BRIDE HAD IN HIS HEART (6:4-5)

- A. The King broke the silence with the Bride (6:4-10) that had begun in Song 5:6. He praised her beauty, telling her how He felt about her during her testing and how she moved His heart (6:5).
⁴O My love, you are as beautiful as Tirzah, lovely as Jerusalem, awesome as an army with banners! ⁵Turn your eyes away from me, for they have overcome me. (Song 6:4-5a)
- B. ***Beautiful as Tirzah:*** Tirzah was one of the most attractive cities in the ancient world; it was the capital city of the Canaanites before Israel conquered the land (Josh. 12:24; 1 Kgs. 15:33; 16:61). Some see this city as symbolic of unbelieving Gentiles. Tirzah speaks of beauty that affects even unbelievers. The Bride’s beauty is effective in winning unbelievers to Jesus. They saw the Bride’s sacrificial love for the King, as she gave up everything for love.

- C. **Lovely as Jerusalem:** The King declared that she was as lovely as Jerusalem, the capital of Israel. God chose this city for the site of Solomon’s temple. It was the only place on earth that was blessed continually with the manifest presence of God (the shekinah glory in the Holy of Holies). Indeed, God ordained this city as His *worship center* for the *whole* world (Isa. 2:1-4; Zech. 14:16-19). Jerusalem’s beauty speaks of *the beauty of holiness found in worshiping God*.
- D. **Awesome as an army with banners:** In the ancient world, when a victorious army returned from battle, they displayed their banners in a military parade. A defeated army lost its banners. The Bride defeated her greatest enemies—those in her heart—and is thus described as a “victorious army with banners,” because she did not give in to sin or unbelief in the time of testing.
- E. This is one of the great statements in the Song. The King was not asking her literally to look away from Him. He was speaking poetically of the impact of her love on Him. Even when we feel nothing in a time of testing, He is deeply touched when we look to Him with eyes of love. Loving Jesus includes cultivating an ongoing conversation with Him in which we express with affection our gratitude and intent to obey and trust His leadership and Word.
- F. What “overcomes” the King’s heart? The greatness of the stars, oceans, and mountains do not, and vast armies of men or demons are as nothing before Him. He is “conquered” by our love when we are true to Him as we love and trust His leadership, especially in times of testing and difficulty.
- G. **Do you know the way you move Him?** O, the marvel of moving God’s heart by our weak love. He is “overcome” by weak and broken people who sincerely love Him. The movements of our heart are so important to God that they are recorded in His books

⁵*Turn your eyes away from Me, for they have overcome Me. (Song 6:5)*

⁸*You number my wanderings; put my tears in Your bottle; are they not in Your book? (Ps. 56:8)*

III. THE BRIDE’S SPIRITUAL MATURITY (6:5c-7)

- A. The King described the Bride’s maturity (6:5c-7), highlighting three facets of her character signified by her hair, teeth, and temples. They are the same qualities that He spoke of earlier as budding virtues (4:1-3). Now they have come to maturity in her. The twofold test of Song 5:6-7 was fruitful.
- ⁵*Your hair is like a flock of goats going down from Gilead. Your teeth are like a flock of sheep which have come up from the washing; every one bears twins, and none is barren among them. Like a piece of pomegranate are your temples behind your veil. (Song 6:5c-7)*
- B. **Hair:** The Bride’s hair speaks of her dedication to God. The hair of the Nazirites was an outward sign of their dedication to God (Num. 6). Mount Gilead was a bountiful place where the goats were abundantly fed. The Bride’s dedication is the result of being well fed on the Word of God.
- C. **Teeth:** Teeth speak of maturity in having the ability to chew solid food and receive the meat of the Word (Heb. 5:12-14). Infants have no teeth and are nourished only with milk (1 Cor. 3:1-3).
- D. **Temples:** The Bride’s temples speak of her emotions. The Hebrew word translated as *temples* can also be translated as *cheeks*. Temples, or cheeks, express our emotions—we can see anger, joy, gladness, and sadness in someone’s cheeks; they are windows into a person’s emotions.

IV. THE BRIDE'S PLACE IN THE KING'S COURTS (6:8)

- A. The King answered by revealing to her the place that she had in His court (6:8). The Bride is preeminent in honor among the glorious angelic hosts in Jesus' heavenly court.
⁸There are sixty queens and eighty concubines, and virgins without number. ⁹My dove, my perfect one, is the only one...the favorite of the one who bore her. (Song 6:8-9)
- B. In that day, a king's court included his harem, comprised of women of various ranks. In this poem, King Solomon's earthly royal court symbolizes King Jesus' heavenly court—seraphim, cherubim, archangels, etc. Jesus' Bride has more honor than all the hosts in His heavenly court (Rev. 4). Jesus is surrounded by a host of glorious beings with different ranks, but His Bride surpasses them all.
- C. The King mentioned three positions of honor in his court—queens, concubines, and virgins.
1. ***Queens***: At the time of this Song, Solomon had 60 wives, who were all queens. He eventually had 700 wives (1Kgs. 11:3), but none of them had the same honor as the Shulamite, who was the most favored and honored among all his queens.
 2. ***Concubines***: A king's concubines had less honor than his queens, but they still had much honor, because they were legally part of the king's family.
 3. ***Virgins***: While not legally part of the king's family, the virgins had the honor of working and living in the royal court as a "staff member."

V. THE BRIDE'S UNIQUE FAVOR AND STATURE (6:9)

- A. The King described the Bride's unique favor and stature (6:9). "His dove" speaks of her singleness of heart and her walk in the Spirit. "His perfect one" speaks of her spiritual maturity.
⁹My dove, My perfect one, is the only one [is unique], the only one of her mother... (Song 6:9)
- B. ***The only one***: Of all the hosts in Jesus' heavenly courts, He has only one Bride. The phrase "is the only one" is translated "is unique" in the NAS and NIV. She is unrivaled.
- C. The redeemed are crowned with glory and honor by being united to Jesus' heart and exalted status. A low view of God inevitably produces a low view of salvation, resulting in a low view of God's people. A high view of God and His glory leads to a high view of who the redeemed are in Christ.
⁷You have crowned him [the redeemed] with glory and honor, and set him over the works of Your hands...¹⁰It was fitting for Him [the Father]...in bringing many sons to glory... (Heb. 2:7-10)
²¹For all things are yours: ²²whether...the world or life or death, or things present or things to come—all are yours. ²³And you are Christ's, and Christ is God's. (1 Cor. 3:21-23)
- D. Paul's prayer in Ephesians 1:18 includes asking the Lord to allow us to see how He sees and values His people.
¹⁸...you may know...what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. (Eph. 1:18)
- E. Jesus desires that His eternal companion would be with Him and experience His glory (Jn. 17:24).
²⁴I desire that they...may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory. (Jn. 17:24)

VI. THE BRIDE AS A CO-HEIR IN THE KINGDOM (6:10)

- A. The King declared the Bride's position as a co-heir in the kingdom (6:10), expressing her beauty in four metaphors, comparing her to heavenly objects as He had compared her to earthly cities (6:4).
¹⁰*Who is she who looks forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, awesome as an army with banners? (Song 6:10)*
- B. *Who is she*: This rhetorical question points to her preeminence. In the spiritual interpretation, I see the Spirit speaking. Three times the same question is asked, "Who is this?" (3:6, 6:10; 8:5).
- C. *Looks forth as the morning*: The Bride's ministry "looks," or shines, forth as the morning. After the night, the sunlight of morning shines forth with great hope. The Church in this age functions as *salt* and *light* (Mt. 5:13-16), emphasizing the impact that God's people are to have on individuals and society (government, military, economics educational, media, arts, technology, etc.).
- D. *Fair as the moon*: The Bride's ministry shines forth as fair, or as beautiful, as the moon. The moon was established by God to provide light in the nighttime (Gen. 1:14-19). The moon does not have its own light, but reflects the light of the sun. The Church releases God's light in a dark and fallen world as we work in unity together in evangelism and transformation of our culture (Phil. 2:15).
¹⁶*God made two great lights: the greater light [sun] to rule the day, and the lesser light [moon] to rule the night. (Gen. 1:16)*
- E. *Clear as the sun*: The Bride's ministry in the age to come will be as clear, or bright, as the sun. The Church will reflect Jesus' light in the New Jerusalem—where Jesus will be the sun (Rev. 21:11, 23). The Church rules with Jesus and reflects His light in time and eternity (Isa. 60:1-3, 19-20; 24:23; 59:19; 62:1; Dan. 12:3; Mal. 4:2; Mt. 5:14-16; Jn. 8:12; 1 Cor. 15:41-42; 2 Cor. 4:6; Phil. 2:15).
²³*The city [New Jerusalem] had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. (Rev. 21:23)*
¹¹*...having the glory of God. Her light was...like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. (Rev. 21:11)*
- F. *Awesome as an army with banners*: The Bride's governmental role in the age to come is one as awesome as a victorious army who triumphs over all who oppose it.
- G. The Bride will rule in the government of Jesus' kingdom forever (Dan. 7:27; Rev. 3:21).
²⁷*...the greatness of the kingdoms...shall be given to...the saints of the Most High. (Dan. 7:27)*
²¹*To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne. (Rev. 3:21)*

VII. QUESTIONS FOR SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSION (e.g., FCF FRIENDSHIP GROUPS)

1. Identify one point that inspired or challenged you. Why? What will you do differently to apply it?
2. Identify one point that you want to impart to a younger believer. Why? How will you approach this?
3. Identify one point that you would like to gain more understanding of. How will you seek to gain it?