

Song of Songs – The King’s Table (1:12 - 2:7)



There are THREE rounds of conversations between the Bride and the Bridegroom.

In this scene, the bride finds herself in the King’s chamber (1:12; 2:4; C.f. 1:4)

Presumably she heeded the Lord’s advice (C.f. 1:8-10). As she is sitting at the table of the Lord and feeding on His love, her heart rises in worship and adoration. It leads to a greater revelation of God’s beauty, and this in turn reforms her own spiritual identity.

A. 1:12-15 Back to the King’s Table (Conversation #1)

1. Spikenard is a very costly perfume imported from India and Arabia. It speaks of the sweet incense of worship (C.f. Mary of Bethany breaking her alabaster jar over Jesus - John 12:3-5). When we are fed at His table, our heart burns and produces spontaneous worship which like incense rises to the Lord’s throne.
2. Bundle of Myrrh - Myrrh is aromatic gum produced by various trees in India, Arabia, and Africa. Myrrh was used to make the holy anointing oil (Ex 30:23). It has a bitter taste. In Hebrew, מֵרֹר means bitter - a symbol of suffering and death. (a) The wise men from the East prophetically brought myrrh (Matt 2:11). (b) On the cross, Jesus was offered wine mingled with myrrh (Mk 15:23). (c) After the crucifixion, Jesus’ body was embalmed with myrrh (Jn 19:39-40).

Some wealthy women in ANE went to bed with a bundle of myrrh to provide fragrance through the night. The cross was the Lord’s most extravagant gift to us. The theme of the cross rests on the bride’s heart throughout the night – the season of darkness and temptation.

3. Henna blooms – Henna is a plant of sweet fragrant flowers. En Gedi is a dry desert area and can be translated ‘redeeming grace.’
4. The bride has THREE responses to the Lord as she sits at the table of the Lord (Ps. 23:5-6): (a) her heart is filled with spontaneous worship, (b) she is meditating on the cross all night, (c) she is celebrating the loveliness of Jesus.

The Lord’s Response #1:

The Lord calls the bride both ‘beautiful’ (x2) and ‘my love’ in one breath (C.f. 1:8-9). He compares her to ‘Dove’s Eyes’. Dove is a symbol of purity and loyalty.

- a. Dove has no peripheral vision. It only sees straight ahead and has no peripheral vision, i.e., they are not distracted easily. They are single-eyed and single-minded.
- b. Turtledoves mate with only one partner for life. If the partner dies, they never mate again, very different from pigeons. Hence, the dove is a symbol of the Holy Spirit (Jn 1:32).

The Lord is saying to the bride, ‘You have such undistracted devotion and loyalty to me.’ It is a mystery how the Lord can see so much in us!

B. 1:16-2:1 Revelation of the Bride’s Life Purpose and Spiritual Identity (Conversation #2)

1. Following the Lord’s most amazing encouragement, the bride responds in the same way: ‘*You are beautiful* (Heb. הַיָּפִי)’ as 1:15.
2. She also adds that the Lord is ‘pleasant’ or ‘delightful’ or ‘pleasurable’! (C.f. Ps. 16:11) She is feeding on His words and enjoying Him!
3. ‘*Our bed is green*’ (Ps 23:2), or ‘*our couch is luxuriant!*’ (NASV). It denotes ‘joyful rest’.
4. ‘*Beams of our house(s) are cedar*’ – cedar and fir (evergreen, cypress?) were the most expensive, durable, fragrant construction material for building houses. They were used for Solomon’s temple. It speaks of ‘rich provisions’.
5. ‘*And our rafters of fir*’ – Rafters support the roof of the house, providing protection from the weather. It speaks of ‘sure protection’. The ‘bed’, ‘houses’, ‘rafters’ are all ours to share.
6. ‘*I am the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys,*’ – This is the bride’s spiritual identity.

- a. Roses are renowned for their beauty and fragrance among all flowers, a symbol of passionate love. Lilies are small and white, a symbol of purity. It speaks of the life of purity and obedience to the Lord. 'Sharon' can be translated as 'his song', and 'valley' speaks of the darkness of this sinful world.
- b. This is the second 'I am' statement from the bride (C.f. 1:5). In poetic language, she is declaring her 'spiritual identity' and her 'primary life purpose'. 'I live to love the Lord and to walk in purity and obedience.' 'I exist to be a beautiful rose and a pure lily before Him.' We cannot separate love and purity/obedience (Jn 14:23).
- c. Now she is much more than just *'dark but lovely'*, but she is *Jesus' desired inheritance*. Our primary identity is not what we do with our hands, but what we pursue with our hearts. Seeing ourselves as His rose and His lily breaks the sense of purposelessness, failure and inferiority. *'...Simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ...'* (2 Cor 11:2-3)

The Lord's Response #2:

'Lily among thorns' – 'In comparison to your beauty, all others are like thorns to me.' Thorns came as a result of the curse of Adam's sin (Gen 3:17-18). *'You are the standout from the crowd, as a pure lily in the midst of the sinful world.'*

C. 2:3-7 Do NOT Disturb (Conversation #3)

1. 'Like an apple tree among the trees of the woods' – Apple refreshes our spirit (C.f. 2:5). Remember in the ancient world, there was chocolate, etc.) There is only 'One' who ultimately refreshes the human spirit at the deepest level. Jesus is the 'primary source' of all true satisfaction in life. He is the only ONE who can satisfy our hearts. No spouse, children, ministry, can take His place. He alone is the apple tree among many trees.
2. *'I sat down in his shade with great delight'* – We need to *'come and sit awhile'* under 'His shade' to taste the sweetness of His fruit. 'Shade of the Lord' is the secret place of God's presence (Ps. 91:1 c.f. Lk 1:35). Do we delight in the shadow of Almighty and taste the 'sweetness' of His presence?

'The shade of God's apple tree' is the 'banqueting house'.
3. 'His banner over me is love' – In the ancient army, every battalion had a specific banner over them, which served to identify who they were and where they were going. *So, also the goal of Christ's leadership over our lives is to 'reveal' and to 'impart' His unsearchable love into our hearts.*
4. 'Sustain me with cakes of raisins' – The bride cries out for a deeper encounter with the Lord through the Word and Spirit. The 'raisin cake' is bread (ministry of the Word) made with dried grapes in it (ministry of the Spirit).

'Refresh me with apples' means 'Give me Jesus'.

'For I am lovesick.' – 'What is being lovesick? I.e., There is such hunger and longing in my heart for more of the Lord that if I can't have more of Jesus, I will die.
5. 'His left and is under my head' – The invisible and indiscernible activity of God in our lives.

'And His right hand embraces me' – The discernible presence and activity of God in our lives.

The Lord's Response #3:

'Do not stir up nor awaken love until it (she) pleases.' – The Holy Spirit is speaking? Gazelle and doe are beautiful animals in the wild that startle easily and run away fast if they are disturbed. This is the strategic time and season for the bride, and she is not to be disturbed by external activities. Leave her alone to go deep in the Lord's presence. Put the 'Do not disturb' sign on the door.