

Session 10 Jesus' Beauty: A Poetic Description (Song 5:10-16)

I. THE BRIDE LONGS FOR THE KING (SONG 5:8-9)

- A. The Bride declared that she was sick with love for the King. Being “lovesick” is feeling “pained” over longing for a closer relationship with Jesus and over anything that hinders our love for Him.

⁸O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my Beloved...tell Him that I am lovesick!... ⁹What is your Beloved more than another beloved, that you so charge us? (Song 5:8-9)

- B. We love Jesus for Himself more than for His blessing on circumstances, ministry, relationships, etc.

II. THE MAJESTIC BEAUTY OF KING JESUS (SONG 5:10-16): AN OVERVIEW

- A. Song 5:10-16 is the greatest poetic description of Jesus' beauty in Scripture. It focuses on His *leadership* (power and plans), *personality* (mind and emotions), and *deeds* (works of His hands). In this passage, the Bride conveyed ten aspects of the King's beauty. She described ten parts of the human body using agricultural images together with references to Solomon's temple. She was familiar with agricultural images (speaking in the language of her heart), and she referenced the temple of Solomon (speaking in the language of King Solomon's heart).

1. In the natural interpretation, the Bride expressed the physical beauty of King Solomon.

2. In the spiritual interpretation, we interpret references to the human body, agricultural images, and the temple (the worship center) as metaphors to convey the beauty of Jesus.

- B. The Bride began with a general statement of the King's incomparable beauty (5:10), then went on to develop ten attributes of His excellencies (5:11-15), and ended with a summary statement (5:16).

¹⁰My beloved is white [radiant, NIV]and...chief among ten thousand. ¹¹His head [leadership] is like the finest gold; His locks are wavy...¹²His eyes are like doves...¹³His cheeks [emotions] are like a bed of spices...His lips are lilies...¹⁴His hands [works of power] are rods of gold...His body is carved ivory...¹⁵His legs are pillars of marble...His countenance is like Lebanon...¹⁶His mouth is most sweet, Yes, He is altogether lovely. (Song 5:10-16)

General—*He is radiant and chief*: The Lord is incomparably superior to all others (5:10).

1. *His head*: The Lord's sovereign leadership over all
2. *His locks*: The Lord's dedication to God and His Church
3. *His eyes*: The Lord's infinite knowledge, wisdom, understanding, and discernment
4. *His cheeks*: The Lord's diverse emotional makeup
5. *His lips*: God's Word
6. *His hands*: The Lord's divine activity
7. *His body*: The Lord's tender compassion
8. *His legs*: The Lord's walk and the administration of His purposes
9. *His countenance*: God's impartation to His people
10. *His mouth*: The Lord's intimate relationship with His people who draw near to Him

Summary—*He is altogether lovely*: The Lord's outstanding beauty (5:16)

III. THE MAJESTIC BEAUTY OF KING JESUS (SONG 5:10-16): TEN CHARACTERISTICS

- A. **Practical application:** As we become familiar with these truths, we are able to speak them *to Jesus* to express our love for Him, *to the devil* when he lies to us about the nature of God, *to ourselves* in time of temptation and discouragement, and *to others* who need encouragement to trust Jesus.
- B. She starts with a general statement about Jesus (5:10)—His beauty is radiant and incomparable.
¹⁰***My Beloved is white [radiant, dazzling] and ruddy, chief among ten thousand.* (Song 5:10)**
1. **White:** The word *white* is translated as “radiant” (NIV) and “dazzling” (NASB). Some suggest this refers to His deity as “the God with jasper-like glory” or brilliance (Rev. 4:3).
 2. **Ruddy:** He is ruddy, or red (1 Sam. 16:12). This points to Jesus’ humanity. He understands our difficulty because He endured great suffering as a man (Heb. 2:14-17; 4:14-16).
¹⁵***For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.* (Heb. 4:15)**
 3. **Chief among ten thousand:** This is a metaphor denoting His incomparable superiority.
 4. **My Beloved:** In her difficulty, she refers to Jesus as her *Beloved, the One she loves*.
- C. **Head:** Jesus’ head speaks of His sovereign leadership over creation.
¹¹***His head is like the finest gold.* (Song 5:11)**
1. **Gold:** Gold speaks of Jesus’ divine nature—it has tremendous value and is very rare.
 2. **Finest:** This refers to the highest degree of quality and excellence. Finest gold has no mixture. His golden headship or sovereignty has no impurity in it. Nothing can be added to it. It cannot be improved. There is no deficiency in His love, wisdom, power, or kindness. When we are in difficulty, our confession is, “*His head is finest gold. His leadership over my life is perfect.*”
- D. **Locks:** Jesus’ hair here speaks of His dedication to God and His people being eternally vigorous. The Nazirite vow forbade the cutting of their hair—it was a sign of dedication to God (Num. 6). Paul spoke of hair in the context of showing dedication to God’s authority (1 Cor. 11:5, 6, 15).
¹¹***His locks [hair, NIV] are wavy and black as a raven.* (Song 5:11)**
1. **Wavy and black:** Wavy or thick black hair speaks of the hair of a young man in the prime of life, in contrast to an old man whose hair has lost its vitality and fullness—gray and balding.
 2. Black hair here speaks symbolically of Jesus’ youthful, energetic, vigorous strength. His dedication is also strong and energetic, and it will never wear out, diminish, or change. God has no bad moods. We never have to be concerned if it is a good time to approach God.

E. **Eyes:** Jesus' eyes speak of His ability to see all and of His omniscience (infinite knowledge, wisdom, and understanding). Having eyes like doves speaks of His keen perception and loyalty.

¹²***His eyes are like doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk and fitly set. (Song 5:12)***

1. **Doves:** Doves have amazing eyesight. They have the same mate for life. Pairs of doves are tightly knit and work together as a team. They watch each other and mirror each other's actions. They are commonly referred to as "love birds," symbols of love and faithfulness.
2. **By the rivers of waters:** Doves are cleanest after bathing in water and preening each other. Jesus' eyes are pure and clean, like doves that have bathed—He interprets knowledge through the cleanness of His heart. A judge may know all the facts about a story, but if he has an unclean heart he may distort and misinterpret the information. There is no known practice of washing eyes with milk. Milk speaks of nurturing—Jesus nurtures people with what He sees.
3. **And fitly set:** A jewel may be set in a piece of jewelry. It is costly to set a diamond as part of a unique necklace. Eyes fitly set speak of eyes without deformity. They are not set too deeply, nor do they protrude in an unlovely way—there is no exaggeration or deformity in them. Jesus' eyes are perfectly, or fitly, set. This speaks of His perfect discernment.
4. Jesus has perfect knowledge. Every secret is seen by the Lord. God discerns both our negative and positive qualities. His eyes see the "yes" in our spirit even when we stumble.

¹³***There is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account...¹⁵For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are. (Heb. 4:13, 15)***

³***The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good. (Prov. 15:3)***

⁵***...until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God. (1 Cor. 4:5)***

¹⁸***These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire...¹⁹"I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience...²⁰I have a few things against you, because you allow...Jezebel...to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality...²²Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. ²³I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts." (Rev. 2:18-23)***

F. **Cheeks:** Jesus' cheeks here speak of His emotions. A person's emotions are expressed in their cheeks. Our cheeks are windows into our emotions, enabling people to discern if we are feeling joy, sadness, or anger. Jesus' emotional life is compared to a bed of spices.

¹³***His cheeks are like a bed of spices, like banks of scented herbs. (Song 5:13)***

1. **Bed of spices:** A king's garden bed was filled with diverse, fragrant spices.
2. **Banks of scented herbs:** Banks of scented herbs here point to a vast amount of fragrance.

G. **Lips:** Jesus' lips speak of His words. Lilies symbolize purity and beauty. Myrrh was a fragrant burial spice. It speaks of death to self. *Liquid myrrh* may refer to the resin droplets or sap that oozes from the tree or to oil that has been infused with myrrh, like anointing oil. His lips dripping with myrrh means that Jesus will speak to us about embracing death to self to liberate our hearts to love.

¹³***His lips are lilies, dripping with liquid myrrh. (Song 5:13)***

H. **Hands:** Jesus' hands (or arms, NIV) refer to His works (in creation, redemption, history, etc.). He has all power and can accomplish anything He wants. Rods of gold speak of divine character, and beryl speaks of that which is costly and beautiful.

¹⁴***His hands are rods of gold set with beryl. (Song 5:14)***

I. **Body:** Jesus' body (or belly, KJV) speaks of His tender feelings, compassion, or deep emotions. The Hebrew word *me'eh* is translated as "body" here and as "my heart yearned" in Song 5:4.

1. Here it speaks of compassion. It is rare, like ivory—it requires skill to carve ivory.

¹⁴***His body is carved ivory inlaid with sapphires. (Song 5:14)***

2. This Hebrew word is translated several ways as "my inward parts," or "my feelings"—it describes various deep emotions (Isa. 16:11; 63:15; Jer. 4:19; 31:20; 48:36; Lam. 1:20; 2:11).

⁴***My Beloved put his hand by the door...my heart yearned [me'eh] for him. (Song 5:4)***

¹⁵***Where are Your zeal...the yearning of Your heart [me'eh]? (Isa. 63:15)***

J. **Legs:** Jesus' legs refer to His walk or the way He unfolds His purposes. Legs provide the forward motion of one's body. Pillars speak of strength, orderliness, and beauty. Marble is a strong building material that is permanent. Jesus' ways are strong, lovely, permanent, and orderly. When we see the big picture of how He leads, we see the beauty and stability of His purposes and ways.

¹⁵***His legs are pillars of marble set on bases of fine gold. (Song 5:15)***

K. **Countenance:** God's countenance speaks of the impartation of glory to His people. David prayed, "Lord, lift up the light of Your countenance on us" (Ps. 4:6). This is a prayer for manifestations of God to touch His people. Lebanon is symbolic of that which is stately and honorable (4:8, 11, 15).

¹⁵***His countenance is like Lebanon, excellent as the cedars. (Song 5:15)***

L. **Mouth:** Throughout this Song the King's mouth is associated with spiritual intimacy with God. In Song 1:2, the mouth was introduced in the context of "the kisses of His mouth," referring to intimacy with God. His mouth is distinct from His words, as signified by His lips (5:13). The message here is that intimacy with God is "most sweet" because nothing delights our hearts more.

¹⁶***His mouth is most sweet. (Song 5:16)***

M. **Altogether lovely:** Her summary statement calls us to a lifelong journey to discover His beauty. The One she loves is her friend. He is not only radiant in His majesty (5:10), but He humbled Himself to be our friend. He is worth all that we sacrifice or endure in pursuing and serving Him.

¹⁶***Yes, He is altogether lovely. This is my Beloved, and this is my friend...! (Song 5:16)***