

The Altogether Lovely One

Part 1

Speaker	H. Nunn
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Note: This text is a computer generated transcript of the sermon. In some cases it may contain errors.

[00:00:00] Now will you turn with me please to the Song of Solomon, firstly chapter one, the first verse. The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's, let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for thy love is better than wine. Because of the savour of thy good ointments, thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee. Draw me, we will run after thee, the King hath brought me into his chambers, we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine, the upright love thee. I am black but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Cedar, as the curtains of Solomon. Look not upon me because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me.

My mother's children were angry with me, they made me the keeper of the vineyards, [00:01:07] but mine own vineyard have I not kept. Now turn to the fourth chapter and the first verse.

Behold thou art fair, my love, behold thou art fair, thou hast dove's eyes within thy locks, thy hair is as a flock of goats that appear from Mount Gilead. Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn which came up from the washing, whereof every one beareth twins and none is barren among them. Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech is comely, thy temples are like a piece of pomegranate within thy locks. Thy neck is like the tower of David builded for an armory, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men. [00:02:06] Thy two breasts are like two young rose that are twins which feed among the lilies. Until the day break and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of Myrrh and to the hill of frankincense. Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee.

Now turn to the fifth chapter and the eighth verse. I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him that I am sick of love. 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? My beloved is white and ruddy, [00:03:02] the chiefest among ten thousand. His head is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy and black as a raven. His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of water, washed with milk and fitly set. His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers, his lips like lilies dropping sweet-smelling myrrh.

His hands are as gold rings set with a barrel, his belly is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires.

His legs are as pillars of marble set upon sockets of fine gold. His countenance is as Lebanon excellent as the cedars. His mouth is most sweet, yea, he is altogether lovely.

This is my beloved and this is my friend, O ye daughters of Jerusalem. [00:04:04] May the Lord bless to us that reading of his word. In bringing this scripture before you this evening, I would realise that this is Jewish, isn't it, the teaching? And yet, as I turn to the Old Testament scripture, and no doubt as you turn to it so often, there are many things that are Jewish and how much we appreciate them, don't we? We look into the 53rd chapter of Isaiah, do we not? And how much we appreciate the teaching in that chapter. How often we turn to it and how often we take that truth for ourselves and therefore I would feel that if we are able to do that tonight with regard to the scriptures that we have read, well we are going to benefit by them. Because I feel that in this day there is something in these chapters that I have read tonight that can be a means of appreciation to us in this late day. [00:05:07] As I have read them, I have read from the first and the fourth and the fifth chapter of this book and in the first chapter I read, I am black. In the fourth chapter I read those wonderful words, behold thou art fair. And in the fifth chapter I read those wonderful words, he is altogether lovely. Now when I think of those words that we have read in the first chapter, I am black, who do they refer to? Well, thinking firstly of them, you might think that they refer to one that is an unbeliever but I don't think they do, do they? Because when the one speaks she says concerning herself, I am black but comely. I am black but comely. And could it be possible [00:06:03] that an unbeliever could be comely? We must realise what an unbeliever looks like in the sight of a holy and a righteous God and therefore these words were not the words of an unbeliever. I am black. I would think also of the New Testament where we read concerning that great apostle Paul, he could say I know that in me that is in my flesh dwelleth no good thing and I think those two things go together, don't you? I would feel that as this one speaks concerning herself and as Paul the apostle speaks concerning himself, there is something together with regard to those words. And why is it? I feel that we have got to realise, beloved brethren, what we are really in the flesh. It is that as we come before the Lord we know what we [00:07:05] are before him but we should be that practically before him. Behold they are not fair but we will not realise the import of this and neither will it be true practically of us unless we know something about being black. When I think of Israel in the time that God led them out of that land of Egypt and led them through the wilderness, how much they were to learn themselves, hadn't they? This is to do perhaps with Israel. How much they had to learn the flesh that was in them and in those 40 years spent in the wilderness how much there was that came out that showed what was really in them. Then if we think of that wonderful man Job in his day, perhaps it was that he lived before those children of Israel, as I think of him, think of the exercises that he had [00:08:06] in that book till at last, till at last at the end he has to say, I am vile, I abhor myself.

When I think therefore of the great apostle Paul I think of one who when God had worked with him and when God had brought him into the place of blessing it was then he had, by the exercising and the persecutions that were his, he had a different appreciation of what he was in himself.

So that we see in the epistle to the Philippians, whatsoever things were gained to me those I counted lost for Christ and what a difference there was. That which he had been as a man after the flesh, well that man after the flesh was now to sink into insignificance [00:09:02] because after all when we think of what he was and what he had been, those things now he said I count but dung and dross that I might not win Christ, you can't win Christ, that I might gain Christ. And as I think of those wonderful things they must be true concerning ourselves. We must realise that the flesh is that which is not satisfactory to God, that which does not please God and therefore if we take the words of this woman on our lips and say I am black, I am black, then I feel it is that we can turn on to the verses that we read in the fourth chapter because there we see those wonderful words at the beginning, behold thou art fair. Now whereas I am black were the words that the woman felt concerning herself, [00:10:01] here is what the lover thinks of that one he loves, behold thou art fair. Now what wonderful words to

come from the lips, I would say with regard to each one of us here tonight, what wonderful words to come from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ with regard to ourselves but let's remember if these words are to be true of ourselves it must be and it can be alone by that which grace has wrought in our hearts and as we would go down and look at those various things that were written here we've got to notice so many things concerning the one that's fair. I think that we should take notice of the beginning of that chapter because firstly in speaking of her beauty he says thou hast dove's eyes within thy locks and I would feel that as we look at those words tonight that the word dove's eyes within thy locks should read thou hast [00:11:07] dove's eyes within thy veil. That brings me to the thought of Rebecca coming to the home of Isaac and as he goes out into the field to in the evening to meditate it says that the servant bringing Rebecca came along and she looked and as she saw Isaac coming in the distance she said who is this man and knowing who he was she alighted from her camel and veiled herself, and veiled herself. Now why did she do that? Why was it to that moment that she had not the veil upon her and why was it from that moment forward that that veil would take a great part of her life would play a great part in her life? Because she would appreciate the fact with regard to the one [00:12:01] that was meeting her now she was to be veiled for him. She was to be veiled for him and her beauty was for him and him alone. She was for him and him alone and therefore when I think of this scripture tonight and when I look at this verse that says thou hast dove's eyes within thy veil it means to me that that which is found in the veil within that veil is for the Lord alone.

Therefore it appears to me that as I look at this scripture that if we are for him alone we are not for this world are we? When we look at the New Testament teaching with regard to this we realise that we are not our own we are bought with a price are we not? And that which we are found to be now is for him and him alone. But thou hast dove's eyes within thy veil. [00:13:02] Now when I think of this I think of ourselves coming out of the wilderness. I think of ourselves coming to the Lord Jesus Christ and it is then and not till then that we have an appreciation of those things that are spiritual. Thou hast dove's eyes within thy veil, within thy lux. Reminding me of the fact that we have that spiritual intelligence and not till we come to the Lord Jesus Christ. Do you remember the woman in the fourth chapter of the Gospel of John? That woman had been found in the presence of the Lord Jesus and she had that spiritual insight didn't she? To be able after that contact with him to go back into the city and to be able to say come see a man that told me all that ever I did. Is not this the Christ? How was she able to say that? Because she had spiritual insight. When I think of the Scripture [00:14:08] in the New Testament we see that the natural man receiveth not the things that are of the Spirit of God. Neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned. And if there's one thing then we start with when we belong to the Lord Jesus Christ it is spiritual discernment. Thou hast dove's eyes within thy lux. Thy hair is as a flock of goats that appear on Mount Gilead. As we think of the hair in the Scripture how important it is both in the Old and the New Testaments. I know that your thought will go at the moment to the sixth chapter of Numbers because there we see the truth with regard to the Nazarite and his hair. What did it mean to be a Nazarite? What was the connection with the hair there? His hair was [00:15:02] not to be cut. That would show the separation of his Nazariteship. He was to be a separate man was he not? When we look into the New Testament and turn to the epistle to the Corinthians the hair is mentioned again isn't it? And this time with regard to the woman and with regard to keeping her hair long, allowing her hair to grow, we see that there's a blessing. It shows there the teaching concerning submission to the word of the Lord. Now that's two wonderful teachings isn't it? Separation in the Old Testament and submission to the will of the Lord in the New Testament. Now when I think of those two I feel that we get a little way away from them today do you not? When we think of separation today there are so many thoughts concerning [00:16:03] separation and perhaps thoughts that are really not spiritual. Some people in thinking on separation think that

separation is that we should not do this or not do that and not go here and not go there. Maybe that would be true but why was the separation of the Nazarite and why was one at all separated in the scripture? It was that his separation was unto the Lord, unto the Lord. So that in turn as he was separated he had his hands free for the Lord, his hands were free.

And as I think of the Acts of the Apostles where there we read separate unto me Barnabas and Saul for the ministry. Separation means that we are separated unto the Lord and then should it be that there are things that are not suitable for that separation then it is that we don't do this [00:17:07] and we don't do that. We don't go here and we don't go there. But the first thought is with regard to separation being separated unto the Lord. And then as we think of ourselves submitting ourselves to his word. When we think of this today I won't say that it's too widespread but it is to a certain extent seen today that with regard to some scriptures that people feel do not affect their lives they'll hold with them. But should it be that there's a scripture that cuts across that which they want to do they just do what they want to do and leave the scripture. Now when we look at here and when we look at this and see the bride, the spouse mentioned here and when we see her it shows concerning her that she's in a wonderful place.

[00:18:09] I hear is as a flock of goats that appear from Mount Gilead as I think of those two truths being true concerning her she's as a flock of goats. Well if it is that we ourselves are separated unto the Lord and submitted to his word we shall know something of the flock character won't we of the unity between us as brethren but a flock of goats. You'll notice in the next verse it says a flock of sheep but here a flock of goats and as I see this scripture brethren it isn't that the word is just changed it is that there's significance in every word that we read in the scripture and as I think of a flock of goats here I find here because there's the obedience to the [00:19:02] word of God there's the unity and also there's the vigour among God's people because none is so vigorous as a goat is he and so we see that that is true concerning that which is spoken of concerning the hair. Then we see in this next verse that thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn and when I think of the teeth I think of that which speaks of maturity.

If it is that those things that have been said are true concerning ourselves surely there'll be maturity and the ability to feed. Now when we think of that today don't you think that there's a lot of neglect with regard to feeding on God's word? If it should be that there's something novel where people are drawn together it may be that we'll get a crowd of people but when it is God's [00:20:05] word when we can feed well that's a different problem isn't it? If we are mature brethren we will desire to feed on God's word and here we see that the teeth that her teeth are as a flock of sheep that are even shorn and as I see these truths dear beloved brethren not that I want to go in this way through every part of this scripture tonight as I see this how much there is to help us tonight. As I think of the flock of sheep we would realise that the sheep speaks of that which is one of the Lord's people. I give unto my sheep eternal life and they shall never perish. So this is speaking of a partaker of the divine nature isn't it? But they are even shorn. They have relinquished something of self and it is not till we relinquish [00:21:06] something of self that we are able to appreciate that which speaks of the Lord himself. We are able to feed. Thy lips are as a thread of scarlet and when I think of the lips being as a thread of scarlet it reminds me of that thread that was hung by Rahab in her window. Do you remember with regard to that woman and the position that she was in? She had faith in the God of Israel and yet her faith seemed to be hopeless. But you know faith is never hopeless and as I see her there in that godless place of Jericho and as I think of the hopelessness of the position that she was in it was that messengers, spies were sent to Jericho. I say messengers and spies because [00:22:03] although the scripture does not give that order with regard to the spies that are sent I feel that that's

the order in import. Spies were sent to spy out Jericho but God sent his messengers. God sent his messengers to that woman and we see that her thread of scarlet was placed in the window. The scripture says here thy lips are like a thread of scarlet and as I think of that woman having received the spies and then sent them, sending them back in peace there she puts her thread of scarlet in the window. She puts it in the window that is outward. Now her interest in one sense is not in the city it's outside the city because she is one that believes in the God of Israel but she still has an interest in the city. She has in that city all those relatives [00:23:04] and perhaps at that moment they had no faith in that which she had faith in, in the God of Israel and her speech to them was comely. As we think of her going to those that were her relatives gathering them all into her house how wonderful it is to think of her speech in this way because if the teeth speak of that which we would take in for ourselves the lips speak of that which goes out and we see with regard to her lips that they are comely. Thy temples, no doubt that means cheeks, are as a piece of pomegranate within thy lips and as I think of the cheeks being as a piece of pomegranate I look on the description of this dear one and as I see her and as I think of the people of God today this would show the health of the assembly of God's people. [00:24:05] There is that ruddy complexion and then as we turn to the fourth verse we see that thy neck is like the tail of David. As I think of this I would be reminded of the scripture because on one occasion God speaks through his word saying he that is off reproved hardeneth his neck will be suddenly cut off and that without remedy. So the neck would speak to me of the will, the will. And here I see with regard to the neck that speaks of the will it is like a tower. Yes it is in the natural state isn't it but when I look into this scripture I see it has a tower of David and being as a tower of David I would remember that it's spoken of him that David was a man after God's own heart and it would mean to me that as I read this scripture that when I submit [00:25:07] my will to the Lord it is then I am a tower. I am in a place of position and power. And lastly as we see that last verse thy two breasts are as rose that are twins. I feel that in the assemblies today there wants to be a little more of a balance of affection. We have been reading in Upminster lately the epistle, the first epistle of John and how much there is written concerning our love to God but also how much there is written with regard to our love to our brethren there must be a balance with regard to that love. Now when we turn to the fourth chapter we see that the spouse is able to speak of her beloved and what made her to speak of her beloved in this way? Why was it that she spoke of him [00:26:07] and was able to say he is altogether lovely? No doubt there had been a time even in this chapter there had been a time when she not only looked upon him but she contemplated him. If one has an object of affection they certainly contemplate that object and when we think of this one here if those things were true of her in the fourth chapter truly she would be one that would appreciate in a measure that blessed person that speaks to us of the Lord Jesus Christ. And she is able to say at the end of the chapter here he is altogether lovely. He is altogether lovely. And yet in speaking concerning that which he has before her we must realise that [00:27:02] she puts things in their right perspective because in the tenth verse we read that she says my beloved is white and ruddy. My beloved is white and when I think of the Lord Jesus Christ as found in this world and when I think of him right from his very birth what was said concerning him when he was born into this world that holy thing that is born of thee we must remember that when we think of the Lord Jesus Christ in his intense purity during the whole of his pathway here which was a witness before men it's true concerning him my beloved is white. Now that was to be proved was it not because when we think of Old Testament scripture with regard to cleanliness or perfection we must remember that there was a time basis [00:28:02] so that that purity could be proved. When we think of the Passover lamb we see that there was a time it was taken out from the 10th day and kept up to the 14th day and wouldn't that remind us to a certain degree of the Lord Jesus Christ in his pathway whereas that lamb would be kept for nearly four days it would be with regard to the Lord Jesus Christ that he was seen in all his perfection during those three and a half years my beloved is white. At the beginning of his pathway as he came out of the waters of

baptism the word comes to him from the glory this is my beloved son in whom I'm well pleased and as we see him from that moment and no doubt at that moment every eye was upon him and we see every eye upon him particularly [00:29:02] do we not in the first chapter of the Gospel of John when John says there this is the Lamb of God behold him who taketh away the sin of the world and from that moment forward don't you think that it was true that all eyes were upon him and as I look into the scripture from that time even to the time that he was crucified wasn't it true concerning him during the whole of those days that he was in a position that he was accessible and he was able to be seen so often by all kinds of people and as all those people of various degrees looked upon him what did they see? I like to think firstly of those the many that were against him and as I think of those against him what a company there were. There were the Pharisees and there were the Sadducees there were the Jews there were the elders there were the scribes there were the Herodians [00:30:06] and as we think of all of them don't you think that they looked at him to see if there was any spot in him? They did day after day and whenever they met him they sought to catch him in his speech they sought to see something in his life that was not according to the will of God. What did they see? They saw nothing till the time that he was offered up. I like to think of it in this way that from the time that John the Baptist said behold the Lamb of God till the time that Pilate said behold the man he was seen in all his perfection before men. But there were others that saw him and that there were others that saw things that a person from outside would not see. There were his disciples were there not and among them there was one who the scripture says [00:31:01] the words of the Lord say have not I chosen you twelve and one of you is a demon.

What did that mean? That in that inner circle Satan had a man that would see things that other people would not see and at the end of the pathway that one would betray the Lord Jesus Christ but what did he say? I have betrayed innocent blood and when we think of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ we must believe these words my beloved is white and ruddy. Now when we think of that word I don't think it gives really the full meaning and the full power to it. If you think of the word consecration I think there you've got the thought and when I think of the Lord Jesus Christ being found in intense purity here also we must realise that from the beginning of his pathway to the end [00:32:02] it was a life consecrated to do his father's will during the whole of the time. It was a busy life and as we think of him in the whole of that pathway we shall see if we look into Mark's Gospel chapter one and then go through we shall see how busy those days were and his life was filled with that which was his father's will. Yes my beloved is white and ruddy his head is as most fine gold and when I think of his head being as the most fine gold I feel that down here for the first time was one that men could look upon in all his perfection as a man and yet here in this world was the Son of God. The Son of God and as Son of God he was here the head speaking of intelligence would give me to believe that as the Lord Jesus Christ was here he was found here showing really [00:33:07] what God was. That came up a little in our reading last Saturday afternoon at Upminster and it was wondered what the image of God was. Now when we think of the Lord Jesus and when we think of those things that happened in his life I feel that he showed really what God was. You remember the fourth chapter of the Gospel of John it says concerning the Lord Jesus that Jesus being wearied with his journey sat thus on the well and when we think of him there you'd say why is he there? Because the Father would desire that he should be there. The Father's desire is that he should wait in patience for one of the vilest. It's the Father's heart then that the [00:34:02] vilest should be saved. When we see the Lord Jesus looking upon the multitude and as he sees them to be as those a sheep without a shepherd it says that he said I have compassion on the multitude. What does that mean? That when I think of that which God has toward the people of men, the children of men, it is that he has great compassion on them and in so many ways did not he show what God really is? His locks are bushy and black as a raven and when I think of these locks being bushy and black as a raven it shows me that there's no sign of age

here. I read in John's Gospel in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, the same was in the beginning with God, the same. Now that word very often we think that [00:35:02] it's just mentioning the same but I would suggest to you brethren that that's the title of the Lord Jesus Christ. Those words were true of him at the beginning of his pathway, the same was in the beginning. Now later on in his pathway when it was that the Pharisees come to him and ask him who he is he says I'm the same. I'm the same that I said at the beginning. If we look into the epistles we see then that the scripture says Jesus Christ the same. There's no change in him. The same yesterday, today and forever. If we look into the first chapter of Hebrews we see there but thou art the same and thy years shall not fail. As we think of these things we will turn to the twelfth verse and there we see it says concerning him his eyes are as the eyes of doves. So [00:36:01] differently from the eyes that are mentioned in the first chapter of the Revelation. There as the Lord is found moving among the churches it says that his eyes are as a flame of fire. His eyes are as a flame of fire. There it is he's discerning that which is happening among his people in that late day and he understands and sees everything and he's judging it in the right, the right light different from what it's judged today. But here we see the eyes are as the eyes of doves. Speaking to me of the gentleness and the feeling of the Lord Jesus Christ. You remember in the fifth chapter of the Gospel of John as the Lord Jesus Christ went by the sheep gate it says that he saw a man there. But what does it say about him? It struck me during the week when I was [00:37:03] thinking of this scripture because it says and when he saw him lie and when he saw him lie and knew that he had been many years in that state and when he saw him lie what feeling there was. What feeling in the Lord Jesus Christ as he looked upon that man lying there. One that he could make hold and when I think of the eyes being as the eyes of doves here I feel that that feeling is still here as beloved brethren today because it says concerning him that his eyes are fitly set. A fitly set meaning that there's no change with regard to this blessed person. His cheeks are as beds of spices and when I think of the cheeks of the Lord Jesus Christ I'm reminded of his humility. He gave his back to the smiters and his cheeks to those that plucked [00:38:03] off the hair and he hid not his face from shame and spitting. And I want you to think of those words for a minute. No doubt there have been those that have had the hair plucked off of their faces but when we think of who this person was and when we think of the power that was at his disposal at this time and yet it was that he gave his back to the smiters and his cheeks to those that plucked off the hair and when we think of Judas coming to him and kissing him in his betrayal of his master what humility it was for the Lord Jesus Christ at that time not to do what we would have done in retaliating for what he had done at this time. Then there was at his judgment the fact that they smacked him on the cheek. Now was there not? And then we see later with regard to him there were [00:39:04] those that spit on his cheek and that reminds me so much concerning his humility down here. But what does it say concerning his cheeks? Concerning that humility his cheeks are as a bed of spices as sweet flowers. When I think of that I realise that the humility of the Lord Jesus Christ brought fragrance to God his Father. Yes when I think of these things what a wonderful life was the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. And his lips like lilies dropping sweet smelling myrrh as we think of this and as we think of the words that proceeded out of his mouth those gracious words could not come apart from that which would be his lot when he went to the cross of Calvary. [00:40:02] We think of myrrh we think of the fragrance of myrrh and it has been said with regard to myrrh myrrh is bitter to the taste and sweet to the smell and as we think of that which was accomplished upon the cross of Calvary to God's glory sweet to the taste it was bitterness to the Lord Jesus Christ.

His hands are as gold rings set with the barrel and when I think of the Lord Jesus Christ in this pathway of his in this world wherever he went and whenever those hands were opened they were always open to the glory of God his Father. Going forth in that word and going farther in that thought we see in the 15th verse his legs are as pillars of marble set upon sockets of fine gold. When I think

of where he went and the way in which he moved among men I see that there was perfection [00:41:06] in his pathway but I see that his hand and his feet were in unison the one with another bringing glory to God his Father. What a challenge these words are to us beloved brethren as we think of those things that were seen in all perfection in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ and realise as a man he's left us an example that we should follow his steps. What different men we ought to be in this world and lastly his mouth is most sweet and when we think of his mouth being most sweet we look at the beginning of his pathway here and we think of those words that were said concerning him. There his words were so different from the words that were the words of others. There they marvelled at the gracious words that [00:42:01] proceeded out of his mouth. What wonderful words they were and when almost at the end of his pathway there were those that were sent to apprehend him in the seventh chapter of the Gospel of John they came back to their masters and said never man spake like this man but what wonderful words they were. Words of comfort and words of cheer words that were needed at that time for the people of that day but how much more they're needed today because when we think of those words that were spoken by himself we have not to speculate what those words were because as we turn into the Gospels we see those words written down for us and as we see them written down for us beloved brethren what wonderful words of comfort and cheer they are for us today. Now in weakness bringing these thoughts before you tonight I feel that that's a challenge for [00:43:02] each one of us. Yes we must realise firstly that we are black and then if it be that we are able to appreciate to an extent that which our nature, our flesh is capable of then it is that he's able to say behold thou art comely, behold thou art fair and in turn till he comes back and takes us to himself may be that we look upon him and realise in him the altogether lovely one.