

SPECIAL DAYS – CHRISTMAS

“CHRISTMAS: A LOVE STORY”

Scripture: **Song of Solomon 2:1-4**

Text: **Song of Solomon 2:4**
“He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.”

What is Christmas? The most simple yet most complete answer is: “Christmas is about the greatest love ever demonstrated.” Love is the greatest thing that God can give us for God Himself is love and at Christmastime God gave us Himself!

The Christmas story is foreshadowed in a great love story told in the book of The Song Of Solomon. In that book we have the story of King Solomon who falls in love with a young maiden shepherdess, who likewise falls in love with the King.

Jewish tradition says that this book pictures Jehovah’s love for Israel. Christians see it illustrating Christ’s love for the church as well as the individual believer. Also King Solomon’s love for the maiden is a beautiful expression of a husband’s love for his wife and visa versa.

The word “love” and its various cognates such as “beloved”, etc. are found more than 50 times in this story. The Love Story of Christmas can be seen in this rather obscure verse in the Song of Solomon chapter two, verse four: ***“He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.”***

There are three words that will help you to remember this story. They are: **Exit**, **Entrance** and **Explanation**. Concentrate on this verse as follows:

THE EXIT.

“He brought me to the banqueting house....”

In order to bring the maiden to his Banquet House, the King had to exit His house. He came out of His Palace in Heaven; He had to come out before He could bring us in!

The Apostle Paul writes about our Savior’s Exit from heaven in these words: *“Although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”* (Philippians 2:5-8)

The Exit – He came out of His palace in heaven – that’s the Christmas story! And we sing about it in the hymn, **“Out Of The Ivory Palaces”**:

“Out of the Ivory Palaces
Into a world of woe;
Only His great eternal love
Made my Savior go.”

THE ENTRANCE

“He brought me to the banqueting house.”

Why the Christmas event? He came out to take us in - that’s the rest of the story! Paul wrote to the Ephesians, saying: *“Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, **that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.**”* (Eph.5:25-27)

In the year 1519, Cortes, the great Spanish explorer and conqueror, landed in Mexico and marched to the Capital City. There he met Montezuma, the Mexican emperor. The shrewd Cortes urged Montezuma to come out of his Palace and talk with him and his soldiers as evidence of good will. But from the balcony of his Palace, Montezuma answered with these words: “When was it ever heard that a Crown Prince, like myself, voluntarily left his own Palace to become a prisoner in the hands of strangers?”

In the Christmas story, we have the Mexican Ruler’s question answered. For Jesus Christ, the Crown Prince of Heaven, voluntarily left His own Palace to become a prisoner in the hands of strangers that He might take us to His palace in heaven! He said, *“I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”* (John 14:2,3)

Soon the Lover of our souls will appear to catch His bride, the church, away and then we will enter His house forever! The Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev.19:9) will be a glorious event to be enjoyed by all whom the Savior brings into His Banqueting House.

THE EXPLANATION

“his banner over me was love.”

There must be an explanation behind this story! Why would He do such a thing for us? Why would He leave the splendors of heaven? Why would He come out to bring us in? The answer is in this last phrase in v. 4 *“His banner over me was love.”*

Our Savior’s actions cannot be explained apart from His love for us! John 3:16 explains it all: *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life”*

Why Christmas? Christmas is the world’s greatest love story: *“God so loved”!* Why Calvary? Because *“God so loved”!* Why our entrance into His Banqueting House? Because *“God so loved”!*

*“Down from His glory,
Ever living story,
My God and Savior came,
And Jesus was His Name.
Born in a manger,*

*To His own a stranger,
A Man of sorrows, tears and agony.*

*What condescension,
Bringing us redemption;
That in the dead of night,
Not one faint hope in sight,
God, gracious, tender,
Laid aside His splendor,
Stooping to woo, to win, to save my soul.*

Refrain

*O how I love Him! How I adore Him!
My breath, my sunshine, my all in all.
The great Creator became my Savior,
And all God's fullness dwelleth in Him."*

- William E. Booth

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