

Song of Solomon 1:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine.

Analysis

The bride speaks: 'Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine.' This opening verse establishes the Song's unabashed celebration of physical intimacy and passionate desire within covenant relationship. The Hebrew 'yishaqeni' (יִשָּׁקֵנִי, let him kiss me) uses an intensive form expressing urgent longing. The shift from third person ('him') to second person ('thy') creates dramatic immediacy—moving from description to direct address. The comparison 'thy love is better than wine' employs the Hebrew 'dodekha' (דֹּדֶכָּה), which can mean 'love' or 'lovemaking,' suggesting both emotional and physical intimacy. Wine represented joy, celebration, and sensory pleasure in ancient Israel (Psalm 104:15), yet the bride declares her beloved's love surpasses even this delight. This verse teaches that godly passion within marriage is appropriate, beautiful, and divinely ordained—not shameful or merely functional for procreation. The church fathers saw this as the believer's longing for intimate communion with Christ, whose love surpasses all earthly pleasures (Philippians 3:8).

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern love poetry (Egyptian love songs, Sumerian sacred marriage texts) celebrated romantic and sexual love, but often in fertility cult contexts or without covenant commitment. The Song of Solomon uniquely celebrates erotic love within exclusive covenant relationship—neither ascetic denial nor promiscuous indulgence. In Solomon's cultural context, wine was precious and pleasurable, making the comparison especially powerful. The early church's

allegorical reading saw the 'kisses of his mouth' as God's word and revelation (Psalm 119:103), with believers longing for intimate knowledge of Christ through Scripture. Bernard of Clairvaux's sermons on the Song emphasized spiritual eros—holy desire for God that transcends and fulfills all lesser desires. The Puritans recovered appreciation for marital sexuality as divine gift, rejecting medieval asceticism that viewed celibacy as superior. Modern applications must hold together both the literal affirmation of marital passion and the typological anticipation of Christ's passionate love for His Church.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does this verse challenge both prudish embarrassment about sexuality and cultural obsession with eroticism outside covenant commitment?
2. What does it mean practically to pursue spiritual intimacy with Christ that surpasses all lesser pleasures, as this verse metaphorically suggests?

Interlinear Text

יִשָּׁקְנֵנִי	מִנְשִׁיקָא וְתֵ	פִּי יֵהוּ	כִּי	טוֹב יִם	דִּדְךָ יֵה
Let him kiss	me with the kisses	of his mouth	H3588	is better	for thy love
H5401	H5390	H6310		H2896	H1730
מִיָּהּ					
than wine					
H3196					

Additional Cross-References

Song of Solomon 4:10: How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices!

Song of Solomon 1:4: 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.

Isaiah 25:6: And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.

Psalms 36:7: How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.

Matthew 26:26: And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

From KJV Study • kjevstudy.org