

SONG OF SONGS WHICH IS SOLOMON'S



The Young Shulammitte Bride

A STUDY ON THE BOOK OF "SONG OF SONGS"
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INTRODUCTION - 1:1¹

שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים אֲשֶׁר לְשֹׁלֹמֹה הַמֶּלֶךְ
 Songs (of) Songs is which Solomon to(of)

Before one begins a study of this book, there is some background to be covered. We will begin with its name. The Hebrew name is שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים (SHEER H'SHEERIM) which translates as we have it in the NIV Song of Songs while most other translations have it as Song of Solomon which is not in accordance with the Hebrew text. We shall not debate the name, however, since the first verse reads שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים אֲשֶׁר לְשֹׁלֹמֹה (SHEER H'SHEERIM ASHER L'SOLOMON), “*The Song of Songs which is Solomon's.*”

The important question to be resolved is what the purpose of the book might be. We list some viewpoints below:

- a: It is an allegory expressing God's love for the Jews.
- b: It is an allegory expressing Jesus' love for the Church.
- c: It is a personal song between Solomon and his beloved (one of them).
- d: It is a love song, pure and simple, which is to be applied to every husband/wife relationship.

We will not debate the issue here because of the following observations:

Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus and Timothy our brother. To Philemon our dear friend and fellow worker, to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier and to the church that meets in your house.

Philemon 1-2

Paul's letter to Philemon and Apphia and Archippus was a very personal letter. It was a plea from Paul for mercy for their run-away slave Onesimus. I don't believe that Paul sat down and said to himself "I think I'll write a letter to Philemon which can be placed in the New Testament just before the book of Hebrews." The Holy Spirit knew that it would end up in our Bibles, but Paul didn't! It was just a personal note. Solomon's Song was a personal song he wrote for his Shulammite bride. But it is also in our Bibles.

A SONG : The Old Testament is filled with songs the Israelites wrote or sang. The Book of Psalms is full of them. This “song,” however, is different. If it were to be written today in English, we would probably call it a “Broadway Musical,” such as “The Sound of Music,” etc. More properly it would be called “a musical drama” It is written in ACTS and SCENES, as explained below (Page #5).

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the life that is in Christ Jesus, To Timothy, my dear son.

2 Timothy 1:1-2

¹Note that this study was begun in 1990 and has been significantly enhanced in this version. There may be a few inconsistencies in the format because of this.

On the other hand, here we have a "personal" letter to Paul's "dear son" Timothy. But, I ask you, who would address a letter to such a dear son with such a formal greeting as this? Here is an example of a "personal letter" that was more than a personal letter. It is obvious that Paul intended Timothy to share this letter with the members of his congregation and thus Paul's credentials needed to be stated.

We might conclude the same thing with regards to the Song of Solomon. While he probably wrote this song for his bride, he must have thought that it would be of benefit to others or he would never have "published" it.

Now these things occurred as examples, to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did . . . These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come

1 Corinthians 10:6,11

In writing to Corinth, Paul reminds the members of the church there that the actions of Israel in their exodus from Egypt and wandering in the wilderness were recorded for a purpose. Not simply for the purpose of giving us some interesting history, but they were written down as "examples" for us. In these verses the Greek noun is τυπος (TUPOS), from which we get the English word "type".

The study of Old Testament "types" is a very interesting one. The Tabernacle with all of its furnishings was meant to provide typology (a picture) of Jesus Christ. All of the Old Testament has been given us that we might learn about God. Thus, when Paul writes to the church at Ephesus, he writes the following.

This is a profound mystery - but I am talking about Christ and the Church. However, each of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Ephesians 5:32-33

Paul, in Ephesians five had much to say about the relationship between husbands and wives. But then he ends the chapter saying that his primary teaching here is about the relationship between Christ and His Church. He then concludes with the note that the advice is well taken on in the physical sense as well.

With this in mind, we shall state the following. First, Solomon wrote this love song to one of his beloved wives, it is a personal song between the two of them. But then Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus were personal too! Secondly, we may conclude that since Solomon was a very wise man and that since he wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, it is a love song for all of us. Finally, in view of Ephesians five, we shall assume that it is also to be taken as a type, but not as an allegory. You may ask what the difference is and so we shall define these terms:

ALLEGORY: allegory >n. (pl. -ies) a story, poem, or picture which can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning.² Pilgrim's Progress is such a story.

²OXFORD, "allegory"

TYPE: THEOL. 5 THEOLOGY A FORESHADOWING IN THE OLD TESTAMENT OF A PERSON OR EVENT OF THE CHRISTIAN³

The difference is that the portrayal in an allegory is imaginary. There was never really a person named Pilgrim, Mr. Bunyon made him up. He wrote the story to teach a precept. When we study it, what we are interested in is learning the precept.

On the other hand, a type was a real person or thing or event in history. The person who wrote the account was writing an account of an actual event. The author had no idea that he was also describing something that would appear in the age of Grace. Of course, the Holy Spirit, who inspired his writing knew it would.

Since we consider the Song of Solomon to be a type of the love song between Christ and His church, we must be aware that types, unlike allegories, are not to be taken as totally accurate with respect to the type. In some places of this book we must simply accept the writing as a love song between a man and a woman. But in many places we may see the typology of Christ and the Church. In conclusion, we shall consider each of these views as we study the book.

One final note with respect to this introduction. This song is written in a form to be acted out on a stage. It probably never was, at least, not in Solomon's time. There are the following players:

- (a) The Bride, a Shulammite⁴ woman (6:13), = The Church
- (b) The Bridegroom, Solomon, and = The Lord Jesus Christ
- (c) the Chorus. = (no particular type; onlookers)
- (d) others (her brothers and a relative) appear infrequently.

In the NIV these are identified as the Beloved, the Lover, and the Friends respectively. For this reason we shall write this study in play terms (i.e. Acts and Scenes). The division of the work into ACTS and SCENES has been obtained mostly from Keil & Delitzsch's Commentary, but with some modifications. It is unusual to find the Table of Contents for a commentary or study on a book of the Bible, but this is an unusual book!

WHAT IS LOVE?

This book (song) is a love song. But what kind of love? In Greek there are three words for "love" "ἔρος (eros) which is an erotic type of love and is not found in the Bible, φιλῆμα (phila) with is a "brotherly" type of love, such as found in Philadelphia, "brotherly love." The third word is ἀγάπη (agape) which is seldom used outside of the Bible. The New Testament writers, under the firection of the Holy Spirit, adapted this word to describe that fact that,

*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.*

John 3:16 (NKJV)

³OXFORD, "Type"

⁴it is evidently derived from the town of Shunam near Mt. Gilboa. The form Shulammite may have been adopted because of its assonance with Solomon (Heb. Shelomoh) and, indeed, as a kind of title (not a proper name), it may actually be the feminine of Solomon. SHUMATHITES—New Unger's Bible Dictionary

The interesting thing about this word is where it **is** found outside of the New Testament. It is found about sixteen times in the Old Testament (LXX). Five of these are below.

*I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan;
You have been very pleasant to me;
Your **love to** me was wonderful,
Surpassing **the love of** women.*

2 Samuel 1:26 (NKJV)

*Then Amnon hated her exceedingly, so that the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the **love** with which he had **loved** her. And Amnon said to her, "Arise, be gone!"*

2 Samuel 13:15 (NKJV)

*For I considered all this in my heart, so that I could declare it all: that the righteous and the wise and their works are in the hand of God. People know neither **love** nor hatred by anything they see before them.*

Ecclesiastes. 9:1 (NKJV)

*Also their **love**, their hatred, and their envy have now perished;
Nevermore will they have a share
In anything done under the sun.*

Ecclesiastes 9:6 (NKJV)

*"Go and cry in the hearing of Jerusalem, saying, 'Thus says the Lord:
"I remember you,
The kindness of your youth,
The **love** of your betrothal,
When you went after Me in the wilderness,
In a land not sown.*

Jeremiah 2:2 (NKJV)

Note that most of these are in poetic passages. But where are the other eleven occurrences in the Old Testament (LXX)? They are all in one book, The Song of Songs! How could such a "sensual" type of love as is found in the Song of Solomon be used of God's love?

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,

Ephesians 5:25 (NKJV)

What is the love between a man and a woman. Take a look at nature. In the spring the flowers all blossom out. The trees bud and bring forth blossoms. Why did God create all these beautiful blossoms? Not for you to pick and put in a vase! He made the flowers attractive to certain types of birds, bees, and other creatures. Didn't your parents tell you about the "birds and the bees?" God made these beautiful flowers to attract these creatures so they might pollinate them and, as a result they would grow into fruit. God made the reproductive process and plants and flying creatures so as to fill the earth with them.

Do you suppose God would do any less for us? He made the bond between a man and a woman

a truly beautiful thing as well. I do not see recorded in Genesis where Adam said, "Well, God, this woman you made for me is nice, but what am I supposed to do with her? I'm I supposed to wink my eye at her and a baby will shoot out her ear?" I am quite sure that Adam and Even soon found out what is needed to "make babies" and, in the process, found that God produced a beautiful love to ensure this would happen.

If the Song of Solomon is filled with talk of love between man and woman, it is not to be ashamed of, it is to read and enjoy. You should not tear this book out of your Bible and forget about it! To tell you the truth, there were men at the time it was being determined what books should be in the Bible who tried to eliminate this book on this same grounds!

WHAT OTHERS SAY ABOUT THIS BOOK

The church needs the message of biblical wisdom. From Proverbs we must learn the essential rules of life. Teaching us to turn from the lures of easy money and easy sex and to learn again the importance of respect for authority, integrity in business, discretion in social life, and honesty in every arena, Proverbs gives practical meaning to the term "God fearing." Ecclesiastes calls us to reckon with the true meaning of our mortality and in so doing discover genuine faith. It is perhaps our strongest weapon in our contest with the empty existentialism and nihilism of the present age, and yet it goes neglected and unheeded. Song of Songs is perhaps the most desperately needed of all the wisdom books. At a time when scarcely an evangelical church is untouched by scandal, when promiscuity and infidelity are so common that society despairs of the idea that a young man or woman may maintain personal chastity, when homosexuality is all but accepted as an alternative life-style, this book, with its presentation of love between man and woman in all its joy, holiness, and richness, teaches members of the household of faith the true meaning of their sexuality. If we miss its message, we do so to our own peril.—

New American Commentary

THE Song of Songs describes the love of Jesus Christ to his people, and it ends with an intense desire on the part of the Church that the Lord Jesus should come back to her. The last word of the lover to the beloved one is, "Speed thy return; make haste and come back." Is it not somewhat singular that, as the last verse of the Book of love has this note in it, so the last verses of the whole Book of God, which I may also call the Book of love, have that same thought in them? At the twentieth verse of the last chapter of the Revelation, we read, "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." The Song of love and the Book of love and in almost the selfsame way, with a strong desire for Christ's speedy return.

Are your hearts, dear friends, in tune with that desire? They ought to be, yet have not some of you almost forgotten that Jesus is to come a second time? Refresh your memories. Others of you, who know that he will come, have you not thought of it as a doctrine that might be laid by on the shelf? Have you not been without any desire for his glorious appearing? Is this right? That Song of Solomon is the central Book of the Bible; it is the innermost shrine of divine revelation, the holy of holies of Scripture; and if you are living in communion with God, you will love that Book, you will catch its spirit, and you will be inclined to cry with the spouse, "Make haste, my beloved." If you have no longings for Christ's appearance, no desires for his speedy return, surely your heart is sick, and your love is faint. I fear that you are getting into a lukewarm state. I believe that our relationship to the Second Advent of Christ may be used as a thermometer with which to tell the degree of our spiritual heat. If we have strong desires, longing desires, burning desires, for the coming of the Lord, we may hope that it is well with us; but if we have no such desires, I think, at best, we must be somewhat careless;

perhaps, to take the worst view of our case, we are sadly declining in grace.

—Spurgeon's Collected Sermons, 3/4/1888, 5/13/1894

The Song of songs is an idyll of human love, and nothing more. There is no inspiration in it; it contributes nothing to the sum of revelation

Typical liberal interpretations

Song of Solomon

This book is like no other in the Old Testament. It is not a sermon like the prophetic texts, but a series of dialogues between a man and a woman, a chorus of the daughters of Jerusalem and a woman, and dialogues within dreams. Since Israel, the covenant, and God's activity with mankind are not key issues within these discussions, there were some early Jewish debates concerning its inclusion within the canon of Scripture.

Others were offended by its focus on what appears to be almost a lustful concentration on the beauty of the human body. Consequently, "more sanctified" interpretations were developed that saw this imagery as symbolic of the love between God and Israel, or for Christians, the love between Christ and the church. This led to exaggerated allegorical interpretations that were not connected to the historical or grammatical meaning of the text.

*While most find only two main characters in this love story, some believe there is a love triangle within the book. Solomon was trying to woo a beautiful country girl, but she was in love with a plain shepherd boy from the country. The drama describes the tension that developed because of these conflicting loyalties.[31] Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes* (London: T. & T. Clark, 1985). Since the presence of the shepherd boy is not explicit in this story, this interpretation is not preferred.*

In light of the important place that love has in the relationships between a man and a woman, it should not be too surprising to find a biblical discussion of this topic. Elsewhere Scripture condemns the perverse sexual relationships of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah ([Gen. 19](#)), has a long series of laws about purity and sexuality ([Lev. 15; 18; 20](#)), condemns David for his sin with Bathsheba ([2 Sam. 11–12](#)), abhors the prostitution that went on at Baal temples ([1 Kings 14:24; 2 Kings 23:7](#)), and warns young men to stay away from evil women ([Prov. 7](#)). In these songs there is a positive description of love and sexuality.

—Exploring the Old Testament

Canon and Interpretation Because of its erotic language and the difficulty of its interpretation, the rabbis questioned the place of the Song of Solomon in the canon. The positive resolution of that debate is reflected in the famous declaration of Rabbi Akiva, "The whole world is not worth the day on which the Song of Songs was given to Israel; all the Writings are holy, but the Song of Songs is the holy of holies."

—Holman Bible Dictionary

NOTICE: Most of the artwork in this study was obtained from, and used by permission of ClipArt.com including to cover, a few of the photos are from Holylandphotos.com. (In all cases, used by permission). I must confess, the woman is supposed to be the Queen of Sheba on the cover but she

will pass for the Bride.

ACT 1

SCENE 1 : Verses 1:2-4a

The Bride Speaks: 2-4a

LET HIM KISS ME WITH THE KISSES OF HIS MOUTH - FOR YOUR LOVE IS MORE DELIGHTFUL THAN WINE. PLEASING IS THE FRAGRANCE OF YOUR PERFUMES; YOUR NAME IS LIKE PERFUME POURED OUT. NO WONDER MAIDENS LOVE YOU! TAKE ME AWAY WITH YOU - LET US HURRY! THE KING HAS BROUGHT ME INTO HIS CHAMBERS.

The scene opens with the Bride, alone, in the garden outside of the Bridegroom's palace. She is thinking aloud as she speaks.

She begins by asking for the "*kisses of his mouth*". Strange it is that in this love song, the verb and the noun for "kiss", קִשַׁק (YSAAK) and תְּקַשֵּׁק (ESSAWEKA) are found only here and in 8:1 even though the words are used a number of times in the Old Testament. On most of the uses in the Old Testament it is men kissing men!



Why, in a love song, is the word so lacking? Perhaps the reason is that she yearns for the kisses as a sign of acceptance rather than great love. Solomon has had many brides, but this girl is on the outside looking in. She yearns for acceptance. The kisses on the mouth would be the sign of his acceptance of her.

How long had this Bride, in earlier years, lived a happy life, not knowing anything about Solomon and his glory? But, when she learns of the opportunity, she begins to have a deep desire for being united with the Bridegroom.

But people wander the face of the earth for years, sometimes their entire lifetimes, not knowing that they can become part of the Bride of Christ - the Church, and be saved from eternal damnation. There has to be someone who will give them the Gospel message, that they too are invited to partake, before there can be a desire.

Note now the dash in the middle of the first sentence. It separates the clause containing the pronoun him from the clause containing the pronoun you. As the Bride is speaking the first phrase, the Bridegroom appears on the stage and thus overhears her words, hence the switch of pronouns.

The indication from the Hebrew text is that Solomon's lips have touched many. For, indeed, we read...

King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter - Moabites, Ammonites, Sidonians and Hittites. They were from nations which the Lord had told the Israelites, "You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods." Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love. He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines...

1 Kings 11:1-3

and so this woman has some severe competition for Solomon's love. Where she might have fit in among the thousand we can not be sure. It is my supposition that she must have come along near the beginning. It is hard to see how Solomon could have written such a song to wife number 1000!

No sooner had she began wishing for the acceptance of the Bridegroom, than he appears. From the text it seems that he must appear on stage bearing wine and perfume. Hence her words . . .

YOUR LOVE IS MORE DELIGHTFUL THAN WINE...
YOUR NAME IS LIKE PERFUME POURED OUT.



Is there significance to these items? As we look to the significance of the "perfume" we look to the Greek word used here, ἀρώματα (aromata) "aroma". Other than a few isolated places in the Old Testament, it is to be found in two places. The first is in 2 Chronicles 9 where the Queen of Sheba brings this to Solomon.

Then she gave the king ... large quantities of spices ... There had never been such spices as those the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon.

2 Chronicles 9:9

It is to, be found in the New Testament in the Gospel accounts.

On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb.

Luke 24:1

There is an interesting typology here. In the New Testament these spices were brought to Jesus, the

antitype⁵. In the Old Testament they were brought to Solomon, the type. In both cases they were brought by a woman or women. But in the one case they were brought to honor his kingship, in the other, his death. But they both speak of His Lordship.

The wine is much easier to typify. We need only look at the passages dealing with the Lord's supper to see its significance. So Solomon appears on the scene with these credentials of his kingship.

Suddenly, then, she goes from seeking to praising. She has nothing but good to say about the Bridegroom. His love is more delightful than wine. We may speak theology all day long. We may talk about the attributes of God. This maiden goes beyond this and proclaims that his love is far better than this. Love, in the Greek version, is ἀγάπη (agape), the word used of God's love for us. She likens the perfume that is spent to his name. The name of Jesus is above all names.

So he became as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.

Hebrews 1:4

She concludes the praise with "no wonder the maidens love you!" One comes to know the Lord Jesus Christ, it is not at all difficult to see why other Christians have loved Him also.

Having thus praised him, she then, in verse 4, makes the ultimate request. ***"Take me away with you - let us hurry!"*** The verb "take me away" is תָּשַׁח (masacheni). The word usually implies the drawing away by force. It is used of dragging Joseph up from the well where his brothers had put him. It is also used below.

I drew them with gentle cords, With bands of love, And I was to them as those who take the yoke from their neck. I stooped and fed them.

Hosea 11:4 (NKJV)

Dr. McGee wrote concerning this,

This is a wonderful passage of Scripture. It is the expression of one who is in love with Him, who desires a close fellowship with Him. But then comes the awareness that we can't reach that state; we cannot attain to it because it is too high for us. That is the position from which we say, "Draw me."

McGEE, SOS 1:4

⁵Antitype, as used here, is someone (or thing) in the New Testament that is preshadowed by a figure in the Old Testament.

"Let us hurry is, literally, "let us run". At her bidding, they do hurry into the king's chambers and the scene changes and the Chorus comes into view.

SCENE 2 : 4B - 8

The Chorus Joins in: 4b

WE REJOICE AND DELIGHT IN YOU; WE WILL PRAISE YOUR LOVE MORE THAN WINE.

4

The chorus, presumably made up of Solomon's other wives, now join in. They echo the words of the Bride in their praise to the king.

The Bride is Exposed: 5-7

The Bride enters the room.

HOW RIGHT THEY ARE TO LOVE YOU. DARK AM I, YET LOVELY, O DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM, DARK LIKE THE TENTS OF KEDAR, LIKE THE CURTAINS OF SOLOMON. DO NOT STARE AT ME BECAUSE I AM DARK, BECAUSE I AM DARKENED BY THE SUN. MY MOTHER'S SONS WERE ANGRY WITH ME AND MADE ME TAKE CARE OF THE VINEYARDS; MY OWN VINEYARD I HAVE NEGLECTED.

5-6

The bride is now aware of the chorus of Solomon's wives and all of their splendor. Then she turns to herself and examines herself. She says she is "dark, yet lovely". "Dark" is literally "Black" as Job expresses it.

My skin grows black and peels; my body burns with fever.

Job 30:30

She is not "fair" like the ladies of the chorus, she has not had the advantage of the latest in cosmetics and sun shields. She stands there in stark contrast to these other ladies. But then she claims that, in spite of the blackness of her skin, she is "lovely". The same Hebrew word, נֹאֲוָה (**NAHVEH**), is found in the following Psalm.

Sing joyfully to the Lord, you righteous, it is fitting for the righteous to praise him.

Psalm 33:1

The word is here translated "fitting" (NIV) or "becoming" (NAS). While her external appearance may be that of darkness, inside she is a person who is "fit" to be in with these other women. Didn't God tell Samuel that -

The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart.

1 Samuel 16:7b

She likens her darkness to two items, the tents of Kedar and the curtains of Solomon. She is not like the black Ethiopian of which it is asked...

Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots?

Jeremiah 13:23

Indeed the same Hebrew root which was here translated "dark" is used of the sunrise, the ending of darkness. The darkness of the Bride can be changed to whiteness. Just the same as our previously black sins may be was as white as wool.

The tents and curtains she describe were black, or dark, the former being made of black goats' hair. But at the same time, both were considered very valuable items.

She then scolds the Chorus for staring at her as if she were some kind of freak! There is a reason why she is so dark of complexion - her brothers made her do their work and tend their vineyard. To be technical, her "mother's sons" would be half-brothers, brothers by the marriage of their mother to another man. We shall consider why her brothers might have been "angry" with her a bit later.

Because she tended the brothers vineyards, she had to neglect her own. We can not take this literally, she had no vineyards. She is explaining her dark complexion. She would have become just as dark in "her own vineyard". What she means by this expression is that she was too busy being about her brothers' work to take care of herself. We might say she didn't have time "for her beauty sleep". But why did she obey her brothers this way?

She says that they were "angry" with her. The Hebrew word נחרר-בי (**NEHARU-BI**) is translated "to be angry" only here. all other occurrences of the word are translated "to burn". We already have seen this in Job 30:30 above. They were really "burned up" at her! What did she do to deserve this?

We may observe that the Bride was an "idealist" and sought after the finer things of life and her half-brothers wanted to impress upon her the need for work.

Paul had "half-brothers" like this - the Judeaizers. They insisted that salvation had to be obtained by works, by the observance of the law. They were not true brothers of Paul. He forced those at Galatia and other places to work for their salvation and were angry with those who claimed that salvation was by grace and by grace alone.

So this bride, for an untold length of time, neglected her own needs and did the bidding of her half-brothers. But she has now come to realize that what she really needs is not obtained by laboring in the wrong vineyard. She must take care of her own vineyard and seek that which comes free, just for asking and she has now done this.

The Bride now turns to Solomon, as they enter the chambers of the Bridegroom. She asks...

TELL ME, YOU WHOM I LOVE, WHERE YOU GRAZE YOUR FLOCK AND WHERE YOU REST YOUR SHEEP AT MIDDAY. WHY SHOULD I BE LIKE A VEILED WOMAN BESIDE THE FLOCKS OF YOUR FRIENDS?

Verse 7

Having entered into Solomon's chambers, along with the other wives, she then asks Solomon where he spends his days that she might go there to be with him rather than to stick around with the other girls. In this we see a little of the character of the bride. She seems to think that Solomon is a shepherd and tends sheep all day long. She does not realize that he is the "Shepherd of Israel", its king. And, of course, only we know that he typifies the one who is called the "Good Shepherd".

Here we run into some trouble. Is it Solomon who answers her, or is it the Chorus? There are differing opinions on this. The newer translations indicate that it was Solomon. We shall go with this in the next section.

SCENE 3 : VERSES 1:8 TO 2:7

The Bridegroom speaks : 8-11

IF YOU DO NOT KNOW, MOST BEAUTIFUL OF WOMEN, FOLLOW THE TRACKS OF THE SHEEP AND GRAZE YOUR YOUNG GOAT BY THE TENTS OF THE SHEPHERDS.

Verse 8

The bridegroom does not answer her question directly. What does the response mean? As a new Christian, how do you follow Christ? The only way that I know of is to follow after the shepherd, the pastor of the flock. In other words, follow the teachings of the local pastors and elders in the church where you are. Christ does not come and sit beside you and disciple you. In fact, he gave direct

commands:

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations . . .

Matthew 28:19

Having answered, or not answered her question, he then praises her. But they hardly sound like praises to us today!

I LIKEN YOU, MY DARLING, TO A MARE HARNESSSED TO ONE OF THE CHARIOTS OF PHARAOH. YOUR CHEEKS ARE BEAUTIFUL WITH EARRINGS, YOUR NECK WITH STRINGS OF JEWELS. WE WILL MAKE YOU EARRINGS OF GOLD STUDED WITH SILVER

Verses 9-11

To understand this "praise" you must first understand Solomon. We cite the following two passages.

Solomon had four thousand stalls for horses and chariots, and twelve thousand horses, which he kept in the chariot cities and with him in Jerusalem.

2 Chronicles 9:25

Solomon's horses were imported from Egypt and from all other countries.

2 Chronicles 1:16

Solomon was a horse lover. He really appreciated a fine horse. We might assume, then, that this really was meant as a compliment. But, what if your husband or male friend today said to you, "You are just like a red Corvette? Flattering? It still doesn't sound very complimentary.

On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem weaker are necessary; and those members of the body which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor, and our unseemly members come to have more abundant seemliness whereas our seemly members have no need of it. But God has composed the body, giving more honor to that member which lacked..

1 Corinthians 12:22-24 NAS

God does not see things the way we do. The things which we might think to be beautiful, God may not think beautiful at all. So, while we can not really understand this "compliment" to the Bride, we can appreciate that in Solomon's eyes, and in God's eyes, it was so!

Solomon praises her looks and her adornments, but then makes a promise to her. These adornments which she had obtained herself would be replaced with gold and silver ones, ones which would be enduring and give her the beauty that Solomon provided. Paul writes . . .

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old is gone, the new has come!

2 Corinthians 5:17

As pretty as the previous jewelry might have been, it is to be replaced with that of gold and silver - of that which is not corruptible.

The Bride Replies : 12-14

***WHILE THE KING WAS AT HIS TABLE, MY PERFUME SPREAD ITS FRAGRANCE.
MY LOVER IS TO ME A SACHET OF MYRRH RESTING BETWEEN MY BREASTS.
MY LOVER IS TO ME A CLUSTER OF HENNA BLOSSOMS FROM THE
VINEYARDS ON EN GEDI.***

Verses 12-14

There are three sentences in this passage and each mentions a different spice. Since all of these were very costly and the Shulammitte was a "country girl" without resources to buy such things, we take these as all being figurative.

"Perfume" in the first sentence is actually "Nard" which is derived from a similar sounding Hebrew word. The English is "spikenard". This material is mentioned only in one other connection in the Bible.

Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, and expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair.

John 12:3

(see also Mark 14:3)

The second substance was myrrh. It was one of the gifts of the Magi to Jesus (Matthew 2:11) and it was one of the ingredients of the Anointing Oil (Exodus 20:23). We shall look at some more interesting uses of it.

Before a girl's turn came to go in to King Xerxes, she had to complete twelve month of beauty treatments prescribed for the women, six months with oil of myrrh and six with perfumes and

cosmetics. And this is how she would go to the king: Anything she wanted was given her to take with her from the harem to the king's palace. In the evening she would go there and in the morning return to another part of the harem . . . she would not return to the king unless he was pleased with her and summoned her by name.

Esther 2:12-14

Aside from this it was used for embalming (see John 19:39).

The third substance was "clusters of henna blossoms". These would be made into a wreath to be placed on the head. En Gedi was Solomon's garden.

In verse 12 she did not have any nard, Solomon was the nard. His presence was nard to her.

But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him. For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved...

2 Corinthians 2:17

Christ has a sweet aroma that spreads to us as we become His. The Bride says that the fragrance spread round about.

In verse 13 she has a sachet of myrrh between her breasts. Now why there? You probably think you know, but wait! It is because myrrh is a strange substance. There are two things which it must undergo in order to provide a pleasant aroma. It must first be crushed and, secondly, it must be warmed. She could have put the sachet under her arm-pit for warmth, but that would not be a very neat place to put it!

As far as the crushing is concerned, it points to the crucifixion of Christ. Christ provided the crushing, the bride provided the warmth by which the sweet savor was obtained.

The third part is meant to be a parallel to the second. It refers to a wreath belonging to Solomon. But the only other wreaths we know of, other than the one placed on Christ at his crucifixion, are those mentioned by Paul.

Similarly, if anyone compete as an athlete, he does not receive the victor's crown unless he compete according to the rules.

2 Timothy 2:5

The Intimate Conversation : 15-17

As we have noted, we take this book as a type. This means that not everything in the book has an antitype in Christ.

Bridegroom:

HOW BEAUTIFUL YOU ARE, MY DARLING! OH, HOW BEAUTIFUL! YOUR EYES ARE DOVES. BRIDE HOW HANDSOME YOU ARE, MY LOVER! OH, HOW CHARMING! AND OUR BED IS VERDANT. BRIDEGROOM THE BEAMS OF OUR HOUSE ARE CEDARS; OUR RAFTERS ARE FIRS.

Verses 15-17

The bride pictures a "verdant bed" a bed of green. This implies a rural scene away from the hustle and bustle of the city. His response describes a rustic cottage in Lebanon.

The glory of Lebanon will come to you, the pine, the fir and the cypress together, to adorn the place of my sanctuary.

Isaiah 60:13

Leaving the typical and turning to the practical, there must be a withdrawal of the bride and the groom to begin the marriage so as to avoid the distractions of day-to-day life. And this is what the two year for - a honeymoon.

The Bride Speaks : 2:1

I AM A ROSE OF SHARON, A LILY OF THE VALLEYS.

Here the bride likens herself to two kinds of flowers. The question is, is she complimenting herself. We are reminded of the passage where Christ says..

Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these.

Luke 12:27



Almost all flowers are beautiful when they are in bloom and the Rose of Sharon and the lilies of the field are no exception. But, the point here is that these flowers grow like weeds in Israel. They are abundant. Yes, the bride is a beautiful woman, but so are all of the other women in Solomon's harem.

The Bridegroom Responds : 2

LIKE A LILY AMONG THORNS IN MY DARLING AMONG THE MAIDENS.

Solomon agrees that she is like a lily. But he says that she is so much more beautiful than the others that they appear as thorns. She is not just one of many lilies, but she is an outstanding one.



Let us stop and consider the topology. Have you ever looked at yourself as a Christian and said to yourself (or to the Lord), "I am no better than the average Christian?" That may be in your eyes, but in God's eyes, each Christian is a very special person. God, even more than Solomon, can look at each of the members that make up the Bride as being special.

The Bride Reacts : 3 - 7

At this point the Bridegroom apparently goes to sleep and the Bride turns to the chorus with the following words (seems strange that the chorus would be there for this!)

***LIKE AN APPLE TREE AMONG THE TREES OF THE FOREST IS MY LOVER
AMONG THE YOUNG MEN. I DELIGHT TO SIT IN HIS SHADE AND HIS FRUIT IS
SWEET TO MY TASTE.***

The Apple tree is seldom mentioned in the Bible outside of this book. The term is תפוח **TAPPOAH**. It is found once in Proverbs.

A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver.

Proverbs 25:11

We know little about this tree, but it must have



been considered special. Therefore, we will go out on a limb (no pun intended) and cite the following passage.

You are free to eat from any tree in the Garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Genesis 2:16-17

Now, the Scriptures nowhere say that this was an apple tree in spite of the tradition that has been handed down for centuries. It is probably the source of the biological term "adam's apple". We might suppose that this tradition had already started in Solomon's time and so she is saying that of all the trees, the Bride is the "tree of life" to her. Christ is the tree of life to us!

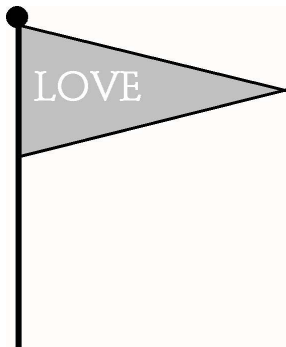
We might even go further when she says that its "fruit is sweet to my taste" to say that our "tree of knowledge" today is in the form of God's printed word, the Bible, and this should also be "sweet to our taste".

She continues on, not in actuality, but in her imagination, since the bridegroom is now asleep (or not present).

The Bride to the Chorus

HE HAS TAKEN ME TO THE BANQUET HALL, AND HIS BANNER OVER ME IS LOVE.

verse 4



The latter part of this verse is well known, but do the people who use it know what it means? The "banner" is דגל (DEHGEL) and is found only here and in the book of Numbers.

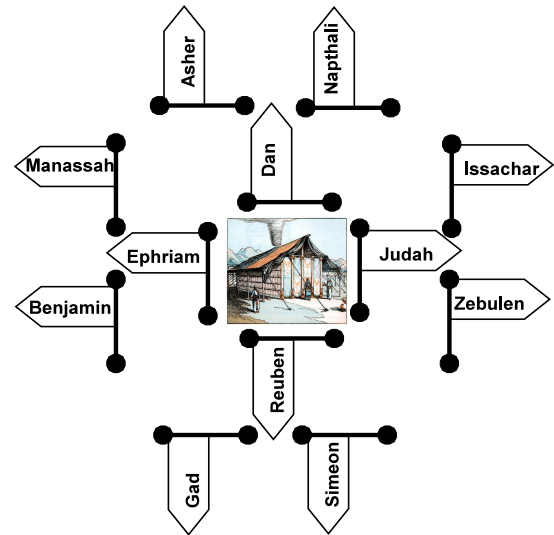
The Israelites are to set up their tents by divisions, each man sets up his own camp under his own standard.

Numbers 1:52

Each tribe had its own standard, a flag with a certain word or symbol on it which designated that tribe (see Numbers 2). Rabbinical tradition says that the banners of Judah contained the figures of a lion, Reuben's a man's head, Ephraim's an ox and Dan's an eagle. The symbols, in some way, depicted the character of those who mustered under the banner. The entire arrangement is found in Numbers.

The LORD said to Moses and Aaron: "The Israelites are to camp around the Tent of Meeting some distance from it, each man under his standard with the banners of his family." On the east, toward the sunrise, the divisions of the camp of Judah are to encamp under their standard. The leader of the people of Judah is(etc. - see picture to the right) . . .All those in the camps, by their divisions, number 603,550. The Levites, however, were not counted along with the other Israelites, as the LORD commanded Moses.

Numbers 2:1-33 (NIV)



As Christians, we are to muster⁶ under the banner which has written on it the word **LOVE**. That is to be our characteristic. We note that this was in connection with the entering into the banquet hall. As Christians we enter into the "banquet hall" when we enter into communion with him - into the Lord's Communion (or Supper).

Now she asks for strength. We also need to always ask for strength.

The LORD is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation; He is my God, and I will praise Him; My father's God, and I will exalt Him.

Exodus 15:2 (NKJV)

STRENGTHEN ME WITH RAISINS, REFRESH ME WITH APPLES, FOR I AM FAINT WITH LOVE.

Verse 5

There were health-food nuts even in Solomon's day! First she asks for "raisins" (NIV) or "raisin cakes" (NAS) or, incorrectly, "flagons" (KJV). David gave these for nourishment when he brought the ark back to Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6:19). We have already spoken of the apple. She is crying for physical nourishment as well as spiritual in her love relation with the Bridegroom. Paul writes...

No, I beat my body, and make it my slave, so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

1 Corinthians 9:27

⁶OXFORD, muster >v. 1 come or bring (troops) together, especially for inspection or in preparation for battle. Etc.

Paul was a great believer in physical fitness, not as a fad, but so that he would have the strength to do the work the Lord had for him. The Bride seeks physical support so she will not fail the Bridegroom. We need the Lord's support - continually! But there is more to this than meets the eye. "Strengthen" is סמך (sammek) which means "lean, lay, rest, support"⁷ and Refresh is רפה (raphed) meaning "spread out any support"⁸ Because of this, the NAC has,

She asks to be placed on a bed of raisins and other fruits. (The translations "strengthen" and "refresh" are possible, but an alternative interpretation, "to lay someone down on a bed," has equal if not greater probability [v. 5]. In either case, the object of her desire is not real fruit but his love.) As in 2:3 she associates the pleasures he gives with various fruits.

NAC, SOS 2:5

HIS LEFT ARM IS UNDER MY HEAD, AND HIS RIGHT ARM EMBRACES ME.

Verse 6

There are those who would make this a very erotic statement. But consider the following passage which uses much the same terminology.

So Joseph brought his sons close to him (Jacob), and his father kissed them and embraced them.

Genesis 48:10

The terms signify help and strength and love, but not some erotic experience. Charles Spurgeon wrote the following with respect to this passage.

The first part of this text hath relation to temporal blessings, "Blessed is the people that be so": the second to spiritual, "Yea, blessed is the people while God is the Lord." "His left hand is under my head", saith the spouse (Song of Songs 2:6); that sustains me from falling into murmuring, or diffidence of his providence, because out of his left hand he hath given me a competency of his temporal blessings; "But his right hand doth embrace me", saith the spouse there; his spiritual blessings fill me, possess me so that no rebellious fire breaks out within me, no outward temptation breaks in upon me. So also Solomon says again, "In her left hand is riches and glory" (temporal blessings) "and in her right hand length of days" (Proverbs 3:16), all that accomplishes and fulfils the eternal joys of the saints of heaven. The person to whom Solomon attributes this right and left hand

⁷BDB, סמך

⁸BDB, רפה

is Wisdom; and a wise man may reach out his right and left hand, to receive the blessings of both sorts. And the person whom Solomon represents by Wisdom there, is Christ himself. So that not only a worldly wise man, but a Christian wise man may reach out both hands, to both kinds of blessings, right and left, spiritual and temporal.

SPURGEON, Treasury of David, The, on Psalm 144:15

She sees the Bridegroom strengthening her as she needs the strength. As we cry out for strength, we receive it for, as Paul said,

I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

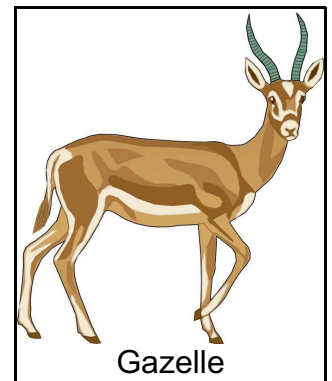
Philippians 4:13

The scene ends with the following words from the Bride.

DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM, I CHARGE YOU BY THE GAZELLES AND BY THE DOES OF THE FIELD: DO NOT AROUSE OR AWAKEN LOVE UNTIL IT SO DESIRES.

Verse 7

"Charge" is from the common Hebrew root שבע (SHEBAH), which is translated "swear" in many places. But the meaning of the word changes in different stems. Both the KJV and the NIV have "charge", the NAS has "adjure". Literally, it has the meaning, "swear (probably, so to say, seven oneself, or bind oneself by seven things,)"⁹ Seven is the number of completion, a Holy word to the Hebrews.



The point is that it is not as strong as an oath that is sworn. As a Christian we can swear by nothing nor no one but God. So this is a lesser charge.

There are a number of different renderings of the end of the verse. For example:

THAT YOU WILL NOT AROUSE OR AWAKEN MY LOVE, UNTIL SHE PLEASES.

NAS

THAT YOU STIR NOT UP, NOR AWAKE MY LOVE, TILL HE PLEASES.

KJV

DO NOT STIR UP NOR AWAKEN LOVE UNTIL IT PLEASES.

⁹BDB, שבע

DO NOT AROUSE OR AWAKEN LOVE UNTIL IT SO DESIRES.

The differences you should note are

- (1) the omission of the pronoun my in the NKJV and the NIV
- (2) the change of pronoun, it in the NIV, and NKJV, she in the NAS, and he in the KJV.

The fact of the matter is that neither of these pronouns are found in the Hebrew text. The my is added by the translators. The he, she, or it also has to be supplied from the form of the verb. But a verb has to have some form and it may not necessarily indicate who it is.

The NIV and the NKJV most likely have it correct. She is not telling the Chorus not to awake Solomon. She obviously is not asking that she herself not be awakened. What she is asking is not to be disturbed in her love relation with the Bridegroom. Thus the curtain closes with the Bride and Bridegroom embraced in a deep undisturbed love.

But before we drop the curtain, we might make note of the typical application as written by Paul.

Love never fails ... these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 13:8,13

ACT 2

SCENE 1 : 2:8-17

The Bride Speaks: 8-13

The scene is changed. The Bride has returned home. She is no longer in Jerusalem in Solomon's palace. We, too, have "mountain top" experiences with the Lord, but we too must return home. So we find the Bride speaking from her rustic home as the curtain opens.

LISTEN! MY LOVER! LOOK! HERE HE COME LEAPING ACROSS THE MOUNTAINS, BOUNDING OVER THE HILLS.

verse 8

If we were to paraphrase this into modern English we might be tempted to say "here he comes leaping over tall buildings in a single bound" and be referring to Superman! But, in a way, this might be correct, for Christ is a "super" man, being both God and man.

But she is not referring to one who is "faster than a locomotive!" She goes on to say...

MY LOVER IS LIKE A GAZELLE OR A YOUNG STAG.

Verse 9a

and likens him to a swift footed animal that is both fast and graceful. Elephants are fast but not graceful. Swans are graceful but not fast. The gazelle is both fast and graceful. So also is a "young stag."

LOOK! THERE HE STANDS BEHIND OUR WALL, GAZING THROUGH THE WINDOWS, PEERING THROUGH THE LATTICE

Verse 9b

We can't help but think of a New Testament parallel.

Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will go in and eat with him and he with me.

Revelation 3:20

The Bride is inside the house, the Bridegroom on the outside, looking in. Jesus said "if anyone hears

my voice..."

The Bridegroom thus speaks.

MY LOVER SPOKE AND SAID TO ME "ARISE, MY DARLING, MY BEAUTIFUL ONE, AND COME WITH ME.

Verse 10

The Bridegroom speaks and bids the Bride to come with him. She, apparently, has been home for some time by herself. But now the Bridegroom has come and bids her come with him. Why now?

SEE! THE WINTER IS PAST; THE RAINS ARE OVER AND GONE. FLOWERS APPEAR ON THE EARTH; THE SEASON FOR SINGING HAS COME, THE COOING OF DOVES IS HEARD IN THE LAND. THE FIG TREE FORMS ITS EARLY FRUIT; THE BLOSSOMING VINES SPREAD THEIR FRAGRANCE.

Verses 11-13A

Have you ever had a Winter experience with the Lord? The Lord seems to be nowhere around. Our prayers seem unanswered. But we must have Winters as well as Summers if we are to grow in our spiritual lives. For Christians, the winter will pass, if not here on Earth, in heaven.

The Bride's Winter is past! The Bridegroom points out the window and says "See" The Hebrew has a compound word here כִּי־הִנֵּה (KEE-HINHEH), "for behold". The NAS has the literal translation. But the NIV expresses in terms we can better understand. He tells her to look out the window and to observe - to SEE - what has happened.

On the other hand, perhaps if we take "see" in too literal a sense, we miss part of this. She is to observe with all of her senses so the "LO" in the KJV and NKJV is the best:

Touch:	The rains are gone, things have dried out.
Sight:	The flowers are in bloom.
Hearing:	The doves are cooing.
Smell:	The blossoms spread their fragrance.

The only sense missing is taste! As Christians, we can add taste to this list!

Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!

Psalm 34:8 (NKJV)

Sometimes, we Christians, fail to sense that our winter has passed because we don't take stock of our senses. According to Paul, we need all of them in the church,

If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling?

1 Corinthians 12:17 (NKJV)

We have to wait until the Lord calls us the second time. This is what the Bridegroom does...

ARISE, COME MY DARLING; MY BEAUTIFUL ONE, COME WITH ME

Verse 13B

This is a repeat of the first call in verse 10 except that there is an added emphasis. He uses the word "come" twice.

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

Matthew 11:28

"O MY DOVE, IN THE CLEFTS OF THE ROCK, IN THE SECRET PLACES OF THE CLIFF, LET ME SEE YOUR FACE, LET ME HEAR YOUR VOICE; FOR YOUR VOICE IS SWEET, AND YOUR FACE IS LOVELY."

Verse 14

While hymns are not, in of themselves, inspired, this verse reminds me of the following.

HE HIDETH MY SOUL

He hideth my soul, in the cleft of the rock,
 That shelters a dry, thirsty land,
 He hideth my life in the depths of His love
 And covers me there with His hand

Dr. McGee wrote

The psalmist made this plea: "O deliver not the soul of thy turtledove unto the multitude of the wicked . . ." (Ps. 74:19). Will the Lord deliver us? We are told He will hide us in the clefts of the rock, and that Rock symbolizes Christ. He is the Rock upon whom the church is built. He bore our judgment, and we can rest in Him.

The NAC has,

The description of her as a dove in the clefts of the rocks suggests that she is inaccessible. This theme will be taken up in several of the man's songs.

NAC, Song of Songs 2:14

and BKC has

So again (cf. 2:10, 13) he urged her to leave her home and join him so he could enjoy her sweet-sounding voice and lovely face

BKC, Song of Songs 2:14

Rearranging the text a little we have,

Let me see your face; . . . your face is lovely,
Let me hear your voice . . . your voice is sweet

Her Brothers speak

***CATCH US THE FOXES, THE LITTLE FOXES THAT SPOIL THE VINES, FOR OUR
VINES HAVE TENDER GRAPES.***

2:15

As far as a literal interpretation is concerned, Clarke has,

That these were ruinous to vines all authors allow. They love the vine, and they are eaten in autumn in some countries, according to Galen, when they are very fat with eating the grapes. They abounded in Judea; and did most damage when the clusters were young and tender. It is likely that these are the words of the bridegroom to his companions, just as he was entering the apartment of his spouse. "Take care of the vineyard: set the traps for the foxes, which are spoiling the vines; and destroy their young as far as possible."

CLARKE, SOS 2:15

In terms of the figurative, BKC has

“The foxes represent as many obstacles or temptations as have plagued lovers throughout the centuries. Perhaps it is the fox of uncontrolled desire which drives a wedge of guilt between a couple. Perhaps it is the fox of mistrust and jealousy which breaks the bond of love. Or it may be the fox of selfishness and pride which refuses to let one acknowledge his fault to another. Or it may be an unforgiving spirit which will not accept the apology of the other. These foxes have been ruining vineyards for years and the end of their work is not in sight” (S. Craig Glickman, *A Song for Lovers*, pp. 49-50). Even in ideal courtships and marriages most couples encounter some potentially destructive problems. Their willingness to solve them together is an evidence of their maturity.

BKC, SOS 2:15

The Bride (to herself)

**MY BELOVED IS MINE, AND I AM HIS.
HE FEEDS HIS FLOCK AMONG THE LILIES.**

2:16

Dr. McGee observed,

This Song of Solomon expresses the highest spiritual state of the relationship between the Lord Jesus Christ and the believer. There is no other book of the Bible which portrays this relationship any better than this little book, and there is no higher plane than this right here: "My beloved is mine, and I am his." This is one of the deepest, most profound of all theological truths which our Lord Jesus put into seven simple words: ". . . ye in me, and I in you" (John 14:20). The bride says, "My beloved is mine, and I am his."

McGEE, SOS 2:16

If I have not noted this before, Solomon was not a shepherd (not in the literal sense, anyway). He probably had many sheep but he did not tend them himself. If you check the Hebrew here carefully, "his flock" is missing. The translators have assumed it. The term for lilies actually refers to a variety of flowers noted for beauty. The Hebrew has, then, "He feeds(?) among the flowers. I have questioned the translation "feeds." Consider the following.

*Your two breasts are like two fawns, Twins of a gazelle, Which **feed among the lilies.***

Song of Songs 4:5 (NKJV)

We have the same word here (we shall study this passage later) and obviously, it is used figuratively. She has just commented on their togetherness, why would she then say he was away tending his sheep? Clarke writes, *The odor with which he is surrounded is as fine as if he passed the night*

among the sweetest scented flowers.¹⁰ The BKC says,

“She could rest in the shepherd-like quality of his love despite the struggles they shared. She said he browses (lit., “he pastures” his flock) among the lilies (cf. 6:3). Speaking to herself (using the personal pronouns mine, his, and he) in 2:16, it is likely that verse 17 is also a soliloquy. Her thoughts of their mutual possession of each other naturally led to her desire for physical intimacy.

BKC, SOS 2:16

The Bride (To Her Beloved)

**UNTIL THE DAY BREAKS AND THE SHADOWS FLEE AWAY,
TURN, MY BELOVED, AND BE LIKE A GAZELLE OR A YOUNG STAG
UPON THE MOUNTAINS OF BETHER.**

2:17

The bride now speaks to her beloved. There are three terms which are not clear and need clarification. “Until the day breaks” is, literally, “the “blowing of the day” and “*in reference to nature refers to the “blowing” of the day, i.e. the first appearance of the morning.*”¹¹ But some translators take this to be the evening, “*until the day breathes, i.e. grows cool*”¹² I believe the context makes it to be morning.

Secondly, which way is “her beloved” to turn? Perhaps the best answer to this is found by considering where this is to happen. It is to be “upon the mountains of Bether.” Where is Bether? Noone seems to know where it was other than its name means “the divided one” which might refer to a mountain range with two peaks. Solomon was already close to a range with two peaks and so that would be the most natural here. The NAC has this.

The phrase “mountains of Bether” may be taken as a proper name or translated as “split mountains.”The Vulgate takes it as a proper name, but the LXX renders it “mountains of hollow [places].”The Peshitta reads it as “mountains of spices” on analogy with Song 8:14. In fact, however, whether or not there really was a place called the “Split Mountains” in ancient Israel, the nature of the allusion and the parallel in 4:5–6 indicate that the woman’s breasts are meant

NAC, Song of Songs 2:17

The BKC reaches the same conclusion with that below.

¹⁰CLARKE SOS 2:6

¹¹TWOT, בִּפְתוֹת

¹²BDB, בִּפְתוֹת

Rugged hills is literally, “hills or mountains of separation or cleavage.” Some say this refers to actual mountains—perhaps “hills of Bether” (niv marg.), though the location of such a site is unknown. In that case the hills separated the couple, but this seems unlikely since he was already at her wall and lattice (2:9). It seems preferable to take this as a subtle reference to her breasts (cf. 4:6), thus an inner longing that they consummate their marriage. If that is the meaning, then she wanted that intimacy to last during the night till the day breaks (lit., “breathes”) at dawn and the night shadows vanish. When their marriage was consummated they did this (see 4:5-6). As already stated, in expressing their love in their courtship, the beloved and her lover used restraint. Yet because of their deep love and commitment to each other they longed for their wedding day to come.

BKC, Song of Songs 2:17

SCENE 2 : 3:1-5

The Bride's Loss : 1-2a

ALL NIGHT LONG ON MY BED I LOOKED FOR THE ONE MY HEART LOVES; I LOOKED FOR HIM BUT DID NOT FIND HIM. I WILL GET UP NOW AND GO ABOUT THE CITY, THROUGH ITS STREETS AND SQUARES; I WILL SEARCH FOR THE ONE MY HEART LOVES.

Scene 1 took place in the daytime. Scene 2 takes place that night. It is generally believed that what she describes is a dream, not a reality. How do we know that? How else can you do any “looking for something” if you are “on your bed?”

The Hebrew word for "night" מִשְׁכָּב (MISCABE) here is in the plural form. The significance may be as above "all night long" or "By night" (KJV) or "night after night". The interpretation is important in presenting this as a dream.

BKC says,

The king returned to Jerusalem, leaving his beloved at her home in the country. The phrase All night long on my bed indicates that the experience she was describing took place in a dream. When a person loves another person deeply, it is natural to fear losing him or her. In her dream she lost her lover and sought to find him. The repeated expression the one my heart loves (once in each of these four verses) revealed the depth of her love for Solomon.

In her dream she went to a city (either a town near her home or Jerusalem) to look for him, but she was unsuccessful. She even asked the watchmen, men who guarded the city at night, if they had seen him. Apparently they had not. When she found him in her dream, she took him to her mother's house, the most secure place she knew.

BKC, Song of Songs 3:1

Had the bridegroom left, she would have gone and sought for him, day or night, until she found him. But to say that "night after night" she went seeking him would indicate that he left her night after night, which is not feasible to believe.

CLARKE observes

By night on my bed I sought him—It appears that the bridegroom only saw the bride by night: that on the night referred to here he did not come as usual. The bride troubled on the account, rose and sought him, inquired of the city guards, and continued to seek till at last she found him, and brought him to her apartment

CLARKE, Song of Songs 3:1

The Bride's Gain ; 2b-5

Remember, the bride is in her country home, far from Jerusalem. But in her dream she is transported to that great city and, there, she says...

SO I LOOKED FOR HIM BUT DID NOT FIND HIM. THE WATCHMEN FOUND ME AS THEY MADE THEIR ROUNDS OF THE CITY. "HAVE YOU SEEN THE ONE MY HEART LOVES?" SCARCELY HAD I PASSED THEM WHEN I FOUND THE ONE MY HEART LOVES.

3

The BKC notes, "*In her dream she lost her lover and sought to find him. The repeated expression the one my heart loves (once in each of these four verses) revealed the depth of her love for Solomon.*"¹³

Her first attempts failed. Then the "watchmen" found her. In the Hebrew it is heshahmarim hesahvavim, The first is the participle of the verb "to keep" and the second, likewise a participle, "to compass". In other words, those who keep the city safe at night by walking around it. We find the same participle in the following verses.

I will lift up my eyes to the hills - where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip - he who watches over you will not slumber; indeed he who watches over Israel will neither



One on the gates around Jerusalem
This is the Golden Gate, closed until Christ returns!

¹³BKC, Song of Songs 3:3

slumber nor sleep. the Lord watches over you -

Psalm 121:1-5a

The Bride could not find the Bridegroom. But when the One who watches over us takes over, things are different. This, according to both our passage and the Psalm takes place in the middle of the night as well as during the day. No sooner had she met the watchmen and told them her problem and her seeking was ended - she found the one her heart loved!

I HELD HIM AND WOULD NOT LET HIM GO TILL I HAD BROUGHT HIM TO MY MOTHER'S HOUSE, TO THE ROOM OF THE ONE WHO HAD CONCEIVED ME.

4

She Immediately brought him into her “mother’s house.” In that culture the women had quarters separate from the men. A man would only be brought into such a place for one thing . . .

Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent; and he took Rebekah and she became his wife, and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

Genesis 24:67 (NKJV)

She concludes with the same statement she made in 2:7 (page #24).

I CHARGE YOU, O DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM, BY THE GAZELLES OR BY THE DOES OF THE FIELD, DO NOT STIR UP NOR AWAKEN LOVE UNTIL IT PLEASES.

5

ACT 3

SCENE 1 : 3:6-11

In the first two acts we have seen the love affair between the Bride and the Bridegroom. In act 3 we have the preparation and performance of the marriage of the two.

The Coming of the Bridegroom : 6-10

**WHO IS THIS COMING UP FROM THE DESERT LIKE A COLUMN OF SMOKE,
PERFUMED WITH MYRRH AND INCENSE MADE FROM ALL THE SPICES OF THE
MERCHANT?**

Verse 6

It is again daytime and the Bride is watching as before. The first evidence that is seen is the smoke arising from the procession. It reminds us of the Lord going before Israel in a pillar of smoke.

But as the procession comes closer, we see that it is the smoke arising from the myrrh and incense that accompanies the procession. This, then, is no ordinary procession, for the average person did not travel in such style.

**LOOK! IT IS SOLOMON'S CARRIAGE, ESCORTED BY SIXTY WARRIORS, THE
NOBLEST OF ISRAEL, ALL OF THEM WEARING A SWORD, ALL EXPERIENCED
IN BATTLE, EACH WITH HIS SWORD AT HIS SIDE, PREPARED FOR THE
TERRORS OF THE NIGHT.**

Verses 7 and 8

Solomon is coming for the leading of the bride to his palace. We find a reference to this custom is Psalm 45 (which see) which is titled "A wedding Song". We also find a historic parallel in the following.

After this came word to Jonathan and Simon his brother, that the children of Jambri made a great marriage, and were bringing the bride from Nadabatha with a great train, as being the daughter of one of the great princes of Canaan ... they lifted up their eyes and looked, and behold, there was much ado and great carriage: and the bridegroom came forth, and his friends and brethren, to meet them with drums, and instruments of music, and many weapons.

1 Maccabes 9:37,39

(Please do not look for the above passage in your Bible, it is from the Apocrypha!)

And, of course, we have...

...the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.

Matthew 25:10

So, according to the tradition, Solomon is arriving. The description goes on.

KING SOLOMON MADE FOR HIMSELF THE CARRIAGE; HE MADE IT OF WOOD FROM LEBANON. ITS POSTS HE MADE OF SILVER, ITS BASE OF GOLD. ITS SEAT WAS UPHOLSTERED WITH PURPLE, ITS INTERIOR WAS LOVINGLY INLAID BY THE DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM.

Verses 9-10

What did Solomon show up in? What was it he “made for himself?” The NIV has "carriage", the NAS has "*traveling couch*". The RSV has "litter" and the KJV has "chariot"! The KNJV has "palanquin" The only thing I can say here is that he did not arrive in a Limo! "Palanquin" (right) is probably the most accurate, if only you knew what that meant! *palanquin (also palankeen) >n. (in India and the East) a covered litter for one passenger, carried on two horizontal poles by four or six bearers.*¹⁴ One of these is described above.



There were white and blue linen curtains fastened with cords of fine linen and purple on silver rods and marble pillars; and the couches were of gold and silver on a mosaic pavement of alabaster, turquoise, and white and black marble.

Esther 1:6 (NKJV)

The Hebrew term appears only here in the Bible and hence it is hard to determine its exact meaning. The Greek word is also no help. From the description, and from what the historians know of that time, it was a covered bridal litter (or bed) on which the bride was to ride.

The text says that "Solomon made it for himself" but that doesn't imply that he was going to ride in it. He made it for his own use, that is, to carry his bride in.

COME OUT, YOU DAUGHTERS OF ZION AND LOOK AT KING SOLOMON WEARING THE CROWN, THE CROWN WITH WHICH HIS MOTHER CROWNED HIM ON THE DAY OF HIS WEDDING, THE DAY HIS HEART REJOICED.

¹⁴OXFORD, Palanquin

The scene closes with the Bride "sending out her wedding invitations" to the "daughters of Zion". The "crown" spoken of is not the crown of the king (i.e. the one normally worn) but the floral crown worn on the wedding day. In the LXX the word is στεφάνος (STEPHANOS), it is the same crown that Paul speaks of when he writes to Philippi.

Therefore, my brothers, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, that is how you shall stand firm in the lord, dear friends!

Philippians 4:1

It is upon the marriage of these two that the crown is received. But, then, Jesus wore another "stephanos" in His preparation for being the Bridegroom of the Church!

The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head.

John 19.2

With these words the scene closes.

SCENE 2 : 4:1-5:1

The scene is now the marriage hall where the Bride and the Bridegroom converse. We assume that the conversation (at that time) is private.

Solomon's Praise for Physical Attractions: 1-7

HOW BEAUTIFUL YOU ARE, MY DARLING! OH, HOW BEAUTIFUL!

Verse 1a

These words for the introduction to this section. He begins with a general word of praise for her beauty. But then he gets more specific.

YOUR EYES BEHIND YOUR VEIL ARE DOVES.

Verse 1b

He begins with the eyes. According to K&D, the resemblance to doves is with respect to color,

movement, and sheen. She has shiny white eyes that dart about.

YOUR HAIR IS LIKE A FLOCK OF GOATS DESCENDING FROM MOUNT GILEAD.

Verse 2

This "compliment" is a bit hard for us to understand. I do not recommend you use it on your spouse or loved on! Goat's hair is coarse and stiff. But he is not likening her hair to goat's hair. In the symbolism, her head is Mount Gilead, and her hair flows down from her head in black (or dark) tresses like one would observe of a flock of goats descending from the mountain. The Living Bible says, "Your hair falls across your face like flocks of goats the frisk across the slopes of Gilead".

Dr. McGee says of this chapter,

This entire chapter except the last verse is the song of the bridegroom. It expresses Solomon's love for this girl whom he had met up in the hill country and had brought to town, as it were. I suppose that she wore shoes for the first time. Now she is wearing lovely dresses, and she sits at the table of Solomon. What a privilege she had, and she was rejoicing in it.

As we read this chapter, we should see that the Spirit of God is trying to show us Christ's love for us. It is expressed through this very wonderful and personal relationship. It shows to us the love of Christ for the church and His love for the individual believer. This is the love song of the Bridegroom, or the love song of the Lord Jesus Christ.

McGEE, Song of Songs 4:1

With respect to her hair,

The beloved's dark hair had the same beautiful quality. Mount Gilead was a mountain range east of the Jordan River in Gilead, known for its fertile pastures and many flocks (cf. Micah 7:14 below)

BKC, Song of Songs 4:1

Shepherd Your people with Your staff, The flock of Your heritage, Who dwell solitarily in a woodland, In the midst of Carmel; Let them feed in Bashan and Gilead, As in days of old.

Micah 7:14 (NKJV)

YOUR TEETH ARE LIKE A FLOCK OF SHEEP JUST SHORN, COMING UP FROM THE WASHING. EACH HAS A TWIN, NOT ONE OF THEM IS ALONE.

Verse 3

This is still harder to interpret. To interpret it properly you must know something about sheep. First, they are not washed until several weeks after they are shorn. Secondly, sheep in Palestine are normally white. Thus, after washing, they would have a smooth line if glistening white wool as they

came out. In other words, her teeth are white, even, and sparkling. She must have used a good dentifrice. She must also have had a good dentist for each tooth has a twin. In other words, for each tooth on the right side of her mouth, there is a matching tooth on the other. This would imply that, not only are there none missing, but that she wouldn't benefit from seeing an orthodontist. I wish I had know her dentist!

YOUR LIPS ARE LIKE A SCARLET RIBBON; YOUR MOUTH IS LOVELY.

Verse 3A

This statement really requires no amplification other than to note that the Hebrew word used here for "scarlet" not only signifies the color but also that they glisten.

YOUR TEMPLES BEHIND YOUR VEIL ARE LIKE THE HALVES OF A POMEGRANATE.

Verse 3B

Now this is a tough one! If I were to picture her temples as the cut open halves of a pomegranate, I would figure she had a really bad case of acne!

If we turn to a paraphrase, the Living Bible, we find "Your cheeks are matched loveliness behind your locks." This is no help at all! We are not speaking of "cheeks" and "locks", but "temples" and "veils". But furthermore, the LB omits the reference to the pomegranate. The LXX has "the skin of a pomegranate" but this is not a likely translation. The reference has to be to what one would come up with if the white of the pomegranate body is perceives as being colored by the delicate pink of its seeds - a blending of the second color on the first. K&D has this.

The half of a cut pomegranate (Jer. fragmen mali punici) is not meant after its outer side, as Zöckler supposes, for he gives to the noun rakkāa, contrary to Judg 4:21; 5:26, the meaning of cheek, a meaning which it has not, but after its inner side, which presents a red mixed and tempered with the ruby colour,—a figure so much the more appropriate, since the ground-colour of Shulamith's countenance is a subdued white

K&D, Song of Songs 4:3

I suppose today we would say she had "rosy temples."

YOUR NECK IS LIKE THE TOWER OF DAVID, BUILT WITH ELEGANCE; ON IT HANG A THOUSAND SHIELDS, ALL OF THEM SHIELDS OF WARRIORS.

Verse 4

He describes her neck is as an elegantly built tower. Now a tower is a



building that is characterized as being very tall compared to its width and thus the allusion is that she has a long slender neck. The thousand shields are, without doubt, necklaces which she wears about her neck. Being a country girl, we would suppose that these were presented to her by Solomon. However, the NAC has,

Her neck is like the tower of David in that both are statuesque and cause feelings of admiration and wonder. He does not mean that her neck is outlandishly long. What is striking in this analogy is the military terminology. The picture of a tower of David, Israel's great warrior king, adorned with the shields and weapons of mighty men, cannot but convey a sense of unassailable strength. No man could "conquer" her, and her suitor is awed by the dignity she carries. Her love is a gift; it could never become plunder.

NAC, Song of Songs 4:4

Solomon has described her from the head down. He has described the features of her face, then the neck, and now he goes still lower. The lower he gets, the more trouble I get myself into!

***YOUR TWO BREASTS ARE LIKE FAWNS, LIKE TWIN FAWNS OF A GAZELLE
THAT BROWSE AMONG THE LILIES.***

Verse 5

It is rather interesting that there is almost no difference in any of the translations of this verse. Perhaps the translators simply did not want to do any interpretation, but merely rendered a literal translation of the Hebrew. Clarke writes,

Thy two breasts are like two young roes—I have met with many attempts to support this similitude, or rather to show that there is a similitude; but I judge them unworthy of citation. The poet speaks the language of nature; and in a case of this kind, where the impassioned lover attempts to describe the different perfections of his bride, language often fails him, and his comparisons and similitudes are often without strict correctness. In love songs we have heard ladies' necks compared to that of the swan, not only for its whiteness, but also for its length! The description here shows more of nature than of art, which I consider a high recommendation.

CLARKE, Song of Songs 4:5

There are other references to the breast in the O.T. For example.

Then I passed by and saw you kicking about in your blood, and as you lay therein your blood I said to you, "Live!" I made you grow like a plant of the field. You grew up and developed and became the most beautiful of jewels. Your breasts formed and your hair grew, you who were naked and bare.

Ezekiel 16:6-7

In this allegorical reference to Jerusalem, the growth of the hair and the development of the breasts symbolize the reaching of maturity (in a woman).

The likening of them to twin fawns, of course, refers to the fact that they are identical and, if one considers the field of lilies (being a smooth white space) as the chest, the picture of the gazelles browsing among the lilies is an imagery of their shape.

Fortunately, Solomon ends his praise here. But, interestingly enough, he has praised the following:

- | | |
|---------------|---------|
| 1) eyes | verse 1 |
| 2) hair | verse 1 |
| 3) teeth | verse 2 |
| 4) lips/mouth | verse 3 |
| 5) temples | verse 3 |
| 6) neck | verse 4 |
| 7) breasts | verse 5 |

He has praised seven things about her, the number of perfection. That he stops there is, perhaps, the Holy Spirit's leading that shows that this woman was perfect in all respects.

But what does all of this teach us about us? We have already made note of 1 Corinthians 12:12-31 which likens the parts of the body to the parts of the church. But consider again the following.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing of water through the word and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

Ephesians 5:25-27

This is exactly what Solomon has just described. In fact, he uses almost the same terms in the last two verse of these scene.

UNTIL THE DAY BREAKS AND THE SHADOWS FLEE, I WILL GO TO THE MOUNTAINS OF MYRRH AND TO THE HILL OF INCENSE. ALL BEAUTIFUL YOU ARE, MY DARLING, THERE IS NO FLAW IN YOU.

Verses 6-7

What is meant by "the mountains of myrrh" and "the hill of incense". There have been many explanations, depending on who is doing the speaking.

If we assume that Solomon is still speaking, as most do, and if we read the last verse very carefully,

the meaning becomes quite clear. Solomon concludes, after an intimate relationship with her, that he can say...

YOU ARE SO BEAUTIFUL, MY LOVE IN EVERY PART OF YOU.

LB

YOU ARE ALTOGETHER BEAUTIFUL MY DARLING, AND THERE IS NO BLEMISH IN YOU.

NAS

In all of the translations is evidence of the Hebrew word for "ALL". Solomon can say that there is not one part of this bride that is not beautiful. There is no blemish anywhere! Now, one can not pass another on the street and, after taking a good look at him or her, say that there is absolutely no blemish on this person! It only comes from an intimate relationship.

But it is exactly this type of relationship that Christ desires to have with his church, as we read in Paul's letter to Ephesus. We can not leave this section without one more observation. Do you believe that this woman was absolutely beautiful without one blemish anywhere? I hardly think so - we all have some blemishes, even if they may be small. But to Solomon, she was spotless.

We are not sinless. We are not perfect. Yet, through Christ **we are perfect**. In his eyes there is no blemish at all.

Solomon's Invitation : 8

***COME WITH ME FROM
LEBANON, MY BRIDE, COME WITH ME
FROM LEBANON. DESCEND FROM THE
CREST OF AMANA, FROM THE TOP OF
SENIR, THE SUMMIT OF HERMON, FROM
THE LIONS' DENS AND THE MOUNTAIN
HAUNTS OF THE LEOPARDS.***

Verse 8

As he bids her to come with him, he calls her by a new term, "my bride". All this time he has called her "my darling", but now it is "my bride," כלה (kallah). He uses the word 5 times, in this chapter and once in the next.

"My darling" is עדר (Hadar) which is found only in this book. Seven of the nine times we have already covered. Aside from this it



is only used in Judges.

But grant me this one request," she said, "Give me two months to roam the hills and weep with my friends, because I will never marry."

Judges 11:37

The term refers to a "companion" and, generally, to a female companion - in other words, a "girl friend". Up to this time there is no formal relationship between them, but after what has transpired in the last scene, she becomes a כלה (kallah) "bride". The word is used many times in the O.T. for "daughter-in-law" as in...

Then Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go back, each of you to your mother's home.

Ruth 1:8

She is obviously not his "daughter-in-law" It is only translated as "bride" in the later books of the O.T. such as

As a young man marries a maiden, so will your sons marry you; as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will God rejoice over you.

Isaiah 62:5

There are differences of opinion as to the origin of this word, but it appears to come from the stem of the verb "to be complete or perfect".

This would make sense since the maiden's life would be made "complete" when she became a bride. The Greek word, νύμφη (NUMPHE), has the same double meaning. We get the word "Nuptial" from this.

So, in this verse he bids her to leave her mountain home in Lebanon and to accompany him over the mountain ranges to Jerusalem. A map showing the location of Mt. Hermon in Lebanon is on the previous page. The other mountains named must have been in the same general area.



Mount Hermon at a distance

As he bids her to come, he again begins to compliment her, but this time he speaks more of her character than her appearance. The description is more abstract.

Solomon's Praise for her Personal Attractions : 9-15

YOU HAVE STOLEN MY HEART, MY SISTER, MY BRIDE; YOU HAVE STOLEN MY HEART WITH ONE GLANCE OF YOUR EYES, WITH ONE JEWEL OF YOUR NECKLACE.

Verse 9

First, Solomon starts with his heart reaction. What this was depends on the translation. The NIV (above) has stolen while the NAS has beat faster and the KJV has ravished as does the RSV, AB and LB. "Ravished my heart" is all one word in the Hebrew, לבב (LEHVAHV) as is also in the Greek, ἐκαρδίωσας (EKARDIOSIS). The Greek does us no good, it is never used in the New Testament. He uses the phrase twice. This is in conformity of the Hebrew idiom to stress a thing. The NAC has:

The Hebrew here is ambiguous and perhaps deliberately so. The sense of the verb could be either "you have taken away my heart" in the sense of "I am hopelessly in love with you" or "you have 'heartened' me" in the sense of "you have sexually aroused me." The cases for both meanings are strong, and it may be that both nuances were recognized by the ancient audience. If so, rather than decide between the two, one should read this as a double entendre; that is, the text implies both meanings are intended.

NAC, Song of Songs 4:9

He calls to her by two terms "my sister" and "my bride." We have already looked at "bride" and sister is a generic term like our word "sister" (i.e. it may be used of a biological sister, or in a manner of a good friend)

K&D translate this verse as follows:

**THOU HAST TAKEN MY HEART, MY SISTER-BRIDE;
THOU HAST TAKEN MY HEART WITH ONE OF THY GLANCES,
WITH A LITTLE CHAIN OF THY NECKLACE.**

K&D, Song of Songs 4:9

They also made this comment.

That a glance of the eye may pierce the heart, experience shows; but how can a little chain of a necklace do this? That also is intelligible. As beauty becomes unlike itself when the attire shows want of taste, so by means of tasteful clothing, which does not need to be splendid, but may even be of the simplest kind, it becomes mighty. Hence the charming attractive power of the impression one makes communicates itself to all that he wears, as, e.g., the woman with the issue of blood touched

with joyful hope the hem of Jesus' garment; for he who loves feels the soul of that which is loved in all that stands connected therewith, all that is, as it were, consecrated and charmed by the beloved object, and operates so much the more powerfully if it adorns it, because as an ornament of that which is beautiful, it appears so much the more beautiful.

K&D, Song of Songs 4:9

HOW DELIGHTFUL IS YOUR LOVE, MY SISTER, MY BRIDE, HOW MUCH MORE PLEASING YOUR LOVE THAN WINE AND THE FRAGRANCE OF YOUR PERFUME THAN SPICE.

Verse 10

We have already noted that he calls her his "sister-bride." It should not seem strange to use for him to use two terms like this. We refer to Jesus Christ as "our Lord and Savior". The first term "Lord" is a term that describes our relationship with him - Lord/Slave, and the second term describes what He did to bring this relationship into being, He saved us! "My sister" describes his love relationship with her while "my bride" signifies the means by which this love was brought about.

The rest of this verse is interesting in it comparison with 1:2-3 (page #11) where she says the exact same thing about him. We have completed the transaction - their feelings are now mutual.

YOUR LIPS DROP SWEETNESS AS THE HONEYCOMB, MY BRIDE; MILK AND HONEY ARE UNDER YOUR TONGUE.

verse 11a

Here he praises her kisses and her words. Her kisses are as sweet as honey. Her words of praise to him are also sweet. But where does the milk come in? First a note from Dr. McGee.

The bridegroom speaking of the bride typifies the Lord Jesus speaking of believers, those who are His own. This is how much He loves us today. Oh, it would break your heart and my heart if we knew how much He loves us. Only the Spirit of God can make this love real to us. Some folks write out a little motto and stick it on their car bumper and then drive around with it. It says, "Jesus loves you." I wonder, how do you know He loves you? Have you experienced that love yourself? Are you conscious of His love right now? Oh, my friend, He loves you! Fall in love with Him.

McGEE, Song of Songs 4:11a

Note that "milk" is not alone here, it is "milk and honey." Where have you heard that term before?

"and I have said I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, to a land flowing with

milk and honey." '

Exodus 3:17 (NKJV)

K&D have the best description of this verse.

here is intermingled praise of the beauty of her person with praise of the fragrance, the odour of the clothing of the bride; for her soul speaks out not only by her lips, she breathes forth odours also for him in her spices, which he deems more fragrant than all other odours, because he inhales, as it were, her soul along with them.[a Hebrew word] , is virgin honey, [a Hebrew word] i.e., that which of itself flows from the combs. Honey drops from the lips which he kisses; milk and honey are under the tongue which whispers to him words of pure and inward joy; cf. the contrary. . .As Jacob's raiment had for his old father the fragrance of a field which God had blessed, so for Solomon the garments of the faultless and pure one, fresh from the woods and mountains of the north, gave forth a heart-strengthening savour like the fragrance of Lebanon (Hosea 4:7), viz., of its fragrant herbs and trees, chiefly of the balsamic odour of the apples of the cedar.

K&D, Song of Songs 4:11

Leaving the antitype and turning to the type, what does this all mean? Do we kiss Christ? Do we speak words of praise to Christ? Certainly, we do not kiss Christ in a physical sense, but we do both when we commune with Christ in prayer.

I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercessions and thanksgivings be made for everyone - ... This is good and pleases God our Savior...

1 Timothy 2:1,3

May the word of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.

Psalms 19:14

THE FRAGRANCE OF YOUR GARMENTS IS LIKE THAT OF LEBANON.

Verse 11b

The sense of this line may be found in the following parallel.

When Isaac caught the smell of his clothes, he blessed him and said, "Ah, the smell of my son is like the smell of the field that the Lord has blessed."

Genesis 27:27

The bride is from the fields of Lebanon. Her clothes give her away and remind Solomon of the place where he found his bride.

YOU ARE A GARDEN LOCKED UP, MY SISTER, MY BRIDE; YOU ARE A SPRING ENCLOSED, A SEALED FOUNTAIN.

Verse 12

He now likens her to a "garden". The Hebrew is גן (GEN), which is used some 41 times in the O.T. Of these, 17 refer to the Garden of Eden. Eight are found in this book. Of the 16 remaining references most are like those below.

*He also repaired the wall of the pool of Siloam, by the **king's garden**.* Nehemiah 3:15

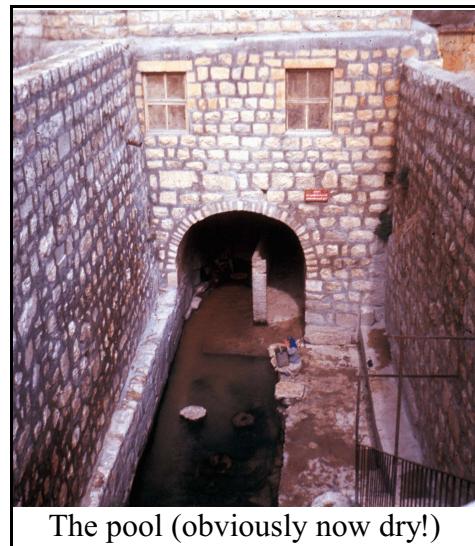


Many of the remaining references are similar to this, a "king's garden". Consider the passage from which the following verse is taken.

*I made it beautiful with abundant branches, the envy of all the trees of **Eden in the garden of God**.*

Ezekiel 31:9

This Hebrew word for "garden" refers to a king's garden. This is especially so when it is described as here, a "locked up" garden. Locked so no one but the king and his friends could enter. She was his "garden", his place of delight, and not open for anyone but him! The Greek word which is *usually* used for this is παράδεισος (PARADISO) from which we get paradise.



Secondly, she is a "spring enclosed". "Spring" is from the Hebrew גַּל (GAL) which is usually translated "heap", a heap of stones or a heap of water (i.e. a wave). There is a question as to whether there is a typo here and it should repeat "garden" (as does the LXX) as the word nowhere else in the O.T. has anything to do with a spring. But likely it is to parallel the last part, the "sealed fountain". "Seal" is exactly what it sounds like, a seal that is put on something to show that it has not be opened and, perhaps, polluted. In the O.T. it is almost always the seal from the King's signet ring. In Genesis 2:10 a description of a river flowing from the center of the Garden of Eden is described which watered the garden.

In effect, then, Solomon is saying that this bride is to him the Garden of Eden, for him and for him alone. Turning to the type, we can't help but think of Christ's promise to the thief on the cross...

Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."

Luke 23:43

YOUR PLANTS ARE AN ORCHARD OF POMEGRANATES WITH CHOICE FRUITS, WITH HENNA AND NARD, NARD AND SAFFRON, CALAMUS AND CINNAMON, WITH EVERY KIND OF INCENSE TREE, WITH MYRRH AND ALOES AND ALL THE FINEST SPICES.

Verses 13,14

Then, continuing the analogy of the garden, he describes the fruit of the garden. We shall not here take up a discussion of all of the fruit, the spices, and so on other than to point out that these are all precious and desirable fruits.

But, as Christians, we are Jesus' garden. What does he expect in his garden?

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Galatians 5:22

BKC and NAC note the following.

By extending the metaphor of the garden (begun in v. 12) Solomon conveyed to his beloved how much he valued her purity. She was like a rich exotic garden, with rare and valuable plant life. Such a garden was therefore valuable, attractive, and desirable. Included were fruits, flowers, plants, trees, and spices. Pomegranates (cf. v. 3) were a delicacy in Bible times. Henna, and saffron is a powder from the pistils of a plant in the crocus family. Calamus is possibly sweet cane. Other perfumes were cinnamon, from the bark of a tall tree, myrrh (see comments on Song 1:13), and aloes, a plant native to an island in the Red (Reed) Sea, whose partially decayed wood gives off a fragrance. These items would make an unusual garden, valuable for its pleasant tastes, sights, and smells. Similarly Solomon valued his bride for her pleasing attractiveness

BKC, Song of Songs 4:13-15

The man now describes his beloved under two metaphors, the locked garden and the sealed fountain. This shows fairly plainly that this is an appeal for her to open her pleasures to him. The catalog of exotic spices in this "garden" serves to suggest that the pleasures of the woman's love are abundant and especially that they are varied; he could never grow bored in such a garden. They do not, however, have specified symbolic referents, that is, as parts of the woman's anatomy. The spring of water is a metaphor for sexual love in Prov 5:15–20.

One other aspect of this song is noteworthy. Five times in succession (4:8–12) and once in 5:1 the man calls the woman his bride. It is difficult to deny that this is a couple in the process of

consummating their marriage

NAC, Song of Songs 4:13-15

Solomon expected all these fine things from his bride. We presume he received them. But Christ expects fruit from His bride as well.

*Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered. And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and **found nothing thereon**, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away. And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away! Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.*

Matthew 21:18-22 (KJV)

Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another-- to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.

Romans 7:4 (NKJV)

***YOU ARE A GARDEN FOUNTAIN, A WELL OF FLOWING WATER STREAMING
DOWN FROM LEBANON.***

Verse 15

What more can we say about this verse than what Jesus has already said...

Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.

John 7:38

The Bride's Response : 16

***AWAKE, NORTH WIND, AND COME SOUTH WIND! BLOW ON MY GARDEN, THAT
ITS FRAGRANCE MAY BE SPREAD ABROAD. LET MY LOVER COME INTO HIS
GARDEN AND TASTE ITS CHOICE FRUITS.***

4:16

She appeals to the winds, specifically the North and South winds. Actually, the term "wind" is not found in this verse. Some translations have "wind" in italics for this reason. It is from the context that wind is supplied. The Hebrew has simply the term for "North" which is very seldom used for the North wind. But we do find the following. "North wind" צפון (TSAPHAN) and, of the 153 times it appears

on the Old Testament this is one of only two places where it is used for the “North wind.” (Proverbs 25:23) Its root is a “hidden” or “dark” place.

The “south *wind*” is תימן (TEMAN) which, literally, is “what is on the right hand.” Well, what **is** on your right hand? If you face east, your right hand is “south” of you. If you think this is a strange derivation, try studying Hebrew for a while! “Wind” is not in the word, hence the italics in most translations.

Perhaps the last verse expresses what the Bride is referring to. First the North Winter winds come and bring rain and refreshment to the garden and then the hot Summer winds come from the South to bring warmth and growth.

But we, too, need this if we are to blossom out as Christians. We need the Winter winds of the north and the summer winds of the south - the gloomy times and the joyous times if our “fragrance is to be spread abroad”.

So, she receives his compliments and invites him to partake. We, too, need to invite Christ into our innermost beings if we are to have a vital communion with Him.

The BKC titles this verse and the next as “The Consummation of the Marriage.”

5. The Consummation of the Marriage (4:16-5:1)

4:16. The beloved’s request that the winds blow on her garden, that is, herself (cf. vv. 12, 15) was a delicate, poetically beautiful invitation to her lover to fully possess her (come into her). She wished to be his with her charms as available as fruit on a tree (cf. v. 13).

BKC, Song of Songs 4:16

The Conclusion : 5:1

I HAVE COME INTO MY GARDEN, MY SISTER, MY BRIDE; I HAVE GATHERED MY MYRRH WITH MY SPICE. I HAVE EATEN MY HONEYCOMB AND MY HONEY; I HAVE DRUNK MY WINE AND MY MILK.

Verse 1a

Solomon has accepted her invitation and the marriage is consummated. He has entered into his royal garden and enjoyed the fruits of it. So the curtain falls on this Act. As the curtain falls, the chorus (see below) concludes with the words...

EAT, O FRIENDS, AND DRINK; DRINK YOUR FILL, O LOVERS.

Verse 1b

BKC makes the following note as the “curtain falls.”

The NIV margin attributes the last part of the verse, Eat, O friends, and drink; drink your fill, O lovers, to the “friends” of the couple. However, it is unlikely that friends, wedding guests, or any other persons would have been present in the bedroom at the consummation of the couple’s marriage. A more plausible suggestion is that the speaker was God Himself. Only their Creator would have been a “guest” on that occasion. Since their love was from Him it was fitting that He approve it. He invited them to enjoy sexual love in marriage as if it were a banquet (“eat... and drink”). This clearly indicates God’s approval of marriage, which He designed in the Garden of Eden

BKC, Song of Songs 5:1

Is this right? Theologically, BKC have it correct, but this “book” is a musical drama and so, if this were actually performed, it would be the “chorus” which sang these words.

Just as Solomon was eager to rush in and accept the invitation of the Bride, Christ is eager to come and dwell within us. We will conclude with Paul's words.

I pray that out of His glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know his love the surpasses knowledge - that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Ephesians 3:16-19

ACT 4

Scene 1 : 5:2-6:1

Another Dream Sequence : 2-8

I SLEPT BUT MY HEART WAS AWAKE.

Verse 2a

To understand this statement, one must understand the Hebrew. First, Hebrew verbs are inflected for person and number (as in most languages) so the pronoun "I" is not needed with the verb "to sleep". In this case the pronoun, אָנִי (ANEE) appears. When it does, it is for emphasis. **אָנִי** Slept. There was no question about it, she went to sleep and remained that way. It is emphatic.

The second part of the phrase has it "my heart was awake". Most translations have it this way. Consider, however, the following.

*No one is fierce enough **to rouse** him.*

Job 41:10

The verb may mean to "be awake," but often it means "to be aroused" as in the above passage. The same verb was used in the last chapter where we read "Awake, north wind..." (4:16). She was asleep in her bed but as she slept, her heart became aroused. What so aroused it? she continues.

LISTEN! MY LOVER IS KNOCKING: "OPEN TO ME MY DARLING, MY DOVE, MY FLAWLESS ONE. MY HEAD IS DRENCHED WITH DEW, MY HAIR WITH THE DAMPNES OF NIGHT."

Verse 2b

In her dream, her lover comes to her as he has before. He knocks on the door. He asks her to let him in. He appeals to her compassion as he is wet from the dampness of the night. So what does she do? she jumps out of bed and lets him in...? Oh no!

I HAVE TAKEN OFF MY ROBE - MUST I PUT IT ON AGAIN? I HAVE WASHED MY FEET - MUST I SOIL THEM AGAIN?

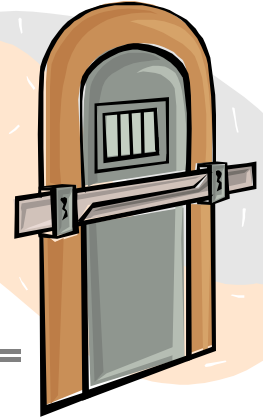
Verse 3

What love! She doesn't want to take the trouble of putting her robe on and walking across the room to let him in. How can this be after what we have seen in the last Act? Well, it can happen, you know, it has happened...

The message John was to deliver to the “angel of the church at Ephesus” was,

Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.

Revelation 2:4-5



In a married couple’s life there is a time when the honeymoon is over and life gets practical again. The church at Ephesus had a burning love for the Lord when its members were newly saved. But years had past and the life in the church had gotten down to the "ho-hum". Christ says, "Repent!"

He asks them to regain that fervent love they once had ... or else! There was a time when the bride would have leapt across the room to let him in. But the honeymoon is over. Open the door yourself! If you have been married for a number of years, you may have had such experiences.

MY LOVER THRUST HIS HAND THROUGH THE LATCH OPENING; MY HEART BEGAN TO POUND FOR HIM. I AROSE TO OPEN FOR MY LOVER, AND MY HANDS DRIPPED WITH MYRRH, MY FINGERS WITH LOWING MYRRH, ON THE HANDLES OF THE LOCK. I OPENED FOR MY LOVER, BUT MY LOVER HAD LEFT; HE WAS GONE.

Verses 4-6a

The NASB has “*My beloved extended his hand through the opening.*” as nothing is said about a latch or lock. This is true, but, in verse 5 the word “bolt” is found and so the added word here in the NIV is warranted. Dr. McGee wrote, “*door was so constructed as to leave an opening so that one could reach through to the inside and remove the bar unless it was locked as well as barred -- which was the case on this occasion*”¹⁵

I am sorely tempted here to present the antitype before.

Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.

Revelation 3:20 (NIV)

When Christ invites us into His heart, the invitation is not forever, you must take the invitation when it is offered as will be seen as we continue. However,



¹⁵McGEE, Song of Songs 5:4

it is believed that this scene is after the married (i.e. after your salvation) and so is this really a proper antitype? The fact of the matter is that, while we use this verse to picture Christ's invitation to receive Him as ones Savior, in context, it really is not.

Dramatically Christ pictured Himself as standing outside and knocking on a door. In a familiar painting the latch is not shown but is assumed to be on the inside. The appeal is for those who hear to open the door. To them Christ promised, I will go in and eat with him, and he with Me. With Christ on the outside, there can be no fellowship or genuine wealth. With Christ on the inside, there is wonderful fellowship and sharing of the marvelous grace of God. This was an appeal to Christians rather than to non-Christians. This raises the important question concerning the extent of one's intimate fellowship with Christ. To those who respond, Christ promises to give the right to sit with Him on His throne and share His victory.

BKC, Revelation 3:20

My loving Lord has driven me back sometimes with sharp words of rebuke, but oftener he has loved me back with attractive tenderness. What a wonderful magnet love is! It draws our iron hearts to itself. Its sway is kindly but irresistible. We wander hither and thither, in the instability of our minds, till a memory of the days of love comes over our spirit, and straightway we can rest no longer in the things of earth after which we have so wickedly gone astray, but we say, "I will return unto my first husband, for it was better with me then than now" A moment's memory of the days of our espousals makes the heart sick with longings to return to her home in the bosom of Jesus. He loves us out of our backslidings. Perhaps you have fallen into lukewarmness, and are chilly and lifeless, and what is the way to raise you out of that horrible state? Is it not a way of love? When the Laodicean church was neither cold nor hot, and even her Beloved was ready to spue her out of his mouth, how was she bidden to rise out of her condition? Did not the Lord say, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." Christ's coming to commune with the church was the cure of her indifference. When the love of God is shed abroad in the soul you feel no longer sleepy and indifferent, but your spirit girds herself with zeal as with a cloak, and your heart glows with vehement flames of affection

SPURGEON, Sermon 1337 - Love's Medicines And Miracles, 1/21/1877

So, there are at least two who state the true meaning of Revelation 3:20. But the words of Spurgeon, above, even though commenting on Revelation 3:20, sounds like he is commenting of our passage in Song of Songs. I shall not comment further on this, the above two have done quite well, better than I would.

As long as we have been looking at Revelation, let us back up a few "churches."

*'But I have this against you, that **you have left your first love.** 'Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove **your lampstand out of its place—unless** you repent.*

Revelation 2:4-5 (NASB)

The wedding was over and the bride had reached the place of complacency, "I don't want to get my feet dirty!" In terms of the above passage, she had left "her first love." Let me set this straight. It does not mean her "first lover" but the kind of love one has at first, before the honeymoon is over. Solomon did not remove her lampstand but he left some myrrh on the lock and left! Dr. McGee wrote,

They had lost that intense and enthusiastic devotion to the person of Christ. It is difficult for us to sense the state to which the Holy Spirit had brought this church. He had brought the believers in Ephesus into an intimate and personal relationship to Jesus Christ. He had brought them to the place where they could say to the Lord, "We love you." This may seem like a very unimportant thing to us today, but their love for the Lord was very important to Christ. He was saying to the Ephesians, "You are leaving your best love." They hadn't quite departed from that love, but they were on the way. It is difficult for us in this cold, skeptical, cynical, and indifferent day in which we live to understand this. The world has intruded into the church to such an extent that it is hard for us to conceive of the intense, enthusiastic devotion the early church gave to the person of Christ. The early church first went off the track not in their doctrine but in their personal relationship to Jesus Christ.

McGEE, Revelation 2:4

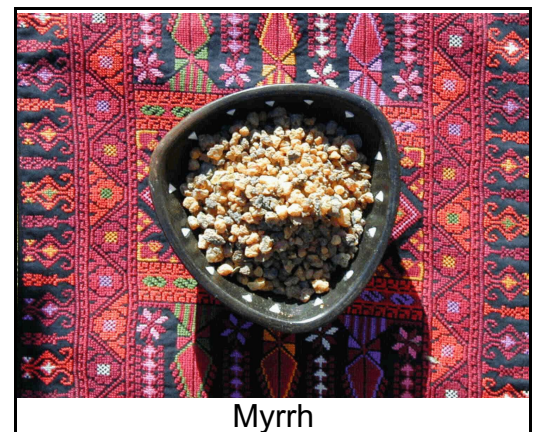
Going back to the door and its opening, K&D give this detailed description of what went on.

. . . the loophole in the door above . . . is understood from the standpoint of one who is within; "by the opening from without to within," thus "through the opening;" stretching his hand through the door-opening as if to open the door, if possible, by the pressing back of the lock from within, he shows how greatly he longed after Shulamith. And she was again very deeply moved when she perceived this longing, which she had so coldly responded to: the interior of her body, with the organs which, after the bibl. idea, are the seat of the tenderest emotions, or rather, in which they reflect themselves, both such as are agreeable and such as are sorrowful, groaned within her,—an expression of deep sympathy so common, that "the sounding of the bowels," Isa 63:15, an expression used, and that anthropopathically¹⁶ of God Himself, is a direct designation of sympathy or inner participation

K&D, Song of Songs 5:4

When the bride came to her senses and went to the door, she was too late! All she had to show for it was the myrrh on her hands. The Bridegroom had myrrh with his and it was spread on the lock of the door. We have spoken of myrrh before but it won't hurt to take one more look. According to Holman's Dictionary,

*MYRRH An aromatic resin having many uses in the Ancient Near East. It was traded along with spices (Gen. 37:25), used as an ingredient in anointing oil (Ex. 30:23), **applied as***



¹⁶OXFORD, anthropopathy >n. the attribution of human emotions to a god.

perfume (Esth. 2:12), placed in clothes to deodorize them (Ps. 45:8), given as a gift (Matt. 2:11), **and used to embalm bodies** (John 19:39).

HBD, Myrrh

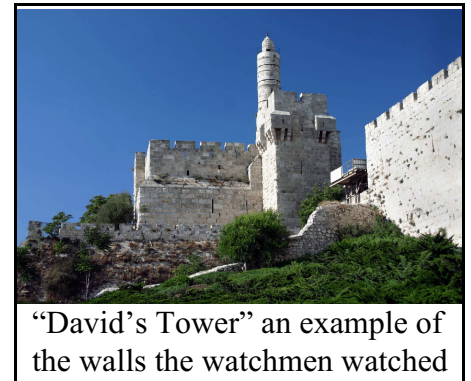
The myrrh was brought out of love, it was left as a symbol of the death of that “first love.”

The Watchmen : 7-8

THE WATCHMEN FOUND ME AS THEY MADE THEIR ROUNDS IN THE CITY. THEY BEAT ME, THEY BRUISED ME; THEY TOOK AWAY MY CLOAK, THOSE WATCHMEN OF THE WALLS! O DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM, I CHARGE YOU--IF YOU FIND MY LOVER, WHAT WILL YOU TELL HIM? TELL HIM I AM FAINT WITH LOVE.

Once before, also in a dream, the Bride has come upon the watchmen of the city. But this time they beat and bruised her and took away her coat. It is clear that they beat her, but what did they take from her? The various translations do not agree a all on this.

BDB note only one other occurrence of the word in the form found here, רדיד (RAHDEED) .



“David’s Tower” an example of the walls the watchmen watched

*In that day the Lord will take away the finery: The jingling anklets, the scarves, and the crescents; The pendants, the bracelets, and the veils; The headdresses, the leg ornaments, and the headbands; The perfume boxes, the charms, and the rings; The nose jewels, the festal apparel, and the mantles; The outer garments, the purses, and the mirrors; The fine linen, the turbans, and **the robes**.*

Isaiah 3:18-23 (NKJV)

The Greek word is not found in the New Testament. The Hebrew word describes a very large covering that goes over the head. If one chooses to use the word "veil", it has to be with the understanding that it is not just a face covering but that which covers the entire upper part of the body. We will go with “*wide wrapper, or large veil*”¹⁷

But why the hostile action of the watchmen? In the last dream we saw them as being good. I shall begin be revealing what K&D describes.

¹⁷BDB, רדיד

**The watchmen who go about in the city found me,
They beat me, wounded me;
My upper garment took away from me,
The watchmen of the walls.**

She sought her beloved, not "in the midbar" (open field), nor "in the kepharim" (villages), but ריעב, "in the city,"—a circumstance which is fatal to the shepherd-hypothesis here, as in the other dream. There in the city she is found by the watchmen who patrol the city, and have their proper posts on the walls to watch those who approach the city and depart from it (cf. Isa 62:6). These rough, regardless men,—her story returns at the close like a palindrome¹⁸ to those previously named,—who judge only according to that which is external, and have neither an eye nor a heart for the sorrow of a loving soul, struck (הכה, from הכנ, to pierce, hit, strike) and wounded (נצפ, R. פץ, to divide, to inflict wounds in the flesh) the royal spouse as a common woman, and so treated her, that, in order to escape being made a prisoner, she was constrained to leave her upper robe in their hands (Gen 39:12). This upper robe, not the veil which at Song 4:1, 3 we found was called tsammāa, is called דידר. Aben Ezra compares with it the Arab. ridâ, a plaid-like over-garment, which was thrown over the shoulders and veiled the upper parts of the body. But the words have not the same derivation. The ridâ has its name from its reaching downward,—probably from the circumstance that, originally, it hung down to the feet, so that one could tread on it.

K&D, Song of Songs 5:7

The BKC describes the action much better.

However, the beloved responded too late (vv. 6-7). When she set out to look for him she was found and beaten by the city watchmen. In her first dream the watchmen helped her look for her lover (3:3), but this time they mistook her for a criminal. In her dream this action by the watchmen may indicate that she was to blame for her separation from her lover. More importantly the dream symbolized the pain of separation brought about through her selfishness and the dream dramatized her need of the lover for her well-being and protection.

BKC, Song of Songs 5:7

One other commentary,

*As suddenly as the man disappeared, the guards appear. They are called "those who encircle the city" and "the keepers of the walls," and once again her virginity is meant. They beat her, bruise her, and strip her. **No meaningful literal interpretation of this verse has been offered.** The event is harsh and inexplicable at this level. Metaphorically, then, it is not any person who assaults her; it is her own virginity. This is an experience in which the man paradoxically has no part.*

NAC, Song of Songs 5:7

¹⁸OXFORD, palindrome >n. a word or sequence that reads the same backwards as forwards, e.g. madam.

Remember, this is a dream sequence. She has not really rejected her lover, she is dreaming of what would happen "if" she did.

The chorus asks a question : 9

HOW IS YOUR BELOVED BETTER THAN OTHERS, MOST BEAUTIFUL OF WOMEN? HOW IS YOUR BELOVED BETTER THAN OTHERS, THAT YOU CHARGE US SO?

She has charged the Chorus (the other wives) to tell her where the Bridegroom (Solomon) is. So, their response is "why should we?" But you must read this verse correctly. They call her the "most beautiful" of women? The inference is that she was his favorite. she was the one whom he really loved. Their question tends to be cynical. There is a purpose to their interjection here. It is to give her the opportunity to describe her lover (to us). NAC has,

This verse introduces the woman's next solo, in which she praises her beloved's beauty. Nevertheless, the answer of the chorus should not be dismissed as mere transition, for it has a highly significant function in the text. The girls do not respond to her request directly, as in, "Yes, we'll do that." Instead, they pose two questions for her, the first here and the second in [6:2](#). The first is: What is so special about this man that you Page 412 would want us to go to him for you? In doing this, they ask her to come to terms with her love for him. Page 413

In surrendering her womanhood to him, she has opened herself to great emotional hurt. She feels isolated and, perhaps, depressed. But the solution to her problem is not to be found in something either they or he can do for her; it is to be found in herself. She must recognize that she gave herself to him for a reason, that she is in fact deeply in love with him. He is, in her eyes, better than all other men.

NAC, Song of Songs 5:8

The Bride's Answer : 10-16

MY LOVER IS RADIANT AND RUDDY, OUTSTANDING AMONG TEN THOUSAND. HIS HEAD IS PUREST GOLD; HIS HAIR IS WAVY AND BLACK AS A RAVEN. HIS EYES ARE LIKE DOVES BY THE WATER STREAMS, WASHED IN MILK, MOUNTED LIKE JEWELS. HIS CHEEKS ARE LIKE BEDS OF SPICE YIELDING PERFUME. HIS LIPS ARE LIKE LILIES DRIPPING WITH MYRRH. HIS ARMS ARE RODS OF GOLD SET WITH CHRYSOLITE. HIS BODY IS LIKE POLISHED IVORY DECORATED WITH SAPPHIRES. HIS LEGS ARE PILLARS OF MARBLE SET ON BASES OF PURE GOLD. HIS APPEARANCE IS LIKE LEBANON, CHOICE AS ITS CEDARS. HIS MOUTH IS SWEETNESS ITSELF;

Verses 10-16a

Now it is her turn. In the previous section Solomon described the bride. Now she describes him. Her description is even more detailed than was his description of her. In one of his sermons, Spurgeon said,

It is of Christ, the Heavenly Bridegroom, that we perceive the spouse to be speaking, and mentioning in detail at least ten particulars, dwelling with delight upon the beauties of his head and his locks, his eyes and his cheeks, his lips and his hands, and every part of him; and, beloved friends, I think it shows true love to Christ when we want to speak at length upon everything that concerns him. The general hearer says, "Oh, yes, yes! of course, Christ is the Son of God, and he is also perfect man, I believe that;" but he does not want you to go into minute particulars concerning your Lord. It is not so with those who truly love the Savior; they wish to know all that can be known about him. True love likes to become familiar with the object of its affection; its heart is set upon that object, it studies it, and can never know it too well or too closely. True love to Christ thinks of him from morning till night; it is glad to be released from other thoughts that it may follow only its one darling pursuit. True love to Christ seeks to get to him, to live with him, to live upon him, and thus to know him so intimately that things which were unobserved and passed over at the first, stand out in clear light to the increased joy and delight of the contemplative mind. I wish, dear friends, that we had many more of those people about who study Christ from head to foot, that they may learn all that can be learned about him, those who would be able, with the spouse, to talk of his charms and beauties in detail, and to describe them as she does with rapturous delight

SPURGEON, Sermon #2479 - Spices, Flowers, Lilies - 8/5/1880, 8/23/1896

My lover is radiant and ruddy, outstanding among ten thousand.

His body is like polished ivory

1. His head is purest gold
 2. his hair is wavy and black as a raven
 3. His eyes are like doves by the water streams, washed in milk
. mounted like jewels
 4. His cheeks are like beds of spice yielding perfume
 5. His lips / His mouth are like lilies ripping with myrrh / is sweetness itself
 6. His arms are rods of gold set with chrysolite
 7. His legs are pillars of marble set on bases of pure gold.
- His appearance is like Lebanon, choice as its cedars.
-

He is altogether lovely. This is my lover, this my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem

Comparing the seven specific characteristics with those of the bride we have

	Her	Him
1.	Eyes	Eyes
2.	Hair	Hair
3.	Teeth	(Cheeks)
4.	Lips/Speech	Lips/Mouth
5.	Temples	Head
6.	Neck	(Arms)
7.	Breasts	(Legs)

Three of the seven do not match. One would admire a woman's neck but not a man's. I have substituted the closest thing - Arms. One would admire a woman's breasts, but not a man's! I have replaced it with the nearest thing, the legs. Finally, I do not think men in Solomon's day had electric tooth brushes etc. so I have replaced teeth with cheeks.

Note that I have combined Lips & speech and likewise Lips and Mouth as they are all the same part of the body. I know you are going to accuse me of combining these two so as to arrive at seven features. Well, I am the one who is writing this! Seriously, the "mouth" and "speech" are not physical attractions. They are certainly attractions, but not physical. I had considered putting these in a separate category. So, yes, there are seven items, a "complete" list.

Her descriptions are much easier to understand than his. This is rather strange since she is the "quaint country girl". We might conclude that each described the other in terms that the other would comprehend. Should we just sum this up and say he was a handsome person or do we believe the Holy Spirit went on at length with these individual features for a purpose. I shall believe that and take each in detail

Head purest gold

He has the most beautiful head, fine and majestic. Gold is here used to express excellence.¹⁹

The NASB has, "***His head is like gold, pure gold***" carrying over the Hebrew text which uses two terms for gold. The first is gold in general but the second is gold that has be freed from all impurities, "pure gold." She starts at the top with the head (and hair). The NAC has, "His face is like gold not only in that it is tanned but of the highest value to her"²⁰

Typically speaking,

*But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the **head of Christ is God.***

¹⁹CLARKE, Song of Songs 5:11

²⁰NAC, Song of Songs 5:11

Hair wavy and black as a raven

Going to the hair, we have somewhat of a problem. The Hebrew word translated here as “wavy” is translated in various ways in various translations. The word is תלתלים (TALTALIM) which is used only here. The Greek word is not found in the New Testament (hence there are no entries for it in the Greek Lexicons). The root of the word appears to be תל (TEL) such as “Tel Aviv” which means “mound (or hill) of ears of grain.” If we translated this literally, his hair was “piled upon his head like a mound,” Regardless of whether you use “wavy”, “bushy” or the improbably translation “clusters of dates” (NASB), there is a vivid contrast which is noted by Paul in a rather long passage.

*For if a woman is not covered, let her also be shorn. But if it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered. For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. For man is not from woman, but woman from man. Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man. For this reason the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. Nevertheless, neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord. For as woman came from man, even so man also comes through woman; but all things are from God. Judge among yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? Does not even nature itself teach you **that if a man has long hair**, it is a dishonor to him? But **if a woman has long hair**, it is a glory to her; for her hair is given to her for a covering.*

1 Corinthians 11:6-15 (NKJV)

Remember the description of the brides long flowing hair. As far as his hair being black is concerned, we might consider the following.

*Aliens have devoured his strength, But he does not know it; Yes, **gray hairs are here and there on him**, Yet he does not know it.*

Hosea 7:9 (NKJV)

The black signifies that he is in the prime of life. Also

*If, however, in his judgment it is unchanged and **black hair** has grown in it, the itch is healed. He is clean, and the priest shall pronounce him **clean**.*

Leviticus 13:37 (NIV)

Not only does it denote life and longevity, but also healthiness and purity. I wonder what color hair our Lord had here on earth. He was certainly a man of strength and courage to take the abuse and crucifixion!

HALLELUJAH! WHAT A SAVIOR²¹

Man of Sorrows! what a name
For the Son of God, Who came
Ruined sinners to reclaim.
Hallelujah! What a Savior!

Bearing shame and scoffing rude,
In my place condemned He stood;
Sealed my pardon with His blood.
Hallelujah! What a Savior!

Guilty, vile, and helpless we;
Spotless Lamb of God was He;

“Full atonement!” can it be?
Hallelujah! What a Savior!

Lifted up was He to die;
“It is finished!” was His cry;
Now in Heav’n exalted high.
Hallelujah! What a Savior!

When He comes, our glorious King,
All His ransomed home to bring,
Then anew His song we’ll sing:
Hallelujah! What a Savior!

Eyes like doves by the water streams, washed in milk, mounted like jewels

The description of his eyes is quite extended. She likens them to doves, washed in milk (white) mounted like jewels. NAC has:

Judging from 4:1, “eyes like doves” seems to be a stock metaphor. “Washed in milk” may refer to the white of the eye, in which the pupils are like bathing doves. “Mounted like jewels” is a hypothetical translation

NAC, Song of Songs 5:12

Only the NIV has “mounted like jewels” and, I assume, “Jewels” is not significant in this description. Clarke and K&D add this to the description.

The white of the eye, exceedingly white. By the use of stibium, in the East, the eye is rendered very beautiful; and receives such a lustre from the use of this article, that, to borrow the expression of a late traveler, “their eyes appear to be swimming in bliss.” I believe this expression to be the meaning of the text. Fitley set—Or, as the margin, very properly, sitting in fullness; not sunk, not contracted.

CLARKE, Song of Songs 5:12

His eyes like doves by the water-brooks,

Bathing in milk, stones beautifully set

The eyes in their glancing moistness (cf. ὑγρῆς τῆς ὀμμῆτων, in Plutarch, of a languishing look), and in the movement of their pupils, are like doves which sip at the water-brooks, and move to and fro beside them. אֵינֶיךָ, from אֵינָה, continere, is a watercourse, and then also the water itself flowing in

²¹Philip P. Bliss, “What a Savior” words and music, in International Lessons Monthly, 1875

it, and then the river flowing in the valley, bahr, the sea-basin (properly the cleft), and then also the sea itself. The pred. "bathing" refers to the eyes (cf. Song 4:9), not to the doves, if this figure is continued. The pupils of the eyes, thus compared with doves, seem as if bathing in milk, in that they swim, as it were, in the white in the eye.

K&D, Song of Songs 5:12

He was not like the cross-eyed school teacher who could not control her pupils! (Sorry about that, I just had too!) Paul wrote,

*. . . in a moment, in the **twinkling of an eye**, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*

1 Corinthians 15:52 (NKJV)

Paul does not mention whose eye would "twinkle," actually it is a metaphor. But, still, the description of the Bride-groom's eyes certainly would remind us of this!

Cheeks like beds of spice yielding perfume

It is difficult to tell rather לחי (LECHI) refers to cheeks or jaws. It refers to both. Virtually all of the translations have "cheeks" so we will go with that. It is hard to imagine how ones cheeks could look like "beds of spice." Actually, it does not refer to the cheeks themselves but the "beds of spice" that grow on them. Hence,

In merkahhim there scarcely lies anything further than that this flos juventae on the blooming cheeks gives the impression of the young shoots of aromatic plants; at all events, the merkahhim, even although we refer this feature in the figure to the fragrance of the unguents on the beard, are not the perfumes themselves, to which megadloth is not appropriate, but fragrant plants, so that in the first instance the growth of the beard is in view with the impression of its natural beauty

K&D, Song of Songs 5:13

Scarcely any thing serves to set off the human face to greater advantage than the beard, when kept in proper order. Females admire it in their suitors and husbands. I have known cases, where they not only despised but execrated Europeans, whose faces were close shaved. The men perfume their beards often; and this may be what is intended by spices and sweet-smelling myrrh.

CLARKE, Song of Songs 5:13

"His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers: his lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh."—Song of Solomon 5:13.

IN this chapter the spouse describes in detail the person of her Beloved. She is not satisfied with saying, "He is altogether lovely;" but she delights to talk of the charms of each part of his sacred person, and to picture the beauties of his divine form and features, so that thereby she may, perhaps,

win some other heart first to admire and then to love him.

Dear friends, there are some things about which you will be wise not to go into details. You had better speak in general terms of half the things on earth; for if you once describe them in detail, you will have to confess that they are marred by a thousand imperfections. You may be content to give merely a surface glance at them; for if you dive beneath the surface, you will soon discover much that will alter your opinion of the thing that at first sight looked so lovely. But it is not so with Jesus, our Well-beloved. You may talk of him as long as ever you please, and praise him as much as ever you can, yet you will never discover that you have exaggerated his excellences. You may go into detail about him, and dwell with much minuteness upon everything relating to his character, his offices, his words, his deeds, and you shall be made to wonder at the perfection of each one of them. You may apply the microscope to Christ; you may examine his little things, if, indeed, anything can be little that refers to him; you may look into the deep things of Christ, the hidden things of Christ, his secrets, and the more closely you look, the more be amazed, and astonished, and filled with delight.

It is of Christ, the Heavenly Bridegroom, that we perceive the spouse to be speaking, and mentioning in detail at least ten particulars, dwelling with delight upon the beauties of his head and his locks, his eyes and his cheeks, his lips and his hands, and every part of him; and, beloved friends, I think it shows true love to Christ when we want to speak at length upon everything that concerns him. The general hearer says, "Oh, yes, yes! of course, Christ is the Son of God, and he is also perfect man, I believe that;" but he does not want you to go into minute particulars concerning your Lord. It is not so with those who truly love the Savior; they wish to know all that can be known about him. True love likes to become familiar with the object of its affection; its heart is set upon that object, it studies it, and can never know it too well or too closely. True love to Christ thinks of him from morning till night; it is glad to be released from other thoughts that it may follow only its one darling pursuit. True love to Christ seeks to get to him, to live with him, to live upon him, and thus to know him so intimately that things which were unobserved and passed over at the first, stand out in clear light to the increased joy and delight of the contemplative mind. I wish, dear friends, that we had many more of those people about who study Christ from head to foot, that they may learn all that can be learned about him, those who would be able, with the spouse, to talk of his charms and beauties in detail, and to describe them as she does with rapturous delight.

SPURGEON, Sermon #2479 - Spices, Flowers, Lilies, And Myrrh, 8/5/1880, 8/23/1896

You may think I quote from too many people. The truth of the matter is there are not enough words in the language to express the glory of our Lord. I am giving you a "multi-faceted" approach to it, showing you what others have felt.

Did Christ have a beard? Well, we have his photo on page #53, but, of course, that is only a painting. He most likely did have a beard. I don't recall seeing any artists' renderings without a beard.

Lips like lilies dripping with myrrh

We consider her lips back on page #45. His lips are described as like lilies, lilies dripping with myrrh. I am not a botanist but I don't know of lilies that drip with myrrh. Myrrh is obtained from trees.

The Psalmist wrote,

*My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer. Thou art fairer than the children of men: **grace is poured into thy lips**: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever. Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty.*

Psalms 45:1-3 (KJV)

This is not a reference to Solomon, but to the Lord Himself. John wrote,

*The officers answered, "No **man ever spoke** like this Man!"*

John 7:46 (NKJV)

Arms rods of gold set with chrysolite

Arms? Other than the NIV, the translation is "hands." The word, יָד (YOD) signifies the "hand. The primary meaning of this noun is "the terminal part of the arm used to perform functions of man's will."²² Now that we have decided on "Hands," (at least, I have) what does the description mean?

rings set with . . . beryl -- Hebrew, Tarshish, so called from the city. The ancient chrysolite, gold in color (Septuagint), our topaz, one of the stones on the high priest's breastplate, also in the foundation of New Jerusalem (Re 21:19, 20; also Da 10:6). "Are as," is plainly to be supplied, see in Song 5:13 a similar ellipsis; not as MOODY STUART: "have gold rings." The hands bent in are compared to beautiful rings, in which beryl is set, as the nails are in the fingers. BURROWES explains the rings as cylinders used as signets, such as are found in Nineveh, and which resemble fingers. A ring is the token of sonship (Lu 15:22). A slave was not allowed to wear a gold ring. He imparts His sonship and freedom to us (Gal. 4:7); also of authority (Gen. 41:42; compare John 6:27). He seals us in the name of God with His signet (Revelation 7:2-4), compare below, Song 8:6, where she desires to be herself a signet-ring on His arms; so "graven on the palms," &c., that is, on the signet-ring in His hand (Isa 49:16; contrast Hag 2:23, with Jer 22:24).

JFB, Song of Songs 5:14

I do not believe I can add to or improve this statement.

Legs pillars of marble set on bases of pure gold.

²²TWOT, יָד

Before describing this last part of the body, I would guess some of you are wondering, "Why go into all that detail?" Let me tell you what Spurgeon thought.

You know how very unacquainted many people are with the Song of Solomon; they shut up this Book of Canticles in despair and say that they cannot understand its meaning. You will find that it is just the same with every truly spiritual thing. If you put into the hands of any one of them a deeply-spiritual book, he will say, "I cannot comprehend what the writer means; the man seems to be in a rapture, and I cannot make out what he is aiming at by such writing." Just so; unspiritual people are all at sea in spiritual things, and even some of God's children, who do know Christ so as to be saved by him, seem to be altogether out of their depth when you begin to speak of the things which you have made touching the King, or dilate upon those special truths which only experience and fellowship with Christ can reveal to the soul.

SPURGEON, Sermon #2479 - Spices, Flowers, Lilies, And Myrrh, 8/5/1880, 8/23/1896

His legs were "exquisitely turned and well-shaped; the sockets of gold may refer to his slippers. On these a profusion of gold and ornaments are still lavished in Asiatic countries"²³

Having described seven specific parts, we go to an over all description which was the last half of verse 14.

HIS BODY IS LIKE POLISHED IVORY DECORATED WITH SAPPHIRES

*The [word] signifies properly the tender parts, and that the inward parts of the body, but is here, like the Chald. [word], Dan 2:32, and the [word] Song 7:3, which also properly signifies the inner part of the body, κοιλαα, transferred to the body in its outward appearance. To the question how Shulamith should in such a manner praise that which is for the most part covered with clothing, it is not only to be answered that it is the poet who speaks by her mouth, but also that it is not the bride or the beloved, but the wife, whom he represents as thus speaking. תשע (from the peculiar Hebraeo-Chald. and Targ. תשע, which, after Jer 5:28, like k.halak, create, appears to proceed from the fundamental idea of smoothing) designates an artistic figure. Such a figure was Solomon's throne, made of ׀, the teeth of elephants, ivory, 1 Kings 10:18. **Here Solomon's own person, without reference to a definite admired work of art, is praised as being like an artistic figure made of ivory,—like it in regard to its glancing smoothness and its fine symmetrical form***

K&D Song of Songs 5:16

K&D get a bit technical here, so just not the underscored part above.

She then sums it all up, as did Solomon.

²³CLARKE, Song of Songs 5:15

HIS MOUTH IS SWEET

This is not a physical description, it is a description of what proceeds from his mouth. That this is, indeed, the case is attested to by K&D and Clarke who wrote,

But the naming of the palate can point to nothing else than his words. With this the description comes to a conclusion; for, from the speech, the most distinct and immediate expression of the personality, advance is made finally to the praise of the person.

K&D, Song of Songs 5:16

His eloquence is great, and his voice is charming. Every word he speaks is sweetness, mildness, and benevolence itself. Then, her powers of description failing, and metaphor exhausted she cries out, "The whole of him is loveliness. This is my beloved, and this is my companion, O ye daughters of Jerusalem."

CLARKE, Song of Songs 5:16

What do you get when you sum this all up?

HE IS ALTOGETHER LOVELY. THIS IS MY LOVER, THIS MY FRIEND, O DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM.

Verse 16b

She describes him as "altogether lovely", which sounds good, but is rather strange. The term "lovely" is usually reserved for women. Consider the verse below. Perhaps this is why the NAS has "wholly desirable".

*"In that day "the **lovely young women** and **strong young men** will faint because of thirst.*

Amos 8:13

Women are "lovely", men are "strong". Rachel and Esther were described as being lovely. The bride is so described (1:5, 2:14, 4:3, 6:4). Nowhere is any man so described, except that some of the hymn writers have picked up this phrase and used it.

But Solomon, as a type of Christ, was like no other man, and as such is thus described. Paul writes...

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things.

I am sure that the "things" which Paul would have us "think about" that are "lovely" would include the things ascribed to Jesus Christ!

The Hebrew word here is מהמד (MAGHMAHD), the root of which means "to desire" or "to take pleasure in" and hence the noun means "desirableness" or "preciousness". It is translated "lovely" with regard to women because that is what makes them desirable. The NASB has "wholly desirable."

How does one change what people have used for hundreds of years, "He is altogether lovely?"

Have you notice I have not cited much from Dr. McGee in this section. He does not go into the description in detail. He does have a very good conclusion to it.

There is something here that is very obvious, and that is that she describes him in minute detail. Do you know what that means? It means that she knew him. She knew him intimately.

My friend, if you are going to defend the Lord Jesus Christ today, if you are going to witness for Him, you must know Him. Not only do you need to know who He is, but you need to know Him enough to be able to wax eloquent on His behalf. When I say be eloquent, I don't necessarily mean eloquent in language. I mean full of enthusiasm, excitement, love, and zeal for His person. You and I need not only to know Him, but we must love Him. That is the challenge that we find here. The bride knew Him. She knew Him and she loved Him. She says that He is the chiefest among ten thousand.

Many people have written about the person of Christ because He is altogether lovely even in His humanity. Dr. C. I. Scofield, the man who wrote the first notes for The Scofield Reference Bible, wrote about the Lord Jesus in a tract entitled, "The Loveliness of Jesus." Let me share part of it with you:

All other greatness has been marred by littleness, all other wisdom has been flawed by folly, all other goodness has been tainted by imperfection; Jesus Christ remains the only Being of whom, without gross flattery, it could be asserted, "He is altogether lovely."

McGEE, Song of Songs 5:10-16

We have noted what others have had to say about this "altogether lovely" person, let us look at yet another!

*"Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, **in whom I delight**; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations.*

Matthew 12:18

In the above verse we have God Himself saying the same things about the Bridegroom, Jesus Christ.

The Chorus asks a Second Question : 6:1

WHERE HAS YOUR LOVER GONE, MOST BEAUTIFUL OF WOMEN? WHICH WAY DID YOUR LOVER TURN, THAT WE MAY LOOK FOR HIM WITH YOU?

The second question is where did he go so that we may look for him? But the time has changed. She has awakened from her dream. She shakes the cobwebs from her mind and goes out to seek Solomon. As she does, she meets the daughters of Jerusalem (Chorus) again, but this time for real. The question is real and the offer of assistance is also real.

If we as Christians backslide, as fall away from Christ, what should be done?

Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.

Galatians 6:1

The other brides offered to help her restore her fellowship with Solomon as we should seek to restore our friends and neighbors who are out of fellowship. But, in this case, she was not out of fellowship - she had only dreamed that she was.

She could count on her relationship to be sure, Just as Peter wrote,

But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent **to make your call and election sure**, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

2 Peter 1:5-11 (NKJV)

She responds to the daughters of Jerusalem with the words...

MY LOVER HAS GONE DOWN TO HIS GARDEN, TO THE BEDS OF SPICES, TO BROWSE IN THE GARDENS AND TO GATHER LILIES.

Verses 2

There is a question here if this is to be taken literally, that Solomon had gone into his magnificent garden to browse, or is it figurative as we had in the previous section where the Bride was his "garden". If it is figurative, then he must be in another's garden!

To consider the typology, however, You are not the only one who is the bride of Christ. Not any more than this Bride was Solomon's only bride. The fact, then, that his attentions may be turned to another does not indicate that his attraction to you is any weaker.

that is, in the churches, though He may have withdrawn for a time from the individual believer: she implies an invitation to the daughters of Jerusalem to enter His spiritual Church, and become lilies, made white by His blood. He is gathering some lilies now to plant on earth, others to transplant into heaven

JFB, Song of Songs 6:1

The cause of the couple's separation (the indifference of the beloved) was overcome, as evidenced by her praise of her lover (5:10-16). Yet they were still separated at this point. So the question of the daughters (5:8) concerning his whereabouts (6:1) addressed the problem of their being apart. Having heard of his handsome appearance, the daughters were now anxious to help find him. Which way did he go? they wanted to know.

She answered that he was in his garden where spices and lilies were growing (6:2). This indicated that their separation was more in the emotional realm than in the spatial for she apparently had always known his whereabouts. Her statement of mutual possession (I am my lover's and my lover is mine, v. 3) is the inverse of her earlier passionate declaration (2:16a; cf. 7:10). This indicates that the emotional distance had been overcome on her part and she was confident that it had also been overcome on his part. All that was needed for a complete reconciliation was a statement of forgiveness or acceptance from the lover. He browses is, literally, "he pastures" his flock (cf. 2:16b).

BKC, Song of Songs 6:1-3.

The Bride has learned this lesson.

I AM MY LOVER'S AND MY LOVER IS MINE; HE BROWSES AMONG THE LILIES.

Verse 3

Even though her lover is not present, but is away browsing among the lilies, she has the assurance that "I am my lover's and my lover is mine."

Christian, do you have that confidence in your relationship with Jesus Christ? Do you know, without a doubt, that you are Christ's and Christ is yours?

As surely as the truth of Christ is in me, nobody in the regions of Achaia will stop this boasting of mine.

2 Corinthians 11:10

Paul had this assurance. His assurance was based on Christ's own promise when he said...

I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.

John 10:28

SCENE 2 : 6:4-9

The Bridegroom Speaks

***YOU ARE BEAUTIFUL, MY DARLING, AS TIRZAH, LOVELY AS JERUSALEM,
MAJESTIC AS TROOPS WITH BANNERS.***

Verse 4

Her faith is vindicated as Solomon again praises her. He uses many of the same terms as before. His love has not changed one iota.

***TURN YOUR EYES FROM ME; THEY OVERWHELM ME. YOUR HAIR IS LIKE A
FLOCK OF GOATS DESCENDING FROM GILEAD. YOUR TEETH ARE LIKE A
FLOCK OF SHEEP COMING UP FROM THE WASHING. EACH HAS ITS TWIN, NOT
ONE OF THEM IS ALONE. YOUR TEMPLES BEHIND YOUR VEIL ARE LIKE THE
HALVES OF A POMEGRANATE.***

Verses 5-7

We shall not comment in detail on the compliments as they are very similar to the previous ones. I shall include a note from NAC.

The man now reaffirms his love for her. Much of what he says is repeated from his admiration song of 4:1–5. In particular 6:5b repeats 4:1c, 6:6 repeats 4:2, and 6:7 repeats 4:3b. While there may be some stock metaphors here, the reason for the near verbatim repetition goes beyond the mere use of poetic formulae. The implication is that his desire for her and admiration of her have not diminished now that he has possessed her sexually. He is not like Amnon, of whom it was said after his rape of Tamar that “his hatred of her was even greater than his former desire for her” (2 Sam 13:15).

His awe of her is as great as ever; if anything, it has increased. She is compared to Tirzah and Jerusalem, the two greatest cities of the early monarchy, in all their splendor. The meaning is that she inspires awe and wonder in him; and, as in his comparison of her to David’s tower, he is still aware that he cannot storm her by force (the walls of the city were its most prominent feature). The request that she turn away her eyes further expresses his sense of her power. She can unnerve him with a single glance

NAC, Song of Songs 6:5-7

This time he adds some additional words...

SIXTY QUEENS THERE MAY BE, AND EIGHTY CONCUBINES, AND VIRGINS BEYOND NUMBER; BUT MY DOVE, MY PERFECT ONE, IS UNIQUE, THE ONLY DAUGHTER OF HER MOTHER, THE FAVORITE OF THE ONE WHO BORE HER. THE MAIDENS SAW HER AND CALLED HER BLESSED; THE QUEENS AND CONCUBINES PRAISED HER.

Verses 8-9

Now, we thought the Bible told us that Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines. Here he lists only 60 wives (queens) and 80 concubines. Is there a mistake? No! Of course, there was a time in his life when he had none! This verse might serve then, to indicate at what point in time the Bride came along. One hundred and forty preceded her, and eight hundred and fifty nine followed her.

But this is just like the Church. There have been many saved over the last 2000 years, but the church is not complete yet. Turning to the N.T. we read...

Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.

John 4:35

Paul continued the harvest...

I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I planned many times to come to you (but have been prevented from doing so until now) in order that I might have a harvest among you, just as I have had among the other Gentiles.

Romans 1:13

and it will continue until all "700 wives and 300 concubines" are accounted for. Then the harvest will be over.

Then another angel came out of the temple and called in a loud voice to him who was sitting on the cloud, "Take your sickle and reap, because the time to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is ripe."

Revelation 14:15

Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'

Matthew 13:30

But we have not yet dealt with **“VIRGINS BEYOND NUMBER.”** A virgin is a virgin, she is not a wife. These represent those who have not yet entered into a relationship with Christ. Yet he considers them his. I would take these to be those whom God has called (Elect) but have not yet responded.

Finally, *“but my dove, my perfect one, is unique, the only daughter of her mother, the favorite of the one who bore her. The maidens saw her and called her blessed; the queens and concubines praised her.”*

Her children ***rise up and call her blessed; Her husband also, and he praises her:***

Proverbs 31:28 (NKJV)

The Words of King Lemuel's Mother, here, correspond to the words of Solomon. Perhaps these Proverbs of Lenuel were added by Solomon because they reflected his feelings. Then there was the angel Gabriel who . . .

*. . . was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; ***blessed are you among women!***"*

Luke 1:26-28 (NKJV)

You know what? Mary may have been the first member of the church. She certainly knew our Lord quite well!

ACT 5

SCENE 1 : 6:10 - 7:6

The Bridegroom Speaks : 10-12

WHO IS THIS THAT APPEARS LIKE THE DAWN, FAIR AS THE MOON, BRIGHT AS THE SUN, MAJESTIC AS THE STARS IN PROCESSION? I WENT DOWN TO THE GROVE OF NUT TREES TO LOOK AT THE NEW GROWTH IN THE VALLEY, TO SEE IF THE VINES HAD BUDDED OR THE POMEGRANATES WERE IN BLOOM. BEFORE I REALIZED IT, MY DESIRE SET ME AMONG THE ROYAL CHARIOTS OF MY PEOPLE.

Verses 10-12

The fourth Act, notwithstanding the little disturbances, gives a clear view of the unchanging love of the newly-married pair. This fifth shows how Shulamith, although raised to a royal throne, yet remains, in her childlike disposition and fondness for nature, a lily of the valley. The first scene places us in the midst of the royal gardens. Shulamith comes to view from its recesses, and goes to the daughters of Jerusalem, who, overpowered by the beauty of her heavenly appearance, cry out

K&D, Song of Songs 6:10

The Bride arises early in the morning and enters Solomon's garden (his real garden) and finds the Solomon there. Before we proceed, there is something which needs clarification. The NIV has "majestic as the stars in procession" while most other translations are like the NAS "as awesome as an army with banners". Which is correct?

The NAS and the other versions are correct in so far as a literal translation of the Hebrew is concerned. We should note, however, that army is not in the text. Literally, the Hebrew has "terrible as an array of banners" Specifically, note that she is referred to as "Fair as the moon, bright as the sun." To continue the analogy, then "stars" makes sense in this case. Note that the Hebrew has reference to "banners" which we noted before, page #22. What was on their banners I have no way of knowing.

The sight of Solomon raises her soul to the point where she sees herself as riding in the royal chariot among her people.

The Response from the Chorus: 6:13a

COME BACK, COME BACK, O SHULAMMITE; COME BACK, COME BACK, THAT WE MAY GAZE ON YOU!

Verse 13a

The Lover Responds: 6:13b²⁴

Why would you gaze on the Shulammite as on the dance of Mahanaim?

Verse 13

The response from the chorus is that they wish to gaze upon her. He responds by asking why they would wish to do so. Then comes the puzzling expression "as on the dance of Mahanaim". What does this mean? Places where the word מַחֲנַיִם (MAHANAIM) is found as a reference to a place by this name are below.

*Then David went to **Mahanaim**. And Absalom crossed over the Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him.*

2 Samuel 17:24 (NKJV)

When Jacob saw them, he said, "This is the camp of God!" So he named that place Mahanaim.

Genesis 32:2

The territory extending from Mahanaim and including all of Bashan, the entire realm of Og king of Bashan--all the settlements of Jair in Bashan, sixty towns...

Joshua 13:30

Meanwhile, Abner son of Ner, the commander of Saul's army, had taken Ish-Bosheth son of Saul and brought him over to Mahanaim.

2 Samuel 2:8

These are most of the O.T. references to this city, but they shed no light on the matter. The name comes from the Hebrew word for "camp". In the dual²⁵ form it means "two camps". This is the reason for some translations having "before two armies" (NAS, KJV). The NKJV has "two camps." But the name is, in other Hebrew literature associated with angels. It all probability they seek having her do an "angelic" dance - which she does. As she does she gives rise to the praises for her from the chorus.

HOW BEAUTIFUL YOUR SANDALED FEET, O PRINCE'S DAUGHTER! YOUR GRACEFUL LEGS ARE LIKE JEWELS, THE WORK OF A CRAFTSMAN'S HANDS. YOUR NAVEL IS A ROUNDED GOBLET THAT NEVER LACKS BLENDED WINE. YOUR WAIST IS A MOUND OF WHEAT ENCIRCLED BY LILIES. YOUR BREASTS

²⁴This is verse 1 of the next chapter in the Hebrew text.

²⁵The Hebrew language has "singular" and plural" as we do, but, in addition, has the "Dual," referring to two items, as here, hence "two camps."

ARE LIKE TWO FAWNS, TWINS OF A GAZELLE. YOUR NECK IS LIKE AN IVORY TOWER. YOUR EYES ARE THE POOLS OF HESHBON BY THE GATE OF BATH RABBIM. YOUR NOSE IS LIKE THE TOWER OF LEBANON LOOKING TOWARD DAMASCUS. YOUR HEAD CROWNS YOU LIKE MOUNT CARMEL. YOUR HAIR IS LIKE ROYAL TAPESTRY; THE KING IS HELD CAPTIVE BY ITS TRESSES.

Verses 1-5

In what follows we have another list of praises for the bride. It is interesting that, while Solomon praised her from the head down, the Chorus starts at the feet and work up. They praise her...

1) feet	beautiful
2) legs	like jewels
3) navel	a rounded goblet
4) waist	a mound of wheat
5) breasts	like two fawns
6) neck	an ivory tower
7) eyes	pools of Heshbon
8) nose	tower of lebanon
9) head	like Mount Carmel
10) hair	like royal tapestry

Unlike the previous descriptions, we have ten items rather than seven. Some of the descriptions are similar to previous ones, namely the breasts and the neck. Some of the descriptions which bear further explanation are the waist and the nose and the navel. One might think that this describes a "Jewish nose", but the words are meant to be flattering. Her nose was straight and thin, not crooked.

The Navel is found only in one other place,

On the day you were born your cord was not cut, nor were you washed with water to make you clean, nor were you rubbed with salt or wrapped in cloths.

Ezekiel 16:4

The navel is here chosen as the "center of gravity" of her body as she dances for them. One might say that, because of the body movements during the dance, it becomes the center of attraction - as a goblet of wine.

But this explains the comment about her "waist" (NIV, LB), "belly" (NAS, RSV, KJV) or "abdomen" (AB). At any rate, we are talking about her mid-section, that part of her body which surrounds the navel. They say it is like "a mound of wheat encircled by lillies." "Mound" is not a good term, rather

a circlet would be better. In Biblical times, wheat was sifted and placed in a circular mound to protect small plants from the wind. To people in that area, they were a thing of beauty and here, in this context, adorned with lilies.

We have seen a description of the bride as seen by Solomon, the anitype of Christ. We now have the description as seen by the other wives, the antitype of other parts of the "bride of Christ". What do we learn from this? Remember this is not an allegory, we can not push this to the extent that every phrase has meaning.

The description starts with the feet. Isaiah said...

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!"

Isaiah 52:7

and Paul repeated it...

And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

Romans 10:15

Christians should appear beautiful, not only to God, but to other Christians. I believe this is especially true of those to whom Isaiah and Paul referred, to those missionaries who have gone forth with the Gospel. They are truly beautiful people from the feet up!

SCENE 2 : 7:6 - 8:4

Solomon Enters: 6-8

HOW FAIR AND HOW PLEASANT YOU ARE, O LOVE, WITH YOUR DELIGHTS! THIS STATURE OF YOURS IS LIKE A PALM TREE, AND YOUR BREASTS LIKE ITS CLUSTERS. I SAID, "I WILL GO UP TO THE PALM TREE, I WILL TAKE HOLD OF ITS BRANCHES." LET NOW YOUR BREASTS BE LIKE CLUSTERS OF THE VINE, THE FRAGRANCE OF YOUR BREATH LIKE APPLES, AND THE ROOF OF YOUR MOUTH LIKE THE BEST WINE.

Verses 7:6-9a

Solomon now comes on the scene with these words. It seems hardly necessary to explain the meaning of the words nor the intent of Solomon's heart. We shall simply cite the God's Word

paraphrase.

How beautiful and charming you are, my love, with your elegance. Young woman, your figure is like a palm tree, and your breasts are like its clusters. I thought, "I will climb the palm tree and take hold of its fruit." May your breasts be like clusters on the vine. May the fragrance of your breath be like apples. May your mouth taste like the best wine . . .

Song of Songs 7:6-9a (GW)

One might well ask what such a "sensuous" passage is doing in God's Word. The simple answer is that God put it there! One who asks such a question fails to fully comprehend God's love for us. If you failed, do not be ashamed, for many others have failed also. Look at the following two passages from the Living Bible.

After breakfast Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these others?" "Yes," Peter replied, "You know I am your friend." "Then feed my lambs," Jesus told him.

Jesus repeated the question: "Simon, son of John, do you really love me?" "Yes, Lord," Peter said, "You know I am your friend." "Then take care of my sheep," Jesus said.

Once more he asked him, "Simon, son of John, are you even my friend?" Peter was grieved at the way Jesus asked the question the third time. "Lord, You know my heart; You know I am," he said.

John 21:15-17 LB1971

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Once more he asked him, "Simon, son of John, are you even my friend?" Peter was grieved at the way Jesus asked the question this third time. "Lord, you know my heart; you know I am," he said. Jesus said, "Then feed my little sheep.

John 21:17-17 "LB1966"

The 1971 translation of the same passage is the exact opposite of the 1966 translation. This is because, in 1966, Kenneth Taylor was also confused about God's love. His translation indicated that "God's love", AGAPE, was a divine love and hence a cold love without affection or emotion and that man's love, PHILOS, was the affectionate love that we have for each other. Both words are used here. Jesus uses the former the first two times and Peter answers with the later. Finally, the third time Jesus uses Peter's word (the later). But God's love exceeds in affection and emotion the love between men. Agape love is stronger and deeper and more affectionate than Philos love.

I considered citing what the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament²⁶ says about this love - but decided not to include the thirty-five pages in the definition! Thirty-five pages to tell us what AGAPE love is - wow!

The conclusion is that we should not be embarrassed by the passage from Solomon above. This is the sort of relationship that God wishes to have with us. Unfortunately, our relationship with God is more like that of Peter and we fall short of the feelings we should have toward the Bridegroom!

The Bride Responds : 7:9b-8:4

THE WINE GOES DOWN SMOOTHLY FOR MY BELOVED, MOVING GENTLY THE LIPS OF SLEEPERS. I AM MY BELOVED'S, AND HIS DESIRE IS TOWARD ME.

7:9b-10

Her response is both immediate and direct. "Do with me as you have said" she says, in effect. So she bids him to come and extends the invitation.

COME, MY LOVER, LET US GO TO THE COUNTRYSIDE, LET US SPEND THE NIGHT IN THE VILLAGES. LET US GO EARLY TO THE VINEYARDS TO SEE IF THE VINES HAVE BUDDED, IF THEIR BLOSSOMS HAVE OPENED, AND IF THE POMEGRANATES ARE IN BLOOM--THERE I WILL GIVE YOU MY LOVE. THE MANDRAKES SEND OUT THEIR FRAGRANCE, AND AT OUR DOOR IS EVERY DELICACY, BOTH NEW AND OLD, THAT I HAVE STORED UP FOR YOU, MY LOVER.

Verses 11-13

She bids him to come with her, away from the palace and the city, out into the countryside where they can enjoy one another in privacy and in peace. Maybe that is why we don't have such a relationship with one another! After all, Jesus said,

... when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Matthew 6:6

... Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God.

Luke 6:12

About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a

²⁶Edited by Gerhard Kittel

mountain to pray.

Luke 9:28

A man and his wife need to be able to withdraw from the world scene for some quality time together. A Christian must also withdraw from the world for the same kind of quality time with the Lord.

As she continues her words, they become more mystifying.

IF ONLY YOU WERE TO ME LIKE A BROTHER, WHO WAS NURSED AT MY MOTHER'S BREASTS! THEN, IF I FOUND YOU OUTSIDE, I WOULD KISS YOU, AND NO ONE WOULD DESPISE ME. I WOULD LEAD YOU AND BRING YOU TO MY MOTHER'S HOUSE--SHE WHO HAS TAUGHT ME. I WOULD GIVE YOU SPICED WINE TO DRINK, THE NECTAR OF MY POMEGRANATES.

Verses 8:1-2

This seems to be a strange thing to say. Why would she like him to be a brother to her? We note the following two passages out of Proverbs.

keeping you from the immoral woman, from the smooth tongue of the wayward wife. Do not lust in your heart after her beauty or let her captivate you with her eyes, for the prostitute reduces you to a loaf of bread, and the adulteress preys upon your very life. Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned? Can a man walk on hot coals without his feet being scorched? So is he who sleeps with another man's wife; no one who touches her will go unpunished. Men do not despise a thief if he steals to satisfy his hunger when he is starving. Yet if he is caught, he must pay sevenfold, though it costs him all the wealth of his house. But a man who commits adultery lacks judgment; whoever does so destroys himself.

Proverbs 6:24-32

Then out came a woman to meet him, dressed like a prostitute and with crafty intent. (She is loud and defiant, her feet never stay at home; now in the street, now in the squares, at every corner she lurks.) She took hold of him and kissed him and with a brazen face she said: "I have fellowship offerings at home; today I fulfilled my vows. So I came out to meet you; I looked for you and have found you! I have covered my bed with colored linens from Egypt. I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes and cinnamon. Come, let's drink deep of love till morning; let's enjoy ourselves with love! My husband is not at home; he has gone on a long journey.

Proverbs 7:10-19

To show emotion to a woman on the street in Israel was to show attention to a prostitute - unless the woman was the man's sister. She wishes to be able to show her emotions toward him whenever she pleases, but she has to be careful not to embarrass herself. If Solomon were her brother, she would not have to worry.

Now here is an interesting aspect of typology. Types do not always stay the same. As we have been going through this book we have been equating Solomon and his bride, the Shulamite, to Christ and His bride, the Church. But there is another relationship to be had.

*The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs - heirs of God and **joint heirs with Christ**, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.*

Romans 8:16-17 (NKJV)

If we are “joint heirs” with Christ, what does that make us? Paul answers the question.

*Do we have no right to eat and drink? Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, **the brothers of the Lord**, and Cephas?*

1 Corinthians 9:4-5 (NKJV)

We are “brothers of the Lord” (or brothers with Christ). The Bride wished to be able to have fellowship with the Bridegroom in public, on the streets, as well as in the bed chamber. Now, of course, this fellowship would be a more general one. She wants to be with him in public and not to be shamed.

What does that tell us?

*"For whoever is **ashamed of Me** and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."*

Mark 8:38 (NKJV)

*For I am not **ashamed of the gospel of Christ**, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.*

Romans 1:16 (NKJV)

*Therefore do not be **ashamed of the testimony of our Lord**, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God,*

2 Timothy 1:8 (NKJV)

*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not **need to be ashamed**, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

2 Timothy 2:15 (NKJV)

*Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, **let him not be ashamed**, but let him glorify God in this matter.*

1 Peter 4:16 (NKJV)

We should be able to take a stand for Christ and not feel somehow ashamed for doing it. We need to be able to share our love for Christ in public with other believers.

The curtain comes down on this act as it has in the previous ones. The bride speaks...

***HIS LEFT ARM IS UNDER MY HEAD AND HIS RIGHT ARM EMBRACES ME.
DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM, I CHARGE YOU: DO NOT AROUSE OR AWAKEN
LOVE UNTIL IT SO DESIRES.***

Verses 4

ACT 6

SCENE 1 : 8:5-7

The act begins with the Chorus asking a question.

WHO IS THIS COMING UP FROM THE DESERT LEANING ON HER LOVER?

Verse 5a

The Bride speaks

UNDER THE APPLE TREE I ROUSED YOU; THERE YOUR MOTHER CONCEIVED YOU, THERE SHE WHO WAS IN LABOR GAVE YOU BIRTH. PLACE ME LIKE A SEAL OVER YOUR HEART, LIKE A SEAL ON YOUR ARM; FOR LOVE IS AS STRONG AS DEATH, ITS JEALOUSY UNYIELDING AS THE GRAVE. IT BURNS LIKE BLAZING FIRE, LIKE A MIGHTY FLAME. MANY WATERS CANNOT QUENCH LOVE; RIVERS CANNOT WASH IT AWAY. IF ONE WERE TO GIVE ALL THE WEALTH OF HIS HOUSE FOR LOVE, IT WOULD BE UTTERLY SCORNE.

Verses 5b-7

She begins by rousing her beloved under the apple tree. Spurgeon preached,

I raised thee up under the apple tree: there thy mother brought thee forth; there she brought thee forth that bare thee. Oh! that the believer would never be content with having drops and sips of love, but long for the full feast. O my soul thirsteth to drink deep of that cup which never can be drained and to eat of all the dainties of that table which boundless love has furnished. I am persuaded that you and I are content to live on pence when we might live on pounds; that we eat dry crusts when we might taste the ambrosial meat of angels, that we are content to wear rags when we might put on kings' robes; that we go out with tears upon our faces when we might anoint them with fresh oil. Satisfied I am that many a believer lives in the cottage of doubt when he might live in the mansion of faith. We are poor starveling things when we might be fed; we are weak when we might be mighty, feeble when we might be as the giants before God, and all because we will not hear the Master say, "Rise up my love, my fair one, and come away."

SPURGEON, Sermon #0436 - A Sermon For Spring, 2/23/1862

As far as the apple tree is concerned, BKC has,

The apple tree was sometimes used as a symbol of love and romance in the ancient world. The image here recalls the beginning of their love. The beloved roused (better, "awakened") her lover to love. The "awakening" is a metaphor for new life or rather a new way of perceiving life, which her love had brought to him. Much as he was the product of his parents' love and was brought into the world

by physical birth, the lover had now received a second “birth” or “awakening” through the love of his beloved.

BKC, Song of Songs 8:5b

Unger defines the apple and the tree as follows:

Apple. The Heb. word tappûah for apple is nearly the same as the Arab. tuffâh; and wherever the name of the tree has been preserved in the name of a place, as in Beth Tappuah, the Arab. has preserved it in the modified form, in this tuffâh, showing that the reference to the familiar fruit is recognized. The apple is a favorite fruit of the natives of this land; and although they do not now possess any very fine varieties, they are particularly fond of the smell of an apple (Song 7:8). They habitually smell an apple to revive themselves when faint (Song 2:5). Most of the apples cultivated here are sweet (Song 2:3). The allusions to the size of the apple tree (Song 2:3; Song 8:5) are borne out by fact. There is no need, then, to seek for any other tree, as some have done, to meet the Scripture requirements.

UNGER, apple

When the Bride sees Solomon, she makes a request of him. Namely that he place her like a seal over his heart and on his arm. We must go to the Hebrew to comprehend what she is really asking him.

The Hebrew verb **ghahtham** means to seal, but the verb isn't used here. The related noun, **ghotthahm** is used. It refers to that which is used to make a seal, a signet ring.

There is the story of Judah and Tamar in which we read. . .

He said, "What pledge should I give you?" "Your seal and its cord, and the staff in your hand," she answered. So he gave them to her and slept with her, and she became pregnant by him.

Genesis 38:18

. . .in which Judah tried very hard to get his signet ring back. Then there is the account of Jezebel in which she cheated a man. . .

So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, placed his seal on them, and sent them to the elders and nobles who lived in Naboth's city with him.

1 Kings 21:8

More important, we have the following two passages:

"As surely as I live," declares the Lord, "even if you, Jehoiachin son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, were a signet ring on my right hand, I would still pull you off.

Jeremiah 22:24

"On that day," declares the Lord Almighty, "I will take you, my servant Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel," declares the Lord, "and I will make you like my signet ring, for I have chosen you," declares the Lord Almighty."

Haggai 2:23

A man's signet ring was a part of him. He would never let go of it (except for Judah in desperation). If one had a man's signet ring, he (or she) had his power. This was the case with Jezebel in the above passage.

The Bride wants to be so close to Solomon that she is part of him. She is his signet ring, placed on his heart and arms. One has to understand this figuratively, of course, since the ring was worn on the finger.

But, this is what God provides for you and I as Christians. We should appreciate this as much as the Bride would when Solomon responded to her request. We have the promise given us in many places.

Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval."

John 6:27

Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

2 Corinthians 1:21-22

And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit...

Ephesians 1:13

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Ephesians 4:30

Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: "The Lord knows those

who are his," and, "Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness."

2 Timothy 2:19

We are not the only ones who will be sealed. During the Great Tribulation there will be those of Israel who will be sealed. . .

Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea: "Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God." Then I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel.

Revelation 7:2-4

She concludes with words which sound something like what we read in 1 Corinthians 13. In the last part of verse 6 and in verse 7 she describes love as the strongest thing on earth. Compare the following:

Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm; for love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame. Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot wash it away. If one were to give all the wealth of his house for love, it would be utterly scorned.

with...

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.

1 Corinthians 13:8

and

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 13:13

SCENE 2 : 8:8 - 8:14

The curtain now opens on the home of the Bride, back in Lebanon. The chorus asks another question.

The Brother's Concern : 8-9

WE HAVE A YOUNG SISTER, AND HER BREASTS ARE NOT YET GROWN. WHAT SHALL WE DO FOR OUR SISTER FOR THE DAY SHE IS SPOKEN FOR?

Once again, we get to a rather sensitive passage in this book. It concerns a sister. Whose sister? We may presume that she is the Bride's sister (although it is not necessary, the translators of the Amplified Bible have assumed it to be a description of the Bride when she was younger). The sister is described as being:

1) young (NIV, LB) or 2) little (KJV, NKJV, NAS, RSV, AB)

Little is the literal rendering of the Hebrew, but "little" in what sense? The sense here is that she is a "little girl", she has not grown up yet. Then, to this is added,

2) her breast have not grown (NIV)
 she has no breasts (KJV, NKJV, NAS, RSV, AB)
 too young for breasts (LB)

Again, most of the translations are literal, the NIV explains why she had none. The big question is, then, what will we do as she grows up and does mature?

At this point in the book, we have a new chorus, one made up of the "sisters" brothers. They answer the question posed.

IF SHE IS A WALL, WE WILL BUILD TOWERS OF SILVER ON HER. IF SHE IS A DOOR, WE WILL ENCLOSE HER WITH PANELS OF CEDAR.

To understand the question, one must understand the difference between a wall and a door.

"Listen to another parable: There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey.

Matthew 21:33

A wall is something meant to keep people out. The landowner wanted to keep people out of his vineyard. On the other hand...

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.
Matthew 7:7-8

"But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut. "Later the others also came. 'Sir! Sir!' they said. 'Open the door for us!'"

Matthew 25:10-11

but Peter had to wait outside at the door. The other disciple, who was known to the high priest, came back, spoke to the girl on duty there and brought Peter in.

John 18:16

On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.

Acts 14:27

because a great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me.

1 Corinthians 16:9

I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.

Revelation 3:8

Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.

Revelation 3:20

Doors are always things which are provided to let people in. Walls keep people out. When it comes to the little sister, as she grows and matures, she may grow into a wall - she will be chaste and will not let men take advantage of her. She will wait until God's man comes along. On the other hand, as she grows, she may become an open door for all of the men in the community. She will be one or the other.

If she is the former, she is to be praised, "we will build towers of silver on her". We will build her up and praise her for her purity. If, however, she is the later, they would "enclose her in panels of cedar". In other words, they would "board up the door" to deny access to her. They would protect her from those who would come and take advantage of her.

What do we do with young children. If they are interested in the church and stay away from worldly evils, we should praise and encourage them. If they are not, we must heed the biblical advice regarding the "application of the board of knowledge to the seat of learning" (i.e. spare the rod and spoil the child). Now we will not get into a discussion of whether or not one should use corporal punishment on a child - the point is, that no matter how the correction is applied, it must be applied.

The Bride's comments : 10-12

I AM A WALL, AND MY BREASTS ARE LIKE TOWERS. THUS I HAVE BECOME IN HIS EYES LIKE ONE BRINGING CONTENTMENT. SOLOMON HAD A VINEYARD IN BAAL HAMON; HE LET OUT HIS VINEYARD TO TENANTS. EACH WAS TO BRING FOR ITS FRUIT A THOUSAND SHEKELS OF SILVER. BUT MY OWN VINEYARD IS MINE TO GIVE; THE THOUSAND SHEKELS ARE FOR YOU, O SOLOMON, AND TWO HUNDRED ARE FOR THOSE WHO TEND ITS FRUIT.

The Bride comments that she is a wall - she behaved herself as she grew up. For some girls that is no problem, but it could have been for her because, as she says, "my breasts are like towers". She was the choice pick of the whole area. But she remained pure. She waited for God's man to come along.

She has saved herself for her man, for Solomon. But what of the rest of the statement? Solomon had many who worked in his vineyard and they were to repay him with a certain amount of money. Solomon had 699 other wives and 300 concubines and each one was a "vineyard" as we have noted typically before. It was expected that each repay Solomon with the fruit of their labors. This Bride was no exception but for one thing. She had her own vineyard - in other words, there was no reason, other than love, that she had to work the vineyard. But she still gave to Solomon his due. Not only that, but she gave for those who watched over her vineyard, the "keepers of the flock" you might say. She provided for those who aided her in her relationship with Solomon.

Each of us has a vineyard to work for God. We are to repay God for its fruit. We are to repay those who work to help us in our relationship to God.

The book closes with an exchange between the Bride and Solomon.

The Final Exchange

YOU WHO DWELL IN THE GARDENS WITH FRIENDS IN ATTENDANCE, LET ME HEAR YOUR VOICE!

Solomon wants to hear her voice. God, too, wants to hear our voices - regularly - in prayer.

COME AWAY, MY LOVER, AND BE LIKE A GAZELLE OR LIKE A YOUNG STAG

ON THE SPICE-LADEN MOUNTAINS.

As the Bride responds, the curtain falls on the final act. It closes with the Brides words of praise and compassion to her beloved.

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1 MACCABES

BKC Bible Knowledge Commentary

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CLARKE Adam Clarke is best known as the most famous commentator ever produced by the Methodist Church. Clarke labored over 40 years to produce his most significant contribution to the church his Complete Commentary on the Whole Bible. This rich, verse-by-verse expository is not only based on a deep knowledge of scripture, but is also greatly affected by sanctification doctrines of American Methodists and holiness groups.

Originally published in 1825, as a complete and unabridged eight-volume set. For over 150 years, this commentary is still one of the most used and most trusted commentaries used by both by Armenians and Calvinists alike, this standard in Biblical scholarship transcends theological barriers and differences. Only Matthew Henry's Complete Commentary on the

Whole Bible has sold my copies than Clarke's commentary.

JFB Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary

This is the one volume edition of one of the most highly regarded and popular commentaries. First published in 1864, it is a testament to its enduring reputation of being trustworthy, conservative, devout, and practical that it has been in print continuously since then. It covers every chapter in the Bible with a marvelous balance of learning and evangelical devotion, and is suitable for lay people as well as pastors and students

K&D Keil & Delitzsch's Commentary on the Hebrew Old Testament

McGEE This acclaimed Commentary by Dr. J. Vernon McGee has been heard by millions on his "Thru the Bible" radio program, and has been translated into many languages. Dr. McGee uniquely presents the teachings of the Bible in a simple, scholarly way that is inspired yet practical and eminently understandable. The simplicity of his approach and the scope of his work is unique in this generation. Bible truths come alive through the relaxed sincerity of his comments and anecdotes.

NAC New American Commentary

OXFORD English Dictionary

SPURGEON Charles H Spurgeon's Collected Sermones (3500+ Sermons) in 37 volumes

TWOT Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament,

This extensive work (frequently referred to by the abbreviation TWOT) was written by 46 Old Testament scholars, and contains over 1,400 articles of theologically significant words and 400 definitions of other words. The articles focus on theological meanings, and are brief and non-technical. Each article includes an extensive bibliography. First published in 1980. In Bible Explorer, every TWOT number is cross-referenced to the appropriate Strong's number, making finding a TWOT definition easy and fast.

UNGER Unger's Bible Dictionary

Scriptures not noted as NKJV, NASB, etc, are from the NIV.