

Song of Solomon 2:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.

Analysis

The bride speaks: 'I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.' This verse employs botanical imagery to describe the bride's beauty and character. The 'rose of Sharon' (Hebrew 'chavatzeleth hasharon,' חבצלת השרון) likely refers to a crocus or meadow saffron that bloomed abundantly in the fertile Sharon plain along Israel's Mediterranean coast. The 'lily of the valleys' (shoshannat ha'amaqim, שושנת האמים) designates a beautiful flower growing in lowland areas. Some interpret this as humble self-assessment—the bride comparing herself to common wildflowers rather than exotic, rare blossoms. However, the parallelism with the bridegroom's lavish praise (1:15) suggests the bride is acknowledging her beauty while maintaining humility. She is genuinely lovely ('rose,' 'lily') yet unpretentious ('of Sharon,' 'of the valleys')—beautiful but accessible, not proud or haughty. The church fathers traditionally applied this to Christ Himself—the Rose of Sharon representing His beauty, purity, and the fragrance of His character. Christ is both transcendently glorious and humbly approachable, 'lowly in heart' (Matthew 11:29) yet the 'fairest of ten thousand' (Song 5:10).

Historical Context

The Sharon plain was renowned for its fertility and abundant wildflowers, stretching some 50 miles along Israel's coast. Valleys produced lush vegetation due to water runoff from surrounding hills. Ancient Israelites would have recognized these flowers as common yet beautiful—not rare orchids but accessible natural beauty. The imagery celebrates beauty found in creation's everyday gifts rather than exotic luxuries. Early church interpretation (Origen, Ambrose)

identified Christ as the Rose of Sharon—beautiful, fragrant, bringing joy to all who encounter Him. Medieval hymnody ('Jesus, Rose of Sharon') reinforced this Christological reading. The Puritans applied this to believers: genuinely beautiful through union with Christ yet humble, recognizing beauty as divine gift rather than personal achievement. Modern readers can appreciate both the literal celebration of accessible, natural beauty and the typological anticipation of Christ's approachable magnificence—glorious yet welcoming to sinners.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does the imagery of common yet beautiful wildflowers inform your understanding of true beauty—genuine loveliness combined with humility and accessibility?
2. In what ways does Christ exemplify being both the 'Rose of Sharon'—supremely beautiful—and approachable to the broken and needy?

Interlinear Text

פָעָמִים: שׂוֹשָׁנָה תְּ הַשָּׁר וְ לָתְאַנִּי
I am the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys

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Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 57:15: For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

Hosea 14:5: I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon.

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

Psalms 85:11: Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven.

Song of Solomon 6:3: I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine: he feedeth among the lilies.

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