

Song of Solomon 2:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.

Analysis

The bride declares, 'As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.' The comparison elevates the beloved above all others—as an apple tree (bearing fruit, providing shade) stands out among forest trees (non-fruit-bearing), so the beloved surpasses all competitors. The imagery emphasizes both protection ('shadow') and provision ('fruit'). The bride finds refuge, rest, and refreshment in her beloved's presence. The Hebrew 'chimmadti' (חִמַּדְתִּי, I delighted) expresses intense desire and pleasure. The 'sweet' fruit suggests satisfying nourishment and delight. This verse teaches that covenant love provides security, refreshment, and deep satisfaction—not fleeting pleasure but enduring fulfillment. Theologically, this prefigures the believer's rest and satisfaction in Christ. Jesus is the true source of shade (protection, Isaiah 25:4) and fruit (nourishment, John 15:5). Believers find 'great delight' in sitting under His authority, receiving His provision, and tasting His goodness (Psalm 34:8; 1 Peter 2:3).

Historical Context

Apple trees (or possibly apricots—Hebrew 'tappuach' identification is debated) were cultivated in ancient Israel and prized for their fruit and shade. Most forest trees in Palestine were non-fruit-bearing (oaks, terebinths), making fruit trees especially valuable. The image of sitting in a tree's shade was common in hot

climates—providing rest from labor and scorching sun. Ancient Near Eastern poetry employed similar metaphors, but Israel's covenant theology transformed them: protection and provision come ultimately from YHWH. Jesus used agricultural imagery extensively: 'I am the vine' (John 15:5), 'Come unto me... and I will give you rest' (Matthew 11:28). Early church fathers saw the apple tree as Christ—unique among humanity, offering salvation's fruit and sheltering protection. The Puritans emphasized that believers should actively 'sit down' in Christ's presence through means of grace—Scripture, prayer, sacraments—tasting His sweetness and finding rest for weary souls.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What does it mean practically to 'sit down under His shadow with great delight'—finding rest, protection, and refreshment in Christ's presence?
2. How have you tasted that the Lord's 'fruit is sweet'—experiencing the satisfying nourishment of relationship with Christ?

Interlinear Text

כַּתֵּפֶת וּמַ	בְּאֵץ־	הַיּוֹרֵד	כִּי־	דָּוִד	בְּיַ
As the apple tree	among the trees	of the wood	H3651	so is my beloved	H996
H8598	H6086	H3293		H1730	
בְּבָנָי	בְּצַלְוָן	חַמְדָתִי	וַיַּשְׁבַּתִּי	וַיַּפְרַעַת	
among the sons	down under his shadow	with great delight	I sat	and his fruit	
H1121	H6738	H2530	H3427	H6529	
מַתְּאֵךְ	לְחַפֵּן				
was sweet	to my taste				
H4966	H2441				

Additional Cross-References

Song of Solomon 8:5: Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved? I raised thee up under the apple tree: there thy mother brought thee forth: there she brought thee forth that bare thee.

Isaiah 25:4: For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.

Isaiah 32:2: And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.