

Song of Solomon 2:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.

Analysis

The bride continues: 'He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.' The 'banqueting house' (Hebrew 'beth hayayin,' בֵּית הַיַּיִן, literally 'house of wine') suggests a place of celebration, abundance, and joy—perhaps a vineyard house or feast hall. The beloved actively 'brought' the bride there—initiating, providing, hosting. The second phrase employs military imagery: 'his banner over me was love.' Banners (Hebrew 'degel,' דֶּגֶל) were military standards or flags identifying troops, rallying soldiers, and signifying protection. To be under someone's banner meant you belonged to them and enjoyed their defense. But this banner isn't war or conquest—it's love (ahavah, אַהֲבָה). The beloved publicly declares his love, protection, and commitment to the bride. She is secure under his standard, identified as belonging to him. This verse celebrates love that both delights (banqueting) and protects (banner). Theologically, Christ brings believers to His feast (Luke 14:16-23; Revelation 19:9) and covers them with the banner of His covenant love (Psalm 91:4; Ephesians 1:4).

Historical Context

Banquets in ancient Israel marked significant celebrations—weddings, festivals, covenant meals. Wine symbolized joy and divine blessing (Psalm 104:15; Isaiah 25:6). The beloved providing such celebration demonstrates generosity, provision, and desire to honor the bride. Military banners (flags, standards) rallied troops and identified affiliations—seeing one's banner meant safety, seeing the enemy's meant danger. Ancient Near Eastern warfare prominently featured banners,

making this imagery vivid and powerful. The combination of feasting and military protection creates a comprehensive picture: the beloved both celebrates with and protects his bride. Early church tradition saw the banqueting house as the Lord's Table (Eucharist), where Christ hosts His Church in intimate fellowship. The banner of love became a powerful image in Christian hymnody ('Lift high the cross,' 'The banner of Christ'). The Puritans emphasized that believers feast on Christ through Word and sacrament, finding both nourishment and the security of His covenant promises.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does Christ 'bring you to the banqueting house'—inviting you to feast on His goodness, celebrate in His presence, and experience abundant joy?
2. What does it mean to live under the 'banner' of Christ's love—publicly identified as His, secure in His covenant protection, rallying to His standard?

Interlinear Text

הֵבִיֵּא נִי	אֶל	בֵּית	הַיַּיִן	וְדָגְלִי	עָלַי
He brought	H413	house	me to the banqueting	and his banner	H5921
H935		H1004	H3196	H1714	
אֶהְיֶה:					
over me was love					
H160					

Additional Cross-References

Song of Solomon 1:4: Draw me, we will run after thee: the king hath brought me into his chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine: the upright love thee.

Revelation 3:20: Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

Isaiah 11:10: And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.

Psalms 84:10: For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.

Song of Solomon 6:4: Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners.

Psalms 60:4: Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth. Selah.

Psalms 20:5: We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners: the LORD fulfil all thy petitions.

Song of Solomon 1:1: The song of songs, which is Solomon's.

Esther 7:7: And the king arising from the banquet of wine in his wrath went into the palace garden: and Haman stood up to make request for his life to Esther the queen; for he saw that there was evil determined against him by the king.

Song of Solomon 5:1: I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.