

Song of Solomon 3:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?

Analysis

The scene dramatically shifts: **Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?** The question 'Who is this' (mi-zot, מִי־זֹאת) expresses wonder at a spectacular procession. **Cometh out of the wilderness** (olah min-hamidbar, עָלָה מִן־הַמִּדְבָּר) pictures ascending from desert toward Jerusalem (going 'up' to the holy city). **Like pillars of smoke** (ketimarot ashan, כֶּתִימָרוֹת אֶשֶׁן) suggests rising clouds of incense or dust. **Perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant** (mequtteret mor ulevonah mikol avqat rokhel, מֶקֶטֶרֶת מֹר וּלְבוֹנָה מִכָּל אַבְקַת רוּכֵל) describes aromatic spices creating fragrant cloud.

This elaborate procession celebrates the bridegroom (King Solomon, verse 7) coming for his bride with royal splendor. The wilderness-to-Jerusalem journey, fragrant spices, and public spectacle mark significant moment—likely wedding procession. The imagery combines humble origin (wilderness) with glorious arrival (perfumed, spectacular). Spiritually, this prefigures Christ's procession—He came 'from the wilderness' of humble incarnation, yet His arrival brought fragrant offering to God (Ephesians 5:2). The Church will ultimately be presented to Christ in glorious procession (Revelation 19:7-9).

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern wedding processions were public, festive spectacles. The bridegroom would process to collect his bride with attendants, music, and celebration. Incense and perfumes created fragrant atmosphere and signaled importance. Myrrh (mor, מֹר) and frankincense (levonah, לְבוֹנָה) were precious imports used in temple worship (Exodus 30:23, 34) and royal ceremonies. 'Powders of the merchant' (avqat rokheḥ, אַבְקַת רוֹכֵחַ) indicates expensive imported spices from traveling traders. The 'wilderness' likely refers to the Judean wilderness east of Jerusalem—processions 'ascending' from lower elevations to the elevated city. Early church fathers saw Christ's incarnation as coming 'from wilderness' (humble origins) yet bringing fragrant offering to God. The pillars of smoke prefigure the pillar of cloud leading Israel (Exodus 13:21). Modern readers see both wedding celebration and Christ's glorious return for His bride.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does Christ 'come from the wilderness' in your life—entering difficult, barren places to bring His fragrant presence and glory?
2. What does it mean to live in anticipation of Christ's final 'procession'—His glorious return for His Church?

Interlinear Text

זֶה אֵת מִי	עֹלָה	מִן	הַמִּדְבָּר	כְּתִימֵי וֵת
H4310	H2063	H4480	H4057	H8490
	Who is this that cometh	out of the wilderness	like pillars	
	H5927			
עָשָׂן	מְקֻטָּרֵת	מֵר	וּלְבוֹנָה	מִכָּל ל
H6227	H6999	H4753	H3828	H3605
of smoke	perfumed	with myrrh	and frankincense	with all powders
				H81
רוֹכֵל:				
of the merchant				
H7402				

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.

Song of Solomon 4:6: Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense.

Song of Solomon 1:13: A bundle of myrrh is my wellbeloved unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts.

Revelation 12:6: And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

Revelation 12:14: And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

Isaiah 43:19: Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.

Jeremiah 31:2: Thus saith the LORD, The people which were left of the sword found grace in the wilderness; even Israel, when I went to cause him to rest.

Jeremiah 2:2: Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD; I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown.

Deuteronomy 8:2: And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.

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

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