

Song of Solomon 4:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck.

Analysis

Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck. The Hebrew libbabhtini (לִבְבַחְתִּי, "thou hast ravished my heart") comes from lev (לב, heart) in intensive verbal form—literally "you have hearted me" or "you have given me heart/courage." The KJV's "ravished" captures the sense of being overwhelmed, captivated, or stolen away by love. The doubling of the phrase emphasizes the totality of his captivation.

The dual address **my sister, my spouse** (achoti kallah, אַחֹתִי כָלָה) combines intimacy and covenant. "Sister" expresses familial closeness, equality, and mutual belonging; "spouse" denotes covenant marriage relationship. Together they present ideal companionate marriage: both passionate and fraternal, both romantic and deeply bonded. This language appears six times in the Song (4:9, 10, 12; 5:1, 2), emphasizing the comprehensive nature of covenant love.

The specific causes of ravishment—**with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck**—demonstrate that love is awakened by particularity, not generic beauty. A single glance, a single ornament suffices to captivate completely. The Hebrew be-echad me-eynayikh ("with one of your eyes") and be-anaq echad ("with one chain") suggest that even partial revelation of the beloved's beauty overwhelms. Typologically, this points to how glimpses of Christ's glory—whether in Scripture,

creation, or spiritual experience—ravish believers' hearts, creating holy affection that surpasses all earthly loves (Psalm 27:4; Philippians 3:8).

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern jewelry and adornment held significant cultural meaning. Chains or necklaces marked status, wealth, and beauty. The Song's frequent references to jewelry (1:10-11; 4:9; 7:1) celebrate legitimate adornment within covenant relationship, contrasting with the prohibitions against seductive adornment meant to entice outside marriage (Proverbs 7:10; 1 Timothy 2:9-10).

The "sister-spouse" language appears in ancient Egyptian love poetry where familial terms expressed intimacy without implying incest. In Israelite culture, where marriages were often arranged and romantic love developed within covenant, the combination of passionate desire ("ravished my heart") with familial bond ("my sister") presented ideal marriage as both eros and philia—passionate love and deep friendship.

Church fathers saw this verse as describing Christ's response to the Church's devotion. A single act of faithfulness, a single prayer, a single sacrifice captures His attention and delight. Puritan commentators emphasized that Christ is not a distant, unmoved deity but is genuinely affected by His people's love and faithfulness. The verse assures believers that their small acts of devotion—"one of thine eyes"—matter immensely to Christ and bring Him joy.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does the combination of 'sister' and 'spouse' inform your understanding of what covenant marriage should encompass—both passion and deep friendship?
2. What 'one glance' or small act of devotion might you offer Christ today, knowing that even partial expressions of love captivate His heart?
3. In what ways does recognizing that God is genuinely moved and delighted by our love challenge mechanistic or merely dutiful religion?

Interlinear Text

לִבְבִּתִּי		אָחוֹתִי		כָּל הַ	לִבְבִּתִּי
Thou hast ravished my heart		my sister		my spouse	Thou hast ravished my heart
H3823		H269		H3618	H3823
בְּאַחַד	מַעֲיֵנַי יְיָ	בְּאַחַד	עַנְךָ	מִצְרְנֶיךָ	
with one	of thine eyes	with one	chain	of thy neck	
H259	H5869	H259	H6060	H6677	

Additional Cross-References

Song of Solomon 4:12: A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.

2 Corinthians 11:2: For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

Song of Solomon 7:10: I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me.

Revelation 21:2: And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Isaiah 62:5: For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.

Isaiah 54:5: For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.

Psalms 45:9: Kings' daughters were among thy honourable women: upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir.

John 3:29: He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.

Ezekiel 16:8: Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine.

Zephaniah 3:17: The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.