

Song of Solomon 5:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.

Analysis

The bride recounts another experience of separation: 'I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.' The paradox 'I sleep, but my heart waketh' describes a state between sleeping and waking—perhaps literal light sleep with awareness, or metaphorically spiritual dullness despite underlying responsiveness. The beloved arrives at night, knocking and calling. His fourfold address—'my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled'—employs covenant terms expressing affection, commitment, and cherishing. The plea 'open to me' requests entrance and intimacy. His explanation 'my head is filled with dew' indicates he's been waiting outside in the night air, exposed to damp night conditions. This creates tension: will the bride respond immediately to her beloved's call, or will comfort and convenience delay her? The verse portrays the beloved's persistent pursuit despite discomfort and the bride's need to respond promptly to his invitation. Spiritually, this represents Christ's knock at the heart's door (Revelation 3:20) and the danger of spiritual lethargy delaying response.

Historical Context

Ancient Palestinian homes had simple doors, often bolted from inside for security. Nighttime arrivals required awakening the household—a potential inconvenience. Night dew in Israel could be heavy, soaking exposed hair and clothing. The beloved's discomfort waiting outside highlights his determination and longing. The Song creates dramatic tension: will love overcome convenience? Will the bride promptly respond or delay? This scenario would resonate with original readers familiar with nighttime arrivals and the decision to open doors quickly or delay. Early church fathers saw this as Christ seeking entrance to the believer's heart. Augustine warned against spiritual complacency that delays responding to Christ's call. The Reformers emphasized promptly answering God's summons—not presuming upon grace by delaying obedience. The image of Christ knocking and waiting (Revelation 3:20) powerfully echoes this passage. Modern readers recognize both relational dynamics (how we respond to loved ones' needs) and spiritual applications (responding promptly to God's voice rather than delaying in comfortable complacency).

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. Are there areas where you 'sleep' (spiritual lethargy, comfortable complacency) despite your 'heart waketh' (underlying love and awareness of Christ's presence)?
2. How do you respond when Christ 'knocks'—through His Word, circumstances, or conviction—seeking greater intimacy and obedience? Do you respond immediately or delay?

Interlinear Text

אֲנִי יֵשְׁנָה	וְלִבִּי יִרְעַר	קוֹלִי הוֹדִיעַ	דּוֹפֵק		
H589	I sleep	but my heart	waketh	it is the voice	of my beloved that knocketh
	H3463	H3820	H5782	H6963	H1730 H1849
פֶּתַחִי	לִי יֵאָחֵז	רַעֲיָתִי	יוֹנָתָן	תִּמְתָּה	שָׂרָאֲשִׁי
saying Open	H0	to me my sister	my love	my dove	my undefiled for my head
H6605		H269	H7474	H3123	H8535 H7218
נִמְלֵא	טָל	קְצוֹתַי	רֶסֶס יָסִי	לַיְלָה:	
is filled	with dew	and my locks	with the drops	of the night	
H4390	H2919	H6977	H7447	H3915	

Additional Cross-References

Song of Solomon 2:14: O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.

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.

Song of Solomon 6:9: My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her. The daughters saw her, and blessed her; yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her.

Zechariah 4:1: And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep,