

Song of Solomon 5:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me.

Analysis

The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me (metsauni hashomrim hasovevim bair hikuni petsauni, מִצְאָנִי הַשְׁמַרִים הַסּוּבִים בַּאֲרָבָה הַכּוֹנִי פְּצַעֲוִנִי—*the bride, searching desperately for her beloved through the city, encounters hostile watchmen. Those who should protect her instead abuse her. The verbs hikuni (they struck me) and petsauni (they wounded me) describe physical violence.*

The keepers of the walls took away my veil from me (nas'u et redidi me'alay shomrey hachamot, שְׁמַרְיָה הַחֲמֹת—*removing the veil brought public shame and vulnerability. This painful episode teaches that passionate pursuit of the Beloved sometimes brings misunderstanding, opposition, and suffering. Religious authorities ("watchmen") sometimes wound genuine seekers. Zealous pursuit of Christ may bring persecution even from religious people.*

Historical Context

City watchmen patrolled at night, protecting citizens and maintaining order. A lone woman wandering at night would be suspected of prostitution or illicit activity, explaining the watchmen's hostility. The bride's legitimate seeking was misunderstood as shameful behavior. Removing her veil compounded the shame—exposing her publicly, treating her as immoral. This same hostile treatment appears earlier (3:3) but with less violence. Early church fathers saw this as

believers suffering persecution from religious authorities—synagogue leaders opposing early Christians, or institutional church persecuting reformers. The "watchmen" who should protect God's people sometimes wound them. The Reformers experienced this literally—Catholic authorities persecuting Protestant reformers. The Puritans knew that passionate pursuit of God sometimes brings opposition from nominal Christians or dead religion. Modern readers recognize that zealous faith often faces criticism from cultural Christianity.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. When have "watchmen"—religious authorities or nominal Christians—misunderstood or opposed your passionate pursuit of deeper fellowship with Christ?
2. How should believers respond when legitimate spiritual seeking brings misunderstanding, opposition, or suffering?
3. What does this verse teach about the potential cost of desperate, public pursuit of Christ—and is He worth that cost?

Interlinear Text

הַכְּ וַיְיָ בְּעֵ יָרְ הַסְּבָב יָמְ שְׁמָר יָמְ מִצְאָתְנִ
found The watchmen that went about the city me they smote
H4672 H8104 H5437 H5892 H5221

בְּחַמּוֹתְנִ שְׁמָר יָמְ מִלְעָלְיָהְנִ שְׁמָר יָמְ פָּאָע וַיְיָ
me they wounded took away my veil The watchmen of the walls
H6481 H5375 H853 H7289 H5921 H8104 H2346

Additional Cross-References

Song of Solomon 3:3: The watchmen that go about the city found me: to whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?

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