

Song of Solomon 6:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?

Analysis

Others ask about the bride: 'Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?' The verse employs escalating cosmic imagery: 'morning' (shachar, שָׁחָר) suggests dawn's first light; 'fair as the moon' (yaphah khalevanah, יָפָה כְּלֵבָנָה) indicates reflected beauty; 'clear as the sun' (barah kachamah, בָּרָה כְּחָמָה) describes brilliant radiance; 'terrible as an army with banners' (ayummah kanidgalot, אַיִלָּה כְּנִידְגָּלוֹת) suggests awesome, overwhelming power. The progression moves from gentle beauty to overwhelming glory. This verse celebrates the bride's comprehensive excellence—she is beautiful, radiant, and formidable. The combination of attractiveness and strength models complete femininity. Church fathers saw the Church as both beautiful (adorned in Christ's righteousness) and terrible (victorious over Satan and sin through Christ's triumph).

Historical Context

Ancient peoples marveled at celestial beauty—dawn's gentle light, moon's soft radiance, sun's blazing glory. Military imagery ('terrible as an army with banners') adds unexpected dimension: the beautiful bride also possesses awesome strength. This combination challenged ancient stereotypes limiting women to weakness. The Church's application emphasizes that Christ's bride is both lovely and victorious—beautiful in holiness yet triumphant in spiritual warfare. The Reformers saw the Church as simul pulchra et bellicosa—simultaneously beautiful and militant. Puritan poets celebrated this: the Church adorns herself as bride while battling as

warrior. Modern readers recover biblical femininity's fullness—combining beauty, strength, grace, and courage rather than settling for one-dimensional caricatures.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does this verse challenge reductionist views of femininity that emphasize either beauty or strength but not both?
2. In what ways is the Church meant to be both 'fair as the moon' (attractive, beautiful) and 'terrible as an army' (formidable, victorious)?

Interlinear Text

מִ	תִּ	אַתְּ	תִּ	כִּי	בְּנֵשֶׁקֶת	הַ	כָּתוֹ	שְׁמֵרָה	נִפְתָּחָה
H4310	H2063				Who is she that looketh forth	H8259	H3644	as the morning	fair
								H7837	H3303
כָּלְבָתְּ	הַ	כָּרְבָּהְ	כָּפָתְּ	הַ	אִימְתָּהְ	כְּפָדְגָלָותְּ			
as the moon		clear	as the sun		and terrible	as an army with banners			
H3842		H1249	H2535		H366			H1713	

Additional Cross-References

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

Job 31:26: If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness;

Revelation 10:1: And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire:

Revelation 22:5: And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

Isaiah 58:8: Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy rereward.

Ephesians 5:27: That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Matthew 17:2: And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

2 Samuel 23:4: And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain.

Song of Solomon 3:6: Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?