

Song of Solomon 6:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem,
terrible as an army with banners.

Analysis

The bridegroom declares: **Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem.** Tirzah (תִּרְצָה) was an early northern capital of Israel (1 Kings 14:17), whose name means 'delight' or 'pleasantness.' Jerusalem (יְרוּשָׁלַיִם) was the royal city, the place of God's temple and presence. Comparing the bride to these two capital cities emphasizes both her beauty and her significance—she's not merely attractive but majestic, important, chosen. The parallelism elevates her to the status of cities representing God's covenant people.

Terrible as an army with banners (אֶימָה כַּנִּדְגָּלוֹת)—'terrible' here means 'awe-inspiring' or 'formidable.' The beloved isn't merely delicate but powerful. Church tradition saw the Church as beautiful to Christ yet formidable to evil—adorned with grace while advancing in spiritual warfare (Ephesians 6:10-18). This verse balances beauty and strength, gentleness and power—the bride is both lovely and victorious.

Historical Context

Tirzah served as Israel's northern capital before Omri built Samaria (1 Kings 16:23-24). Its beauty was proverbial, hence its name meaning 'delight.' Jerusalem was the eternal capital, site of Solomon's temple, representing God's chosen dwelling place. Ancient armies with banners were impressive, organized, and formidable sights—banners identified tribes and military divisions, creating visual splendor and military might. The imagery combines aesthetic beauty with martial

strength. Early church interpretation saw the Church as both the bride adorned for her husband and the army conquering through Christ. The Puritans emphasized that believers should be both gentle and strong—displaying Christ's beauty while standing firm against evil.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does Christ see His Church as both beautiful and formidable—and how should this shape your self-understanding as a believer?
2. In what ways are you called to combine the gentleness of beauty with the strength of 'an army with banners'?
3. What 'banners' of faith do you carry that make you formidable against spiritual opposition?

Interlinear Text

יָפֵה הַ	אֵתִי	רַעֲיָתִי	כְּתִירָצָה הַ	נָאִי הַ	כִּירוּשָׁלַם	אִמָּה הַ
Thou art beautiful	H859	O my love	as Tirzah	comely	as Jerusalem	terrible
H3303		H7474	H8656	H5000	H3389	H366
כְּבָנִיָּה עִלּוֹת:						
as an army with banners						
H1713						

Additional Cross-References

Song of Solomon 6:10: Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?

Psalms 48:2: Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.

1 Kings 14:17: And Jeroboam's wife arose, and departed, and came to Tirzah: and when she came to the threshold of the door, the child died;

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.

Psalms 50:2: Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.

Lamentations 2:15: All that pass by clap their hands at thee; they hiss and wag their head at the daughter of Jerusalem, saying, Is this the city that men call The perfection of beauty, The joy of the whole earth?

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.

Song of Solomon 4:7: Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee.