

Song of Solomon

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Author: Solomon · Written: c. 965 BC · Category: Wisdom/Poetry

Introduction

The Song of Solomon stands unique among the Scriptures—an extended love poem celebrating the passion between a bridegroom and his bride. Its presence in the canon has puzzled some readers: where is God's name? Where are the laws, the prophecies, the explicit theology? Yet this very book was called by Rabbi Akiva 'the Holy of Holies' among the writings, and the church has treasured it for millennia as profound revelation of both human love rightly ordered and divine love typologically displayed. The Song teaches that passionate desire between husband and wife is not merely permitted but celebrated, a gift of the Creator woven into creation's fabric from the beginning.

The title 'Song of Songs' (שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים, Shir HaShirim) is a Hebrew superlative—the greatest of songs, the supreme song, as 'King of Kings' means the supreme king. Tradition attributes it to Solomon, Israel's king renowned for wisdom and for composing 1,005 songs (1 Kings 4:32). The text names Solomon explicitly (1:1, 5; 3:7, 9, 11; 8:11-12), and the luxuriant imagery—spices, perfumes, imported goods, royal splendor—fits the Solomonic era's prosperity. Whether Solomon composed it for a particular bride or as idealized wisdom poetry, the song reflects his reign's golden age.

The poem unfolds as dialogue between the beloved (the Shulamite bride) and her lover (the royal bridegroom), with occasional interjections from the 'daughters of Jerusalem'—a chorus providing context and heightening dramatic tension. The structure resists neat outlining; like love itself, it moves by association, memory, longing, and consummation rather than linear argument. Scenes shift between countryside and palace, vineyard and bedchamber, seeking and finding. This dreamlike quality has generated diverse interpretations, but the central thread is unmistakable: mutual desire, exclusive devotion, and the consummation of covenant love.

Throughout church history, interpreters have read the Song on multiple levels. The allegorical tradition—dominant from Origen through the Puritans—saw the bridegroom as Christ and the bride as the church or the individual soul. The literal tradition emphasizes the plain sense: a celebration of marital love providing wisdom for human relationships. The Reformed approach holds both together: the literal sense grounds the text (this is genuine love poetry celebrating marriage), while typological significance emerges from the canon's larger witness (marriage itself images Christ and the church, per Ephesians 5). Neither reading should exclude the other. The Song celebrates human marriage precisely because human marriage reflects divine love.

Book Outline

- **Mutual Longing** (1:1-2:7) — The bride and bridegroom express desire; she is brought to his chambers
- **Springtime Pursuit** (2:8-3:5) — He comes leaping on the mountains; she seeks him by night
- **The Wedding Procession** (3:6-5:1) — Solomon's arrival; the wedding night consummated
- **Seeking and Finding** (5:2-6:9) — A troubled dream; the bride describes her beloved; reconciliation
- **The Beauty of the Bride** (6:10-8:4) — The bridegroom praises her; the Shulamite's loveliness
- **The Seal of Love** (8:5-14) — Love strong as death; the vineyard; final invitation

Key Themes

- **The Goodness of Marital Desire:** The Song celebrates sexual desire within marriage as good, beautiful, and God-given. The beloved longs for her bridegroom's kisses; he delights in her body without shame. This corrects both asceticism (which views physical desire as inherently sinful) and licentiousness (which divorces desire from covenant). Passion belongs within the marriage covenant, where it flourishes as God intended from Eden.
- **Exclusive Devotion:** 'I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine' (6:3) captures the Song's ethic of exclusivity. The love celebrated here is not generic or diffuse but particular and jealous. The bride belongs wholly to one bridegroom; he to her alone. This mutual possession within covenant provides the security in which vulnerability and intimacy thrive. The refrain warns against awakening love before its proper time—exclusivity requires patience and commitment.
- **Love Strong as Death:** The Song's theological climax declares love's unconquerable power: 'Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it' (8:6-7). This love—fierce, enduring, and inextinguishable—transcends mere sentiment. It costs everything and cannot be purchased. Such love images the divine love that pursues sinners through death itself.
- **The Beauty of the Beloved:** Both bridegroom and bride lavish praise upon each other's beauty in elaborate 'wasfs' (Arabic: descriptive poems). He catalogs her features—eyes, hair, teeth, lips, neck, breasts—in language both sensuous and symbolic. She describes him with equal ardor. This mutual admiration teaches that covenant love involves seeing and celebrating the beloved's particular beauty, not generic attraction but delighted attention to this one person.
- **Seeking and Finding:** Twice the bride seeks her beloved through the city streets at night (3:1-4; 5:6-8). The tension of absence heightens the joy of presence. Love is not static possession but dynamic pursuit. Even within established covenant, desire must be cultivated, presence must be sought, love must be actively maintained. The seeking heart eventually finds, but the seeking itself is part of love's nature.
- **The Garden Enclosed:** The bridegroom calls his bride 'a garden enclosed, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed' (4:12). This imagery speaks of sexual purity preserved for one's spouse—a garden whose delights are not public but reserved for the rightful owner. When the bride invites, 'Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits' (4:16), consummation occurs within this protected, exclusive

space. The garden imagery recalls Eden, suggesting marriage restores something of paradise.

- **Christ and the Church:** While the Song's literal sense celebrates human marriage, its canonical placement invites typological reading. If marriage images Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:31-32), then the Song's bridegroom images Christ pursuing His bride with passionate, sacrificial, exclusive love. The church is the bride adorned for her husband, sought when she strays, celebrated in her beauty. This reading does not replace the literal sense but crowns it—human marriage points beyond itself to the ultimate marriage.

Key Verses

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine.

— Song of Solomon 1:2

I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys. As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.

— Song of Solomon 2:1-2

My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the lilies.

— Song of Solomon 2:16

Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes.

— Song of Solomon 1:15

A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.

— Song of Solomon 4:12

I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine: he feedeth among the lilies.

— Song of Solomon 6:3

Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it.

— Song of Solomon 8:6-7

Historical Context

The Song of Solomon derives from Israel's united monarchy under Solomon (circa 970-930 BC), a period of unprecedented peace, prosperity, and cultural flourishing. Solomon's reign saw extensive trade relationships, building projects (including the Temple), and literary production. The spices, perfumes, imported woods, and royal luxury pervading the Song reflect this era's wealth. Solomon's legendary wisdom included musical and poetic composition—he authored 1,005 songs and 3,000 proverbs (1 Kings 4:32). Whether this Song was composed for a particular bride among his many wives or represents idealized wisdom poetry, it breathes the Solomonic era's opulence and literary sophistication.

The Song belongs to the wisdom literature tradition alongside Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, also attributed to Solomon. While Proverbs instructs in practical righteousness and Ecclesiastes contemplates life's meaning under the sun, the Song explores love—complementing wisdom's curriculum. Ancient Near Eastern parallels exist (Egyptian love poetry shares similar conventions), but the Song's canonical placement transforms its significance: this is Israel's Scripture, revealing God's design for human love.

Literary Style

The Song is lyric poetry of the highest order—sensuous, symbolic, and sophisticated. Its primary literary device is dialogue: the bride and bridegroom address each other directly, with the daughters of Jerusalem functioning as chorus. Refrains punctuate the poem ('I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem...'), creating structural markers. The 'wasf' (descriptive poem cataloging the beloved's features) appears multiple times, each partner praising the other in elaborate metaphor.

The imagery draws from nature (lilies, gazelles, doves, vineyards, gardens, mountains), royal luxury (chariots, ivory, gold, spices), and military might (towers, shields, armies with banners). This fusion of pastoral and courtly elements creates a world where shepherd and king merge—possibly reflecting Solomon's identity or perhaps the democratization of royal love language for all covenant marriages. The metaphors are evocative rather than photographic; comparing teeth to shorn sheep or neck to the tower of David captures qualities (uniformity, stateliness) rather than visual resemblance.

The Hebrew is among the most difficult in Scripture, containing unique vocabulary and grammatical forms. The Septuagint translators struggled with numerous terms; the KJV occasionally represents interpretive conjecture. This linguistic richness suggests the poet pushed language to its limits, inventing expressions for experiences that transcend common speech.

Theological Significance

The Song of Solomon makes essential contributions to biblical theology. First, it affirms the goodness of creation, including physical desire and bodily beauty. Against Gnostic or ascetic tendencies to spiritualize faith and denigrate the physical, the Song insists that bodies matter, desire is good (rightly ordered), and material creation declares God's glory. The incarnational logic of Christianity—God becoming flesh—finds preparation here: if flesh were inherently evil, why would Scripture celebrate it so lavishly?

Second, the Song provides the Bible's most extended treatment of marital love, complementing Genesis 2's institution of marriage, Proverbs' warnings against adultery, and the prophets' use of marriage as covenant metaphor. Here we see not instruction about marriage but immersion in its experience—longing, delight, consummation, security, admiration. This experiential dimension teaches what no list of duties could convey: what covenant love feels like from within.

Third, the Song anchors the biblical metaphor of God as husband and Israel/church as bride. Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel employ this imagery; Ephesians 5 and Revelation 19-21 consummate it. But metaphors require literal grounding—if we don't understand human marriage, divine marriage language becomes empty abstraction. The Song provides that grounding, so that when Scripture calls Christ the bridegroom, we know what bridegroom love looks like: pursuing, admiring, exclusive, passionate, enduring.

Fourth, the climactic declaration that 'love is strong as death' (8:6) elevates love to cosmic significance. Death is Scripture's great enemy, the last foe to be destroyed. That love matches death's power anticipates the gospel: divine love entered death and emerged victorious. The love that 'many waters cannot quench' points toward a love that many sins, failures, and even death itself cannot defeat—the love of Christ for His bride.

Christ in Song of Solomon

The typological reading of the Song as depicting Christ and the church has deep roots in both Jewish (where the bridegroom represents God and the bride Israel) and Christian interpretation. While respecting the literal sense, several features invite this reading:

The bridegroom seeks his bride with relentless devotion, coming to her even when she is slow to respond (5:2-6). Christ likewise pursues His church, knocking at the door, seeking the lost sheep, leaving the ninety-nine to find the one. His love is not passive but active, not reactive but initiating.

The bridegroom delights in his bride's beauty, declaring her 'all fair' with 'no spot' in her (4:7). Christ presents the church to Himself 'not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish' (Ephesians 5:27). This is not beauty she possessed naturally but beauty His love creates—He sees her as she will be, cleansed by His blood and perfected by His Spirit.

The bride's identity is found in belonging: 'I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine' (6:3). The church's identity is similarly relational—we are Christ's, purchased by His blood, and He is ours, given by the Father. This mutual possession defines Christian existence.

The invitation 'Come into his garden' (4:16) and the response 'I am come into my garden' (5:1) echo Eden's intimacy lost and restored. Christ, the second Adam, restores His bride to paradise. The marriage supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:9) consummates what the Song anticipates.

The love 'strong as death' with flames that 'many waters cannot quench' (8:6-7) finds ultimate expression in Christ's love that passed through death's waters and emerged triumphant. Romans 8:35-39 echoes this: neither death nor life nor any created thing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Relationship to the New Testament

The New Testament does not directly quote the Song of Solomon, yet its theology of marriage pervades apostolic teaching. Ephesians 5:22-33 presents marriage as imaging Christ and the church—husband loving as Christ loved, wife responding as the church responds. This framework makes the Song's bridegroom-bride dynamic a christological text by canonical implication.

Revelation's marriage imagery—'the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready' (19:7)—brings the Song's anticipation to eschatological fulfillment. The bride adorned for her husband (Revelation 21:2) echoes the Shulamite's preparation. The garden-city of the New Jerusalem, with its river of life and tree of life, restores Eden's intimacy on a cosmic scale.

Jesus' self-identification as bridegroom (Matthew 9:15; 25:1-13; John 3:29) claims the role the Song celebrates. The bridegroom's presence brings joy; his absence brings fasting. The wise virgins await his coming; the wedding feast marks history's goal.

Paul's concern that believers not unite with prostitutes—'know ye not that your bodies are members of Christ?' (1 Corinthians 6:15)—assumes the exclusive devotion the Song celebrates. Sexual union creates one-flesh reality; that reality belongs within covenant. The Song's ethic undergirds New Testament sexual ethics.

Practical Application

The Song of Solomon offers wisdom for marriage, singleness, and spiritual life. For married couples, it models several practices: verbal admiration (regularly expressing delight in one's spouse), cultivated desire (not assuming passion maintains itself but actively nurturing it), exclusive devotion (forsaking all others in thought as well as deed), and protected intimacy (creating space—physical, emotional, temporal—for covenant love to flourish).

The refrain 'stir not up, nor awake love, until it please' (2:7; 3:5; 8:4) addresses the unmarried: desire has its proper season. Awakening love prematurely—through pornography, emotional affairs, or physical intimacy outside marriage—distorts what God designed for covenant context. Patience in singleness honors love's proper timing.

The bride's troubled dream of seeking and not finding (5:6-8) speaks to spiritual dryness. Even in established relationship with Christ, believers experience seasons when He seems absent, when seeking yields no immediate finding. The Song counsels persistence—keep seeking, keep knocking, describe your beloved to others (5:9-16), and reunion will come.

The declaration that love cannot be purchased (8:7) challenges transactional approaches to both human and divine relationships. Love is given, not earned. Works cannot buy God's favor; it comes as gift. Manipulation cannot secure a spouse's heart; only genuine love wins genuine love.

Finally, the Song invites meditation on Christ's love for His church. If human bridegrooms should love like this—pursuing, admiring, delighting, sacrificing—how much more does Christ love His bride? Contemplating His 'better than wine' love, His delight in calling us 'all fair,' His fierce jealousy over our hearts, His love stronger than death itself—such meditation transforms both our worship and our human relationships.

Chapter 1

The Bride's Longing for Her Beloved

- 1 The song of songs, which is Solomon's.
 - 2 Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine.
 - 3 Because of the savour of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee.
 - 4 Draw me, we will run after thee: the king hath brought me into his chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine: the upright love thee.
 - 5 I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.
 - 6 Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me: my mother's children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept.
 - 7 Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?
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- 8 If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents.
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Solomon Praises His Beloved

- 9 I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots.
 - 10 Thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels, thy neck with chains of gold.
 - 11 We will make thee borders of gold with studs of silver.
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- 12 While the king sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.
 - 13 A bundle of myrrh is my wellbeloved unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts.
 - 14 My beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of En-gedi.
-
- 15 Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes.
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16 Behold, thou art fair, my beloved, yea, pleasant: also our bed is green.

17 The beams of our house are cedar, and our rafters of fir.

Chapter 2

The Bride and the Bridegroom Rejoice

- 1 I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.
 - 2 As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.
 - 3 As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.
 - 4 He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.
 - 5 Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples: for I am sick of love.
 - 6 His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me.
 - 7 I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please.
-

The Bride Hears Her Beloved

- 8 The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.
 - 9 My beloved is like a roe or a young hart: behold, he standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the windows, shewing himself through the lattice.
 - 10 My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.
 - 11 For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone;
 - 12 The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land;
 - 13 The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.
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The Bridegroom Speaks to His Beloved

- 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.
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- 15 Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes.
 - 16 My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the lilies.

17 Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether.

Chapter 3

The Bride's Dream

1 By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not.

2 I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not.

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

4 It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him, and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me.

5 I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please.

Solomon Arrives in His Splendor

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?

7 Behold his bed, which is Solomon's; threescore valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Israel.

8 They all hold swords, being expert in war: every man hath his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night.

9 King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon.

10 He made the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom thereof of gold, the covering of it of purple, the midst thereof being paved with love, for the daughters of Jerusalem.

11 Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart.

Chapter 4

Solomon Praises His Beloved

1 Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes within thy locks: thy hair is as a flock of goats, that appear from mount Gilead.

2 Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which came up from the washing; whereof every one bear twins, and none is barren among them.

3 Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech is comely: thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate within thy locks.

4 Thy neck is like the tower of David builded for an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men.

5 Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins, which feed among the lilies.

6 Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense.

7 Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee.

8 Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon: look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards.

9 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.

10 How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices!

11 Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honeycomb: honey and milk are under thy tongue; and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon.

The Bride Is a Garden Locked

12 A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.

13 Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard,

14 Spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices:

15 A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon.

16 Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.

Chapter 5

The Bridegroom Comes to His Garden

1 I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.

The Bride's Dream of Separation

2 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.

3 I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?

4 My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him.

5 I rose up to open to my beloved; and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock.

6 I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone: my soul failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer.

7 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.

8 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him, that I am sick of love.

9 What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? what is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us?

The Bride Praises Her Beloved

10 My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.

11 His head is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy, and black as a raven.

12 His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set.

13 His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers: his lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh.

14 His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl: his belly is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires.

15 His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold: his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.

16 His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.

Chapter 6

Others Ask Where the Beloved Has Gone

- 1 Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? whither is thy beloved turned aside? that we may seek him with thee.
- 2 My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies.
- 3 I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine: he feedeth among the lilies.
-

Solomon Praises His Beloved Again

- 4 Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners.
- 5 Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me: thy hair is as a flock of goats that appear from Gilead.
- 6 Thy teeth are as a flock of sheep which go up from the washing, whereof every one beareth twins, and there is not one barren among them.
- 7 As a piece of a pomegranate are thy temples within thy locks.
- 8 There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number.
- 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.
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- 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?
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The Bride Returns to the Garden

- 11 I went down into the garden of nuts to see the fruits of the valley, and to see whether the vine flourished, and the pomegranates budded.
- 12 Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadib.
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- 13 Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon thee. What will ye see in the Shulamite? As it were the company of two armies.
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Chapter 7

Solomon Praises the Shulamite's Beauty

1 How beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O prince's daughter! the joints of thy thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of a cunning workman.

2 Thy navel is like a round goblet, which wanteth not liquor: thy belly is like an heap of wheat set about with lilies.

3 Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins.

4 Thy neck is as a tower of ivory; thine eyes like the fishpools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim: thy nose is as the tower of Lebanon which looketh toward Damascus.

5 Thine head upon thee is like Carmel, and the hair of thine head like purple; the king is held in the galleries.

6 How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights!

7 This thy stature is like to a palm tree, and thy breasts to clusters of grapes.

8 I said, I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof: now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine, and the smell of thy nose like apples;

9 And the roof of thy mouth like the best wine for my beloved, that goeth down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak.

The Bride's Longing for Her Beloved

10 I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me.

11 Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages.

12 Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth: there will I give thee my loves.

13 The mandrakes give a smell, and at our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved.

Chapter 8

The Bride Yearns for Her Beloved

1 O that thou wert as my brother, that sucked the breasts of my mother! when I should find thee without, I would kiss thee; yea, I should not be despised.

2 I would lead thee, and bring thee into my mother's house, who would instruct me: I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate.

3 His left hand should be under my head, and his right hand should embrace me.

4 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, until he please.

5 Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved? I raised thee up under the apple tree: there thy mother brought thee forth: there she brought thee forth that bare thee.

6 Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame.

7 Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned.

The Bride's Brothers Speak

8 We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts: what shall we do for our sister in the day when she shall be spoken for?

9 If she be a wall, we will build upon her a palace of silver: and if she be a door, we will inclose her with boards of cedar.

10 I am a wall, and my breasts like towers: then was I in his eyes as one that found favour.

Solomon's Vineyard

11 Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon; he let out the vineyard unto keepers; every one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand pieces of silver.

12 My vineyard, which is mine, is before me: thou, O Solomon, must have a thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred.

13 Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice: cause me to hear it.

14 Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices.

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