THE SUPERIOR WORD

COMMUNITY FELLOWSHIP

Sharing God's Word Encouraging His People

SONG OF SONGS

A Verse-By-Verse Study

By Pastor Charlie Garrett

(06/25)

CONTENTS

(*Clicking the title will take you to that location*)

SONG OF SONGS 1:1-3
(THE KISSES OF HIS MOUTH)

While typing this sermon, as always on Monday morning, I had to stop for a few minutes and go to the mall to take out the trash. No sooner had I gotten into the car than the guy on the radio started explaining various ways our lives may be expressed through our actions.

He started by talking about what our priorities are. The things we do and the things we seek after will, in turn, reflect our priorities. If we are seeking worldly things like fame, fortune, fast cars, etc., then the world is our priority.

If we aren't going to church, our lack of priority toward the Lord who told us to meet and fellowship is revealed. The same is true with reading the Bible, sharing our faith, and so forth. After saying this, the radio host then used this train of thought to lead into some of the prayer requests that had been received at the station.

One was from a lady who had been married for 22 years. They had children through the marriage. However, the husband told his wife that he had lost his love for her. The marriage was no longer what he wanted, and he was leaving.

The Bible teaches that this man's priorities towards his wife, his children, and the Lord are skewed. He is a misdirected soul and unless he wakes up and changes his ways, others will have to pay the price for his flawed choices. He is one of billions of examples in human existence of a person with imperfect love.

Text Verse: *"Love never fails." 1 Corinthians 13:8*

One might ask, "If love never fails, then how can there be imperfect love?" Such a question fails to understand the difference between perfect love and imperfect love, something based on the Source of the love. This is why 1 Corinthians 13:8 more precisely says, "The love never fails."

Perfect love is love that refers to the source of the love, even if it doesn't fully define Him and His perfections. Unlike Him, humans are imperfect, so perfect love cannot define our love or be displayed by a human. However, the Bible says, God is love (literally: The God is love). It defines His nature as one of His unchanging attributes.

However, this equation cannot be turned around to say, “Love is the God,” as if love is the only thing that defines God. Nor can it say, “The Love is God,” as if a particular thing, love in this case, is God. The way John has written his statement leaves us with just one possible proper translation with one possible understanding.

We, as humans, love imperfectly. If we loved perfectly, then we would never fail in our state of love. So, when Paul says, “love never fails,” he is speaking of love that is truly love. If we love someone and never fail to love them, then that is love that never fails.

However, we can fail to love, even when we love a person. But God, who is love, will never fail to love. His perfection means His love is perfect and unfailing. Obviously, this means to the objects of His affection. God is love. That doesn’t change, but we can change in relation to Him so that He cannot love us or what we do.

There is nothing contradictory in this. As noted, God is not defined by love only. He is also just, righteous, holy, etc. These attributes produce a tension in how He responds to us. It is a tension that can only be relieved through the cross of Jesus Christ.

In Christ, God’s righteousness is granted to His people. Tension resolved. In Christ, His love is demonstrated toward us and can be lavished upon us. Tension resolved. In Christ, we are made holy. Again, tension resolved. This applies to all of God’s attributes.

In Christ, none of His attributes are in tension with any other. The tension is resolved, allowing a full and perfect expression of each to be directed toward us. The Bible uses the term “in Christ” again and again. This is how that tension is resolved. We still sin. We still love imperfectly. We still don’t deserve God’s grace or mercy.

And yet, because we are in Jesus through our faith, we now participate in the perfect, eternal fellowship that exists between Him and the Father.

The first words of the Song of Songs form an adamant assertion. As this is so, our task should be to try to find out why the assertion is made and what is behind it. This is what we will attempt to do as we go through this wonderful book.

Imagine being the wife who has loved her husband and raised his children suddenly being told she isn’t what he wants anymore. She called in for prayer that he would change his mind. Imperfect her is still in love with imperfect him.

We are living in a world of imperfection, and yet, we can participate in what is perfect while we are here. The way we do so is found in the Person of Jesus Christ. Such a

marvelous truth is to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and… May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. The Song of Songs, an Introduction

Name: The Song of Songs, or the Song of Solomon, gets its name from the first line of the book, *shir ha'shirim asher lish'lomoh* – "Song the songs which to Solomon."

The words "Song the songs" are idiomatic. In the tabernacle, there was the holy of holies, "the Most Holy Place." The words King of kings are equivalent to, "the greatest of all kings." Saying, "Lord of lords" or "heaven of the heavens" speaks of the most superlative or highest of each.

As such, saying, "Song the songs" is a way of stating that this is the greatest of all songs. It is the song that excels all other songs in what it portrays and conveys. It is a majestic claim concerning words that are, at times, very difficult to translate, understand, and comprehend.

Author and Dating: Despite saying "which to Solomon" often translated as "of Solomon," "which is Solomon's," or something similar, whether Solomon is actually the author or not is unknown. This is simply a fact, but it does no good to argue against him being the author. In 1 Kings 4:32, it says that Solomon "spoke three thousand proverbs, and his songs were one thousand and five."

Therefore, it is possible this is one of his songs. However, when Solomon is mentioned in this book, it is usually as someone who is distant from the narrative. This is not a disqualifying consideration though. At times, Solomon is even somewhat idolized in how he is portrayed. Despite this, 8:12 has the female voice speaking directly to Solomon.

As such, even if he is not the author, it is possible that he oversaw the compilation of the poem or that it was written to him, as the opening line may suggest with the words "which to Solomon." Regardless, the dating of the book appears to be contemporary with his rule. Therefore, it was probably written between 970 to 931 B.C.

Style of writing: The book is formed from Hebrew poetry focusing on romantic love between a young man and a woman. Because of the sexually explicit nature of some of the contents, many scholars over the centuries have shied away from analyzing it or even agreeing with its inclusion in the canon of Scripture.

So difficult are the words, and so explicit are some of the contents, that Adam Clarke said, “To conclude: I advise all young ministers to avoid preaching on Solomon’s Song.” So much for 2 Timothy 3:16, 17!

When such instances are detailed, they will be considered without shying away from what is presented. Because the words are a part of Scripture, they are to be considered without timidity.

As for the main actors, verse 1:7 reveals the man in the poem is a shepherd. The next verse reveals the woman is a shepherdess. They express their love for one another and, as just noted, their desires go so far as being sexual in nature. The use of metaphor is quite common in the book.

Structure and Arrangement: The book goes back and forth in verbal exchanges between the man and the woman, but at times, there are calls from others that enter into their relationship, providing various promises, directional help with the relationship, probing questions, and so forth.

These extra voices are like chorus lines in a song or play that interject into what is being said, thus providing relief from tension that has built up, temporarily redirecting the focus, etc.

Various scholars and commentaries have assigned different divisions within the book. However, there are four noticeable breaks, each followed by sudden new beginnings. These are found in verses 2:7, 3:5, 5:1, and 8:4. As such, there are five parts, all ending “in full repose and refreshment” (Jamieson-Faucett-Brown Commentary).

Key .: There is repetition in the book, but the overall key thought is comprised of the thrice-repeated words –

“Do not stir up nor awaken love
Until it pleases”

There is a time when love, if it is meant to be, will come about. To rush the process would be considered an error.

Placement and Prominence: In the Christian canon, The Song of Songs is placed as the last of the five wisdom books: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs. It is the twenty-second book in the Christian Canon.

As for the meaning of the number twenty-two, Bullinger says –

"TWENTY-TWO being the double of eleven, has the significance of that number in an intensified form,—disorganization and disintegration, especially in connection with the Word of God. For the number two is associated with the second person of the Godhead, the living Word. It is associated with the worst of Israel's kings,—Jeroboam (1 Kings 14:20), and Ahab (1 Kings 16:29), each reigning 22 years. Eleven, we have seen, derives its significance by being an addition to Divine order (10), and a subtraction from Divine rule (12). These are two of the three ways in which the written Word of God can be corrupted—the third being alteration. "The words of the LORD are pure words"—words pertaining to this world and therefore requiring to be purified (see p. 169). But these words have been altered, taken from, and added to by man. Is there anything in this which connects it with the fact that the letters of the alphabet (Hebrew) are twenty-two in number? Does it point to the fact that the revelation of God in being committed to human language and to man's keeping would thereby be subject to disintegration and corruption?"

One could ask a similar question about love. Because this is the twenty-second book of the Bible, does this point to the fact that something that can be perfect, such as love – because the Bible says "God is love" – may also be corruptible because of man's fallen nature?

If so, when love is committed to humans, though being a gift of God, it is subject to disintegration and corruption. The book, then, would be a guide with underlying practical applications to assist the reader in how to successfully avoid the pitfalls of disintegration and corruption which are so obviously integrated into human love in fallen man.

As this is the twenty-second book, it is possible that links from the Old Testament to the Book of Matthew may provide a clue about the content. Each of the first twenty-eight books of the Old Testament makes one or more clear links to the 28 chapters of Matthew. The link between the Song of Songs and Matthew is –

*Song of Songs (22nd book) concerns the wedding of the king, the son of David.

Matthew 22:1, 2 –

> "And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said: **2** 'The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son.'"

Therefore, whether Solomon was the author (or co-author) or not, he is the immediate main subject of the book, as noted in verse 1:1, even if Jesus is the ultimate subject being prefigured. Likewise, Jesus the Son of the King of the Universe, is the ultimate Subject of the Bible.

Typology, Pictures, and Foreshadowing: Because this book is placed in Scripture, it is argued that there is a greater purpose to the contents of the book than simply being a love story with moral and practical life applications.

Jews predominantly believe it is a book about the relationship of the Lord to them (meaning the nation of Israel). Christians have drawn similar conclusions, concluding that it is a book that foreshadows the relationship of the Lord Jesus to His church.

If we take a clue from Paul concerning the significance of marriage as conveyed in Scripture, it may help us to understand why the Song of Songs is so important –

> "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. **23** For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. **24** Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in everything. **25** Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, **26** that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, **27** that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. **28** So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. **29** For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord *does* the church. **30** For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. **31** "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." **32** This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. **33** Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife *see* that she respects *her* husband."
>
> -Ephesians 5:22-33

Paul identifies the ultimate purpose of marriage, which is that it reflects the relationship between Christ and the church for which He shed His blood. This idea extends to the last pages of the Bible where, in Revelation, the final consummation of the marriage of God to His people is prophetically referred to.

Because of the nature of the book, the 2nd-century Jewish sage Rabbi Akiva claimed that it was the most sacred book in the Bible, being central to Jewish life. He compared it to the Holy of Holies in the temple.

The Song of Songs, along with four other books, do hold a particularly special place in the annual life of the Jewish people, being read at key points during their annual cycle of events. These five books are known as the Five Megilloth or Five Scrolls.

The word *m'gillah* (the singular of *megilloth*) comes from *galal*, to roll. Thus, the word refers to the way a scroll is rolled up. Although all books of the Old Testament were written in this manner, five have been drawn out to be read at specific times in the synagogue each year during certain festivals:

- Song of Songs: Read on the Sabbath of Passover week
- Book of Ruth: Read on Shavuot
- Book of Lamentations: Read on Tisha b'Av
- Ecclesiastes: Read on the Sabbath of the week of Sukkoth
- Book of Esther: Read on Purim

The Five Megilloth are part of the Ketuvim, the third section of the Tanakh (Hebrew Bible). Today, the books are grouped together in modern printed Hebrew Bibles, this was not always the case. In earlier times, the books were placed in chronological order among the other books of the Ketuvim.

The reason for the other four scrolls being read at particular times seems obvious. The Book of Ruth is read on Shavuoth, or Pentecost. This makes sense from the contents of the story. It is the story of redemption of a Gentile Bride, just as the predominantly Gentile-led church began at Pentecost, occurring just after Christ's ascension.

Reading the Book of Lamentations on the Jewish people's tragic day of Tisha b'Av reflects the pains and sufferings the people of God have experienced throughout their history, reminding them of their disobedience which has resulted in afflictions even while God devotedly maintains them as a people in accord with His covenant faithfulness.

Reading Ecclesiastes during the week of Sukkoth, Tabernacles, makes sense because it is a time of reflection in the presence of the Lord as people contemplate and discover the futility of life except when it is lived in accord with the precepts laid out by God for the conduct of His people.

And the Book of Esther being read on Purim follows logically because Purim was established based on the narrative recorded in Esther.

Seeing these parallels and understanding that the Song of Songs is read during the Passover each year, we can and should look for a suitable explanation as to why. This will be one of the aims of the study as we progress through the book.

As noted, many try to directly equate the contents of the book with the Lord and Israel or the Lord and the church. Because of the style of writing and the rare nature of the words and phrases used, that has led to an "anything means anything" approach to the book. Rather, the Jamieson-Faucett-Brown Commentary states –

"The clue to the meaning of the Song is not to be looked for in the allegory itself, but in other parts of Scripture. 'It lies in the casket of revelation an exquisite gem, engraved with emblematical characters, with nothing literal thereon to break the consistency of their beauty' [Burrowes]. This accounts for the name of God not occurring in it. Whereas in the parable the writer narrates, in the allegory he never does so. The Song throughout consists of immediate addresses either of Christ to the soul, or of the soul to Christ. 'The experimental knowledge of Christ's loveliness and the believer's love is the best commentary on the whole of this allegorical Song" [Leighton].'"

In other words, making direct connections to the Lord or Jesus, which is a common way of evaluating it, is not the main intent of the book and it will mar the overall interpretation. Rather, there are verbal connections to other parts of Scripture that will help the reader understand the nature of God and Christ without directly stating them or being directly equated to them. At times, however, direct connections are evident.

Unfortunately, the Jamieson-Faucet-Brown commentators then went about allegorizing the entire book to such an extent that it is hard to believe they actually read the quote in their own opening commentary.

Final Note: As for the contents of the Song of Songs, the book is comprised of 8 chapters totaling 117 verses. Its canonicity is not in question. It is found in all Hebrew manuscripts of Scripture and also in the Greek Septuagint. It is also found in other collections of the sacred writings.

With this brief summary of the book complete, we can now begin to analyze it word by word, searching out what is on the mind of the Lord with the inclusion of the book in His sacred word...

No kissing tonight, just leave me alone
I only want to watch the game, alright?
I have worked myself to death, right to the bone
And something with your hair just isn't right

The perfume you are wearing is making me sneeze
It is just like everything about you of late
I could find someone better and do it with ease
And what is this tasteless food here on my plate?
*
Your imperfect love is failing me
But I will keep on loving you
Because of Jesus. I will wait patiently
If He can love me with all my faults, well, I can still love you

II. Ointment Poured Forth (verses 1-3)

[1] **The song of songs,**

shir ha'shirim – "Song the songs." The compound use of a Hebrew word forms its own emphasis. However, with the article affixed to the word in the genitive (Song the songs), it carries an especially strong emphasis. This is not a song out of many songs, but the song of all songs, meaning the greatest or most superlative of all songs, without any other qualifier.

The verb *shir* means to sing. That leads to the noun *shiyr*, a song. However, this does not necessarily mean a song with music, even if that is what commonly occurs when the word is used. The Song of Moses found in Deuteronomy 31 may have been read or sung to the people, either with or without instruments.

The words "Song the songs" tell us that the entirety of the song is to be considered a single song, not a collection of songs gathered over the years or from various sources as some claim. Of this song, it is next said to be...

1 (con't) which *is* Solomon's.

asher lish'lomoh – "which to Solomon." The prefix l, the Hebrew letter *lamed*, signifies motion toward an object. It can mean toward, as in "I am heading toward Jerusalem." It can signify to, as in, "I give this to you." It can mean by, as in "This was written by David." It can mean of, as in "This is speaking of Mary."

People debate and argue over the meaning of the letter when affixed to almost anything. They find a similar construct elsewhere and claim it proves their point. In this case, the most likely explanation is that this is the most exceptional song of all and it has been written by Solomon or at least under his hand.

As for the name Solomon, it is generally associated with the word *shalem*, peace. Thus, it is defined as Peace, Peaceful, Peaceable, etc. However, Abarim insists that it is derived from *shillumah*, reward or recompense, (the spelling is identical) and, thus, it signifies Recompense or Fair Penalty.

As this is a book in the Bible, Solomon would then be the inspired scribe or overseer of its composition, but the Holy Spirit would be the ultimate author. David wrote numerous psalms, and many of them contained prophecies that are indisputably pointing to the Messiah. Some could only be understood after they were fulfilled in the work of Christ.

This means that the Holy Spirit guided David, using his words to anticipate the coming of Jesus and provide descriptions of His work, including His death and resurrection. If this truly is the "Song the songs," meaning the epitome of all songs, it can be nothing other than the inspired work of God.

Both songs of Moses (Exodus 15 and Deuteronomy 32) are this type of song. Many of the psalms are this type of song. These are ultimately credited to the Lord, and the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy 31 is specifically said to be the words of the Lord written down by Moses (Deuteronomy 31:19).

As such, to claim that this is the "Song the songs," if it was written by a man, would be a form of blasphemy, claiming it was greater than songs directly inspired by the Lord. As this is so, then when the Lord, who inspired this song, says that it is the "Song the songs," we must treat it with the respect it deserves. Understanding this, the song begins with...

[2] Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth—

yishaqeni min'shiqoth pihu – "Kiss me from kisses his mouth." The word *nashaq*, to kiss, is used. It gives the idea of fastening up. As such, one can readily see the connection. When lips kiss, there is a fastening up that takes place.

The word is used in Ezekiel 3:13 where the wings of the living creatures in his vision "kissed" or met together. It is used in the Chronicles and Psalm 78 when referring to men being armed, kissing the implements of war. They are fastened up to them.

In this case, the song begins with a woman desiring a man to fasten up to her with the kisses of his mouth. The meaning is clearly that of an actual kiss, evidenced by the word mouth.

Some take this figuratively as if the kisses are referring to the precepts of Christ, each being like a kiss of His. However, a kiss is a kiss. Though there may be hints of such things in the book, the immediate poem is referring to a woman anticipating a kiss from a man.

The "where" of the kiss is not addressed. It could be her forehead, hand, or lips. She is simply desirous of the kiss of the kisses of his mouth. Without making a direct connection to Christ, we are seeing what God in Christ offers is to be desired. That which will fasten us to Him should be our yearning. With that, she continues...

2 (con't) For your love *is* better than wine.

The word love is plural: *ki tovim dodekha miyayin* – "For good your loves from wine." The change from the third to the second person is a normal occurrence in poetry. The loves of this clause are parallel to the kisses of the previous clause.

A kiss is a type of loving affection. Thus, the intent is that his kisses, his loving affections, are more desirable and better than wine.

Because of the use of the plural, the Greek translation, which is followed by some translations, say, "breasts" instead of "loves." The words are similar in Hebrew. The standard reading, however, is correct. She is speaking in parallelism, equating his kisses to his loves (doting affections) which are better than wine.

As for *yayin*, or wine, it comes from an unused root meaning to effervesce. Thus it is fermented wine, an intoxicant. In Psalm 104:15, it says that "wine [*yayin*] makes glad the heart of man." The doting affections, the loves, of the man are more important to her than wine, even though it makes glad the heart of man.

In other words, in a perfect loving relationship, that which is considered choice and enrapturing cannot be equated to what God in Christ can and will provide for His people. The perfect love described in the greatest of all songs is subtly being hinted at.

This is the case because, in the Bible, wine symbolizes the merging together of cultural expressions into a result. The thing that ought to happen can happen, symbolized by wine. Good things can result from cultural expressions, but God in Christ transcends cultural expressions.

As such, there is nothing on this earth, in any culture, that can match the loving affections of God through the giving of His Son. Noting that, her compliments continue...

3 Because of the fragrance of your good ointments,

The words are emphatic: *l'reakh sh'manekha tovim* – "To aroma – your oils good." To paraphrase the meaning, one might say, "As for smell, your cologne is amazing." It is, therefore, not just a compliment about the smell of the cologne, but of the choice of it. Everyone understands this. When we compliment the perfume or cologne of another, we are complimenting the person's choice as well.

Aromatic oil was used in the dedication of the tabernacle and the priest. That is seen in Exodus 30 –

> "Moreover the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: **23** 'Also take for yourself quality spices—five hundred *shekels* of liquid myrrh, half as much sweet-smelling cinnamon (two hundred and fifty *shekels*), two hundred and fifty *shekels* of sweet-smelling cane, **24** five hundred *shekels* of cassia, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, and a hin of olive oil. **25** And you shall make from these a holy anointing oil, an ointment compounded according to the art of the perfumer. It shall be a holy anointing oil. **26** With it you shall anoint the tabernacle of meeting and the ark of the Testimony; **27** the table and all its utensils, the lampstand and its utensils, and the altar of incense; **28** the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the laver and its base. **29** You shall consecrate them, that they may be most holy; whatever touches them must be holy. **30** And you shall anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that *they* may minister to Me as priests.'"
>
> -Exodus 30:22-30

Every detail of the tabernacle, all of its furniture, as well as the high priest and his implements, pictures Christ Jesus. When anointed, there would have been a wonderful smell. But this oil and its contents, also pictured the Lord in every detail. That is hinted at next...

3 (con't) Your name *is* ointment poured forth;

There is an alliteration that forms a play on words: *shemen turaq sh'mekha* – "Oil pouring – your name." The woman said that the aroma of the object of her yet unnamed affection is good. Now, she equates the pouring of oil (*shemen*) that she just referred to with his name (*shem*).

In the Bible, a name is equated to one's character. The name Yeshua, Jesus, for example, means Salvation. His character, meaning being the Savior, is equated to His name. He is Salvation. For example, He made a pun of His name when speaking to Zacchaeus –

> "And Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; **10** for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.'" Luke 19:9, 10

Jesus was essentially saying, "I, Salvation, have come to this house." The pouring of oil being equated to his name is realized in what pouring out oil symbolizes, meaning anointing something.

If the fragrance of the oil anticipates the Lord and His word (as was seen in Exodus), and if the oil was poured out on everything anticipating the Lord (which is also noted in Exodus), then it is a way of equating the anointing with the Person and work of the Lord–

> "Your throne, O God, *is* forever and ever;
> A scepter of righteousness *is* the scepter of Your kingdom.
> **7** You love righteousness and hate wickedness;
> Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You
> With the oil of gladness more than Your companions." Psalm 45:6, 7

This psalm is cited in Hebrews 1 and is directly equated to Jesus. And more –

> "The Spirit of the Lord God *is* upon Me,
> Because the Lord has anointed Me
> To preach good tidings to the poor;
> He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,
> To proclaim liberty to the captives,
> And the opening of the prison to *those who are* bound;
> **2** To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord,
> And the day of vengeance of our God." Isaiah 61:1, 2

The words of Isaiah were read in the synagogue in Nazareth by Jesus in Luke 4. After reading them, it says –

> "Then He closed the book, and gave *it* back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. **21** And He began to say to them, 'Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.'" Luke 4:20, 21

Without directly identifying typology or pictures of Christ in these words, we see references to what God is doing in Scripture in subtleties found in this "Song the songs"...

3 (fin) Therefore the virgins love you.

Rather: *al ken alamoth ahevukha* – "Upon thus, maidens love you." It doesn't say, "the virgins." There is no article. Further, the word *almah* signifies a young woman. There is no reason to assume she is referring to a harem or a particular group of young women.

Rather, she is simply stating a fact – "Because of the things I just expressed, maidens love you. I am a maiden, and this is why I love you." She is speaking of herself as an example of how any other woman would react.

The five lines of verses 2 and 3 form what is known as a pentastich, a five-lined stanza within the book. The woman is in love with this man. She is expressing herself to him in a manner that explains why she does so and why it is natural for it to be as it is.

Each thing here, if taken in a natural sense, can be corrupted. Kissing can be forced, and doting affections can be withheld or turned into something unwanted and strained. Aromatic oil, as Ecclesiastes tells us, can be ruined –

> "Dead flies putrefy the perfumer's ointment,
> And cause it to give off a foul odor;
> *So does* a little folly to one respected for wisdom *and* honor." Ecclesiastes 10:1

A good name is desirable, but a name can turn bad when a person exhibits folly of some type. A good example is seen in Jeremiah –

> "And it happened on the next day that Pashhur brought Jeremiah out of the stocks. Then Jeremiah said to him, 'The Lord has not called your name Pashhur, but Magor-Missabib. **4** For thus says the Lord: "Behold, I will make you a terror to yourself and to all your friends; and they shall fall by the sword of their enemies, and your eyes shall see *it.* I will give all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall carry them captive to Babylon and slay them with the sword. **5** Moreover I will deliver all the wealth of this city, all its produce, and all its precious things; all the treasures of the kings of Judah I will give into the hand of their enemies, who will plunder them, seize them, and carry them to Babylon. **6** And you, Pashhur, and all who dwell in your house, shall go into

captivity. You shall go to Babylon, and there you shall die, and be buried there, you and all your friends, to whom you have prophesied lies.”’” Jeremiah 20:3-6

Such things are a problem in the world. No matter what we do and no matter who we do it with, there is always imperfection in our interactions. This is true not only with others but in our interactions with God as well. Without Jesus, there is nothing we can do about the tainted relationships that exist between us and others and between us and God.

We are finite and limited in our ability to focus or remain free from stress. We face temptations that misdirect us. We are imperfect beings in an imperfect world. The Song of Songs is titled as it is because it is a part of the Bible. As a part of the Bible, it expresses to us something that God wants us to focus on.

If love can be perfect, it can only be so because of God who is perfect. And so, He has given us a book of love and asked us to seek out the rest of His word to determine the difference between our perceptions of love and His perfect love.

He did this so that we can know that the state of perfect love that exists in Him can be realized in us and toward us if we accept it from His perspective. Why is this the “Song the songs?” Because the song of love is the epitome of the perfections of God in Christ. It is why He sent Him.

Closing Verse: *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” John 3:16*

Next Week: Song of Songs 1:4-6 *I am smitten by you, can’t you see?...* (Draw Me!) (2nd Song of Songs sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. He alone is the perfect example of love – untarnished, unblemished, and completely pure and holy. He offers this love to you. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Song of Songs 1:1-3 (CG)

1 Song the songs which to Solomon.
2 Kiss me from kisses his mouth –
For good your loves from wine.
3 To aroma – your oils good,

Oil pouring – your name.
Upon thus, maidens love you.

Song of Songs 1:1-3 (NKJV)

1 The song of songs, which *is* Solomon's.
2 Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth—
For your love *is* better than wine.
3 Because of the fragrance of your good ointments,
Your name *is* ointment poured forth;
Therefore the virgins love you.

SONG OF SONGS 1:4-6
(DRAW ME!)

From time to time, I bring up some odd doctrine that is floating around out there in Christian circles. One such doctrine is that of the supposed Black Hebrew Isra elites.

Like the Mormons, they claim that they are descendants of the biblical Israelites. But they go further and claim that the Hebrews of the Bible were actually black. They say that those in Israel today are Edomites who have no right to the land.

By pulling verses out of context, they have formed an entire theology that has nothing to do with biblical or historical reality. And yet, if you take them to the Bible to show them where they are wrong, it is like dealing with people in any other cult. They will not only fail to see reason, but they will also get belligerent with you.

Quite often, these people are violent, not only in their theology but in their conduct. But what they propose goes beyond the single idea of religion. It is more a set identifier like being Jewish is. Being Jewish is what identifies Jews before anything else.

Likewise, their idea is that you can be a Black Hebrew Israelite and be a member of any religion. The main thing for them is their blackness and that they supposedly descend from the biblical Jews of the Bible.

The utterly ridiculous nature of the claim is found in several books of the Bible where the Jews are identified, quite clearly, as being light-skinned. At times, it is even contrasted to being dark-skinned to make the point more relevant.

Text Verse: *"I drew them with gentle cords,*
With bands of love,
And I was to them as those who take the yoke from their neck.
I stooped and fed them." Hosea 11:4

In Hosea, the Lord says He drew Israel. In the verses today, the woman speaking to her beloved calls out for him to draw her. Then she will speak about a perceived defect that she possessed, about which she is unashamed.

What is it that will cause the Lord to draw people to Himself? Is it skin color? Is it national or cultural status? Or is it simply that we are human, and the Lord calls us

because of that? The Bible never speaks of the Lord drawing alligators or birds. Rather, animals are excluded.

Why would some people, like the Mormons or the Black Hebrew Israelites, claim something that they obviously are not? The main reason must be that people think that by co-opting some trait or another God will like them more.

But that is entirely unnecessary. How you look, how many fingers you have, the school you went to, the culture you belong to, or any other category that could separate you within humanity cannot affect how God will perceive you, acknowledge you, or favor you.

This is true with being a Jew or a Gentile. It is true with being black, white, red, yellow, brown, purple, or blue (although if you are one of the latter two, you should probably go to the doctor). These things don't matter to God.

There is just one thing that causes God to, which is how you respond to the call of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Everything else is unimportant. You are a human. There is no need to try to coopt something in humanity that you don't have. Just be yourself and come to Christ. In doing so, God will favor you.

This is a certain truth that is to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and… May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. They Love You (verse 4)

4 Draw me away!

mashkheni – "Draw me!" The verb *mashakh* here is in the form of an imperative. In essence it is like a positive command or instruction. Hence, the use of the exclamation point for effect.

It is an appeal by the woman to be drawn into the love expressed in the previous verses. She desires loving intimacy with the man and expresses that she wants him to make it happen.

How different that is from the Calvinistic view of being called by God. They stand firmly (and incorrectly) on John 6:44 claiming that man has no choice or free will, in the process of the relationship that is established between God and man –

> "Jesus therefore answered and said to them, 'Do not murmur among yourselves. **44** No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.'" John 6:43, 44

Removing Jesus' words from the surrounding context, Calvinism says that the process is initiated by God, must be continued (actually forced) by God, and is then completed by God, at which point the individual can exercise free will.

This is known as monergism, coming from *mono*, one, and *erg*, work. God alone works in the process of salvation, apart from any action (meaning inherent faith) by man and apart from any will in man.

In essence, as if God were speaking, "There is a person who I want to save. I will actively draw him to Myself, change him apart from his will, and this will cause him to call on Me to be saved."

To understand this, it says in John 3:3 –

> "Jesus answered and said to him, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.'"

Calvinism teaches that being born again is not the same as being saved. Rather, it is a step in the process. God decides who He will save. He then regenerates that person to believe (he is born again). The person then believes and is saved.

Thus, they add an unwarranted step into their doctrine of salvation, meaning the free will of believing is granted by God, but only after God gives new birth.

The Bible never speaks of such a thing. It is contrary to the entire nature of what Scripture says. Rather, being born again is equated with being saved, not a step in the process of salvation. Using John 6:44 in the manner Calvinists do ignores the context of what Jesus was saying.

In John 5, Jesus spoke of the witnesses that testify of Him, four in particular. The witness was to Israel, the stewards of the oracles of God. In that passage, Jesus says –

> "If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true. **32** There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the witness which He witnesses of Me is true. **33** You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. **34** Yet I do not receive testimony from man, but I say these things that you may be

saved. [35] He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light. [36] But I have a greater witness than John's; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish—the very works that I do—bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me. [37] And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form. [38] But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe. [39] You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. [40] But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life." John 5:31-40

John the Baptist came to fulfill the role and ministry of Elijah by testifying to the coming of Christ. When he came, he witnessed to Israel, but so did the words of Scripture which told of his coming –

"Remember the Law of Moses, My servant,
Which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel,
With the statutes and judgments.
[5] Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet
Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.
[6] And he will turn
The hearts of the fathers to the children,
And the hearts of the children to their fathers,
Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse." Malachi 4:4-6

The amount of drawing of Israel to Jesus is incomprehensible, and yet, they were not drawn to Him. They rejected (implying free will) the testimony of John the Baptist –

"And when all the people heard *Him,* even the tax collectors justified God, having been baptized with the baptism of John. [30] But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the will of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him."
-Luke 7:29, 30

They rejected the works of Jesus which testified to who He is. They rejected the testimony of the Father who sent Him and who spoke of Him in their own oracles. They rejected the words of those oracles which were given by God through Moses, and which were then built upon by the prophets who were under the Law of Moses throughout the years –

"I do not receive honor from men. [42] But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you. [43] I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if

another comes in his own name, him you will receive. **44** How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that *comes* from the only God? **45** Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is *one* who accuses you—Moses, in whom you trust. **46** For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. **47** But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?" John 5:41-47

God the Father did draw these people through the Scriptures, but they – by an act of free will – rejected what those writings revealed.

The woman speaking to her love says, "Draw me!" She wants to be drawn, stating it as an imperative. And what does Jesus say in John 12? It is the call for His people to express their free will in a similar manner –

"'Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? "Father, save Me from this hour"? But for this purpose I came to this hour. **28** Father, glorify Your name.' Then a voice came from heaven, *saying,* 'I have both glorified *it* and will glorify *it* again.'
29 Therefore the people who stood by and heard *it* said that it had thundered. Others said, 'An angel has spoken to Him.'
30 Jesus answered and said, 'This voice did not come because of Me, but for your sake. **31** Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. **32** And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all *peoples* to Myself.' **33** This He said, signifying by what death He would die." John 12:27-33

In John 12, God the Father again witnessed, as did the Scriptures where these things are a recorded witness. The work of the Son, His being lifted up, likewise witnesses. These are what "draw" us to God. But we have to 1) hear the word, and 2) be willing to be drawn.

A person who never hears the message of Jesus will never be drawn. A person who comes to Scripture with the intent of tearing it apart or attempting to prove it is false will not be drawn unless he is willing to accept that he could be wrong. Like the leaders of Israel, the free will of such a person has set itself against the witnesses God has provided.

However, if a person hears the word, he can be drawn. If he comes to Scripture and says, "If this is truly Your word, draw me to Yourself through it," then the witnesses can be effective. As Scripture hinges on the cross of Jesus Christ, it is through the cross that He draws all men to Himself.

The call by the woman, “Draw me!” is an indication that she longs, even demands, to be drawn. Her free will is what allows her to call out to be drawn. The “Song the songs” is titled as it is because it is a song explaining the greatest expression of love, the cross of Jesus Christ.

We are learning how to appropriate what that act signifies through the words of the woman, “Draw me!” In the introduction to the book last week, I said, “Seeing these parallels, and understanding that the Song of Songs is read during the Passover each year, we can and should look for a suitable explanation as to why this is so.”

The words of the woman tell us why the book is read during the Passover. It is because the Passover anticipates the cross of Jesus Christ –

> “Your glorying *is* not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? **7** Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. **8** Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth.”
>
> -1 Corinthians 5:6-8

Jesus said that when He was raised up He would draw all men to Himself. That means that the cross, His crucifixion, is how that would happen. This drawing would be based on an act of free will by those who hear of it.

Above all, the “Song the songs” is a book about the process of finding the intimate love with God that is possible through His cross. When that is found...

4 (con’t) We will run after you.

The words contain a cohortative: *akharekha narutsah* – “After you, we shall run.” The words have gone from the singular, “Draw me!” to the plural, “...we shall run.” Various suggestions are given to explain this.

It may be the woman alone speaking in the plural out of modesty. It may be a chorus of the daughters of Jerusalem witnessing the love spectacle. John Gill interestingly mixes the two thoughts and says –

“**We;** both I thy spouse, and the virgins my companions. And this change of numbers teaches us that the spouse in this book is one great body, consisting of many members,

of whom therefore he speaks sometimes in the singular, and sometimes in the plural number." John Gill

Either way, the intent is clear. In calling out to be drawn, there is the free will acknowledgment, and the pursuit of the man will result.

Imagine a person standing on a mountain, looking out at the majesty of the panorama before him, knowing that a great and loving God had to have put it all together. He calls out, "I don't know who You are or how to find You, but draw me to You! If You do, I will run after You."

It could be that he is there alone and calls it out in the plural: "I know that if you draw me, we will run after you," meaning, "I and everyone I tell will run after you."

It could be that there are people with him, his family for example. They hear his words, and they all call out, "We will run after you."

Or it could be that there are people with the man, and he speaks for them, knowing what they would also do, "Draw me, and we (all) will run after you."

The point, regardless of which scenario is correct, is that there is a desire to be called and a willingness to then respond to the call.

As a side note, many scholars and translations since the time of Luther have diverted from the structure of the Hebrew to something like, "Draw me after you and let us run together!" (NASB 1995).

This would be redundant. The words "Draw me!" imply "after you" or "to you." The reason for this incorrect change is explained by Cambridge –

"...it is difficult to see who are meant by *we*. By taking the words as suggested we get the maiden and her deliverer as subjects, and the next clause then does not require to be taken as a hypothetical clause, as it must be if *after thee* is connected with ***run***."

So, let us change the word of God because it is difficult. That is convenient. But the words are sufficiently understood when the Subject of the intent behind them, meaning God in Christ, is understood.

At this point, we are not seeing typology, but rather the expression of perfect love as God intends us to see it when we consider the words in light of Jesus. We may not

experience perfect love among ourselves, but we can hope for it when drawn by the perfect expression of God's love. In being drawn, we will run after Him. In so doing...

4 (con't) The king has brought me into his chambers.

heviani hamelekh khadarav – "Brought me, the king, his chambers." The man, heretofore unidentified, is now noted as "the king." Thus, it speaks of Solomon as noted in verse 1.

The substance of the words is debated. Ellicott, in agreement with others, says the words are –

"...in accordance with a common Hebrew idiom, where an hypothesis is expressed by a simple perfect or future without a particle ... to be understood, "Even should the king have brought me into his chambers."

The reason for this supposition is so that the coming clauses, again going from singular to plural, make sense. But there is nothing to suggest this. The words are simple and direct. The king has brought the woman into his chambers, and she is elated by the honor.

Without overextending the intent of the words, what is said is not unlike that of Ephesians 2 –

> "But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, **5** even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), **6** and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, **7** that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."
>
> -Ephesians 2:4-8

A call to be drawn has been expressed, followed by a note that those who are called will run after their loved one. In response to that, the woman is brought into the chambers of the king. This is what happens to believers. As soon as the person receives Jesus, he is spiritually raised up and seated in the heavenly places, represented by the chambers of the king.

With the action taken by the king, the words again go from the singular to the plural. And they are again highlighted by cohortative verbs...

4 (con't) We will be glad and rejoice in you.

Both verbs are cohortative: *nagilah v'nishm'kha bakh* – "We shall twirl and we shall rejoice in you." The word *gil* comes from a primitive root meaning to spin around. This is an act caused by any strong emotion, but it is generally expressed in joy. In Psalm 2, that is probably not the case –

> "Serve Yehovah in fear and twirl in trembling" (CG).

In the case of those now speaking, however, it is a twirling of joy. The words "in you" are masculine. And so, we have the same idea as that expressed in the first two clauses. There is the woman speaking in the singular followed by a plural chorus addressing the king. It leaves us with the same possibilities expressed before.

Regardless of the actual "who" of the song, it is hard to not see at least the possibility of the singular representing an entity expressed in a plural, as noted by John Gill. If so, it mirrors the state of the church where a singular is also expressed as a plural.

4 (con't) We will remember your love more than wine.

The verb is again cohortative: *nazkirah dodekha miyayin* – "We shall remember your loves from wine." The word "from" is rightly expressed as "more than." Hebrew often uses the "m" prefix as a comparative, which is similar to how we might say, "From all the women in the world, you are the most beautiful."

In this case, as in verse 2, the word loves is plural and signifies loving affections, like his kisses. His affections, bestowed upon the woman, are remembered more than wine (which is set forth as an example of that which is memorable).

Thus, to understand the meaning of what is being conveyed, refer back to the comments about verse 2. Because of the king's loving affections and their superlatively desirable nature...

4 (con't) Rightly do they love you.

Rather: *mesharim ahevukha* – "Evennesses – they loved you." The noun *meshar* comes from the verb *yashar* which means to be straight or even. Thus, it means evenness. However, here, and at all other times, it is given in the plural – evennesses. Thus, if taking it adverbially, it would signify "rightly."

The words complete the pentastich, and the clause is set in parallel to the ending clause of the previous pentastich which formed verses 2 and 3 –

"Upon thus, maidens love you."
"Evennesses – they loved you."

As before, the plural may simply be the woman referring to people in general and thus actually about herself –

> Verse 3 – Because of the things I just expressed, maidens love you. I am a maiden, and this is why I love you.
> Verse 4 – This is why they rightly loved you. I am a maiden and this is why I have loved you.

I know You are there, so draw me unto You
Show me the way that knowing You can be done
When I find that out, this is what I will do:
I will come speedily. After You, I will run

My will is that I know You perfectly
In my imperfect state, can it be done?
You can make it possible. I know you can, surely
And when You do, after You I will run

I have heard the word set forth by You
The word about the giving of Your Son
In Him is perfect love, unfailing and true
And so, because of Him, after You I will run

II. Keeping the Vineyards (verses 5 & 6)

[5] I *am* dark, but lovely,
O daughters of Jerusalem,

sh'khorah ani v'navah b'noth y'rushalim – "Black, I, and beautiful, daughters Jerusalem." The word *shakhor* signifies black. But the woman is speaking figuratively. Thus, though not literal, saying dark gets the idea across. The woman is of Israel and, therefore, she is naturally light to olive-skinned. This is evident from verse 6.

The thought is similar to that of Lamentations 4 –

"Her Nazirites were brighter than snow
And whiter than milk;
They were more ruddy in body than rubies,
Like sapphire in their appearance.
8 *Now* their appearance is blacker than soot;
They go unrecognized in the streets;
Their skin clings to their bones,
It has become as dry as wood." Lamentations 4:7, 8

The Nazirite's whiteness was a point of exaltation, but their appearance as soot reflected the state of God's disapproval of the people, including the once lofty Nazirites.

However, this woman now states that she is black and beautiful, not being ashamed of her darkened state. And more, she proclaims this to the daughters of Jerusalem, as if it is actually a point of boasting. They are city girls who reveled in the light skin they possessed.

And yet, despite her blackness, the reason for which will be explained in verse 6, she proclaims her beauty with boldness.

In this, there is an unnatural state in which the woman is found. And yet, she has been the object of affection of the king. The parallel to the Lord's redeemed is notable. Despite having the stain of sin, believers are accepted by God.

As with Christ who came in the likeness of men meaning fallen man (Philippians 2:7), even though He was not fallen, we walk in the world with the appearance of fallen man even though we are the Lord's redeemed and are no longer being imputed sin (2 Corinthians 5:19).

The favor of the king, regardless of outer appearance, is what matters. Thus, the woman could say she was black and yet lovely. Likewise, we can say that we are stained with sin and yet redeemed by the Lord. As for her blackness, she next says it is...

5 (con't) Like the tents of Kedar,

k'ahole qedar – "According to tents Kedar." Kedar was a son of Ishmael, as noted in Genesis 25:13. The name *Qedar* means dark, coming from *qadar*, to be dark or gloomy or to mourn. As such, he was probably an especially dark person.

At some point, this line of Ishmael took up the Bedouin style of living, dwelling in dark tents made from black goat hair. To this day, the Bedouins live in these same black tents which stand out against the surrounding sands.

The psalmist equates these same tents of Kedar to a state of gloom in his life –

> "Woe is me, that I dwell in Meshech,
> *That* I dwell among the tents of Kedar!
> **6** My soul has dwelt too long
> With one who hates peace.
> **7** I *am for* peace;
> But when I speak, they *are* for war." Psalm 120:5-7

It is debated if the words of the previous clause are to be taken sequentially in parallel thoughts or whether they stand together. The woman had said, "Black, I, and beautiful."

Does the black of the tents describe the first part of that clause only: Black, I? If so, then the "beautiful" is reserved for the next clause. If not, then the tents of Kedar are both dark and beautiful.

If she is only speaking of black here, then her previous words would mean something like, "I am ugly and beautiful at the same time. First, I am ugly like the tents of Kedar." Either way, she equates her blackness to these tents, boasting in the color rather than finding shame. Next, that boast is raised to an even higher level with her next words...

5 (con't) Like the curtains of Solomon.

kirioth sh'lomoh – "According to curtains Solomon." If this is only referring to the word beautiful, then she has made a contrast –

Black – According to the tents of Kedar.
And beautiful – According to the curtains of Solomon.

If not, then she has made a comparison –

Black, I, and beautiful – According to both the tents Kedar (a supposed negative) and the curtains Solomon (a contrasting positive).

Without knowing what Solomon's curtains looked like, it would be hard to be dogmatic about this. However, because of the parallelism found in the song, I think she is making a

contrast. Otherwise, using only one comparison would be necessary. By having two, it appears she is making contrasting parallel thoughts.

Either way, however, she acknowledges both and is unashamed of her darkness. Despite this, she next says...

[6] Do not look upon me, because I *am* dark,

al tiruni sheani sh'kharkhoreth – "Not seeing me, that I swarthy." The idea behind her words appears to be, "Don't look down on me because I am swarthy." She uses a word found only here in Scripture, *sh'kharkhoreth*. It is a diminutive form of the word used in the previous verse.

She has unashamedly acknowledged that she is black. Now, she admonishes those who behold her not to look down on her because of her swarthiness. She cannot help her appearance...

[6 (con't)] Because the sun has tanned me.

sheshzaphathni ha'shemesh – "That tanned me the sun." This tells us that she is naturally light-skinned. She uses the word *shazaph*, to tan. Despite being swarthy, she is not naturally and would have been recognized as such. Thus, this is not an indictment on being naturally dark-skinned. Rather, it would be considered a complaint against a light-skinned female who allowed her skin to darken.

In such a case, it might be thought, "What? She isn't happy with her natural skin?" It is a thought common in the world, such as Michael Jackson who wanted to be white while Rachel Dolezal pretended to be black. In the case of this woman, she doesn't want anyone to think this is so. Rather...

[6 (con't)] My mother's sons were angry with me;

Rather: *b'ne imi nikharu vi* – "Sons my mother burned in me." Because it says mother rather than father, innumerable scholars say that these are stepbrothers or half-brothers from a different mother. There is nothing to substantiate this. The Bible elsewhere uses this terminology –

> "Let peoples serve you,
> And nations bow down to you.
> Be master over your brethren,

> And let your mother's sons bow down to you.
> Cursed *be* everyone who curses you,
> And blessed *be* those who bless you!" Genesis 27:29
>
> "And Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, 'Go, return each to her mother's house. The Lord deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me.'" Ruth 1:8

In the case of this verse, Lange rightly says, "like a true Hebrew daughter she is in the habit of denominating everything after her mother."

As for the words about her brothers, every translation follows the thought of the NKJV, saying something like they were angry with her, incensed at her, or strove with her. However, the word *kharar* is used eleven times in the Bible and this would be the only time it had that meaning.

It simply means to burn. It is true that other similar words (e.g. *kharah* – to burn) can be figuratively applied to anger, but 1) why not use that more common word, and so, 2) she may simply be saying, "My brothers caused my skin to burn, darkening it." If not, there is a huge void in her statement, leaving out the reason for their anger.

She has been using figurative language, including metaphor, concerning herself. There is no reason to assume she is not doing the same here. When something burns, it chars and blackens. In the case of her brothers, they put her out in the sun and caused her to burn. This happened because...

6 (con't) They made me the keeper of the vineyards,

samuni noterah eth hak'ramim – "Set me keeping the vineyards." This explains the actions of the brothers. It is not that they were angry with her. Instead, it may be that they were just too lazy to do their job and had her do it instead.

No matter what, she was placed in the role of tending the vineyards by them. This explains the reason for her having been darkened by the sun. Her unapologetic nature concerning this state is because she assumed a lead role in her home that caused it to come about.

Concerning the vineyard, in Scripture, it represents the cultural side of humanity. There are various vineyards that represent various cultures. As such, one can make a valid

comparison to the mission-directed nature of the church where the various vineyards of the world, that should have been tended to by Israel, are given to the church to tend.

They failed to respect the owner of the vineyard and thus had it taken from them (Luke 20:16). But this woman, having been sent to tend to the vineyards next says...

6 (fin) ***But*** **my own vineyard I have not kept.**

karmi sheli lo natar'ti – "My vineyard, that to me, not kept." The plain sense of the words is that she is now speaking of herself. Because she has been tending to other vineyards, she has not had time to tend to herself.

The implication, however, is that she carefully tended to the other vineyards she was set over. This is what brought about her blackened skin, and she asks to not be looked down on because of it. As we will see, her beloved does not hold it against her.

Although we often look at what is out of the ordinary as defective, bad, odd, unsophisticated, etc., we can turn around our thoughts about such things and look at them as positives.

A person may have been shot or burned during battle. If so, we might look away in revulsion. But if we change our attitude, we may say, "His wounds reflect his great character. He charged a hill by himself, saved dozens of men, and secured victory in the battle."

A person may say, "My wife has had too many children, and her body isn't nice like it used to be." Or he could turn it around and say, "My wife has borne and raised eight children. Isn't she beautiful from all of that effort?"

It can be hard to change our views about things, finding positives where we would normally find negatives, but it can be done. In looking at imperfections as their own types of perfections because of what they represent, we can realign our thinking and find good in what we would otherwise find bad.

That is what God has done with us. We are so filled with imperfection that it is surprising He would even consider us. And yet, in our imperfection, He still sent Jesus, understanding that in our failings, He can still be exalted.

And someday, even our imperfections will be removed. We will stand before Him in a way we cannot even imagine at this time. That will only come about if we are His. So let me tell you how that is possible...

Closing Verse: *"Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world." 1 John 4:17*

Next Week: Song of Songs 1:7-11 *We will get the enigma resolved...* (A Mystery Resolved) (3rd Song of Songs sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. He alone is the perfect example of love – untarnished, unblemished, and completely pure and holy. He offers this love to you. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Song of Songs 1:4-6 (CG)

4 Draw me! –
After you, we shall run.
Brought me, the king, his chambers.
We shall twirl and we shall rejoice in you.
We shall remember your loves from wine.
Evennesses – they loved you.
5 "Black, I, and beautiful, daughters Jerusalem –
According to tents Kedar,
According to curtains Solomon.
6 Not seeing me, that I swarthy,
That tanned me the sun.
Sons my mother burned in me.
Set me keeping the vineyards.
My vineyard, that to me, not kept.

Song of Songs 1:4-6 (NKJV)

4 Draw me away!
We will run after you.
The king has brought me into his chambers.
We will be glad and rejoice in you.
We will remember your love more than wine.
Rightly do they love you.

[5] I *am* dark, but lovely,
O daughters of Jerusalem,
Like the tents of Kedar,
Like the curtains of Solomon.
[6] Do not look upon me, because I *am* dark,
Because the sun has tanned me.
My mother's sons were angry with me;
They made me the keeper of the vineyards,
But my own vineyard I have not kept.

SONG OF SONGS 1:7-11
(A MYSTERY RESOLVED)

For this sermon, I deviated from how I typically use words found within the sermon to give it a title. This title is given because of a resolution to the meaning of complex words found within the verses we will go over.

In fact, some of the words in verse 7 have caused enough speculation concerning their meaning to fill an ocean. I can't read every commentary on the planet to see if anyone has figured them out, but of those that I read – which cited innumerable other rabbis and scholars – none of them satisfactorily explain the meaning.

In turn, translations follow these scholarly commentaries, repeating what someone guessed was the intent. This is particularly true with one obscure clause that is extremely difficult to explain.

For me, I started sermon typing around 4 am. With only a 20-minute pause to take out the garbage at the mall, I finally finished considering verse 7 at 7:20 am.

After finishing the evaluation, the reason for the endless speculation seems almost impossible to explain. The meaning of the words is as simple to understand as "dinner time." When you hear that, you rush in and start to eat.

If some other scholar has come to the same conclusion, my hat is off to him. He followed the main rule of biblical interpretation in order to come to his conclusion. The rule is... anyone? Yes! Context. What is the context of what is being said?

Text Verse: *"Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word." John 8:43*

Jesus was speaking to the people about Himself. He "proceeded forth and came from God" (John 8:42). This is true also of the words of Scripture. They likewise proceeded forth and came from God.

To understand Jesus' speech, one must listen to His words. And to understand what the Bible is relaying concerning Jesus' words, you have to spend time in God's word. In other words, one must consider the context of what is being said.

To rip words out of context will not lead to understanding but confusion. To insert one's thoughts into Scripture will change the intent of what has come from God, confusing and obscuring the intent.

When there is an enigma in the word, we have to stop and consider the context. We may or may not figure it out, but at least we won't be shoving our thoughts into the word when we do.

It is better to say, "I don't know," or at least, "I could be wrong, but this is what I think," than to tell someone something that may not be correct.

In the case of verse 7, probably I would have said, "I don't know," if I just read the scholar's comments. They are all over the place and no comment was any better than any other in explaining them. However, I believe my resolution to the mystery of the words is correct.

When I give it, and assuming it is right, you will think, "Well, yeah, that's obvious. What was so complicated about that?" It probably won't even seem like a big deal to you, but it is.

It is a part of God's word. He is giving us information. When we don't understand His speech, it is because we are not able to listen to His word. This is "Song the songs." Thus, the Bible tells us that it is the greatest song ever written.

Have you heard a song a million times, but you still don't know some of its words? When you finally find out what the words say, you think to yourself, "Oh yeah, I'm so glad to know what they were singing."

If that is how you feel about an old song on the radio from your high school days, how much happier should you be to understand what the "Song the songs" is telling us? Concerning verse 7, I feel that way.

Let's get into the sermon. It's dinner time. A feast of beautiful images is to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and… May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. According to Covering (verses 7 & 8)

7 Tell me, O you whom I love,

As noted, some of the words in verse 7 are extremely complicated, and their actual meaning seems unattainable. Most scholars allegorize them to fit some presupposed notion about one thing or another.

Some take letters and transpose them to form different words that seem to fit their presuppositions. Because of this, such transpositions are then found in various translations. For instance, in his commentary on this verse, Ellicott says –

"The Rabbinical interpretation of this verse is a good instance of the fanciful treatment the book has received: 'When the time came for Moses to depart, he said to the Lord, "It is revealed to me that this people will sin and go into captivity; show me how they shall be governed and dwell among the nations whose decrees *are oppressive as the heat;* and wherefore is it they shall wander among the flocks of Esau and Ishmael, who make *them idols equal to thee as thy companions?*"'"

This utterly inane rabbinical interpretation tells us a couple of things: 1) The rabbis had no idea what the words are telling us, and 2) they also spent their time covering up the sins of their own people.

Idolatry is one of the main reasons why Israel was exiled and dwelt among the nations. The rabbis admit that the people sinned and went into captivity, but then their words completely obscure one of the main sins that caused it.

As for the verse, it begins with: *hagidah li sheahava naphshi* – "Declare it to me whom loved, my soul." There is nothing complicated in her words. She is asking her beloved, the one whom her soul loved (the verb is in the perfect aspect), to declare something to her. That something is...

7 (con't) Where you feed *your flock,*

eikhah tireh – "Where pasture?" The verb is *ra'ah*. It signifies tending to a flock. In other words, pasturing. It is quite often translated as the act of shepherding. However, it describes both the act of shepherding by an individual as well as the flock feeding. For example –

> "And Shitrai the Sharonite *was* over the herds that fed [*ra'ah*] in Sharon, and Shaphat the son of Adlai was over the herds *that were* in the valleys."
>
> -1 Chronicles 27:29

Therefore, the word pasture is sufficient for both the act of the animal and the conduct of the shepherd.

In this clause, the verb is imperfect. She is asking where he is pasturing his flock. It is out in the land somewhere at the time, and she is curious about where.

The idea of pasturing is frequently turned into metaphor where it describes leaders caring for their people, guiding them, and so forth. For example –

> "Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and spoke, saying,
> 'Indeed we *are* your bone and your flesh. **2** Also, in time past, when Saul was king
> over us, you were the one who led Israel out and brought them in; and
> the Lord said to you, "You shall shepherd [*ra'ah*] My people Israel, and be ruler
> over Israel."'" 2 Samuel 5:1, 2

This state of pasturing is equated to the Lord at times –

> "Give ear, O Shepherd [*ra'ah* – literally "shepherding"] of Israel,
> You who lead Joseph like a flock;
> You who dwell *between* the cherubim, shine forth!
> **2** Before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh,
> Stir up Your strength,
> And come *and* save us!
> **3** Restore us, O God;
> Cause Your face to shine,
> And we shall be saved!" Psalm 80:1-3

This pasturing or shepherding doesn't just describe physically tending to the people but also spiritually. The idea continues in the ,ment where it is used when referring to leaders in a church, such as in Acts 20 –

> "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy
> Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He
> purchased with His own blood. **29** For I know this, that after my departure savage
> wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock." Acts 20:28, 29

It is also used when referring to Jesus, such as in 1 Peter 2:25 –

> "For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and
> Overseer of your souls."

These are just a few of the New Testament examples that convey this thought. As for the words here in "Song the songs," this woman is asking where her beloved is pasturing...

7 (con't) Where you make *it* rest at noon.

eikhah tarbits batsahorayim – "Where crouch in the double-light?" Saying resting or lying down is the result of the crouching. The word is *rabats*. It signifies crouching, as when an animal folds its four legs under it in a recumbent fashion.

As such, when the word is used of people, the mental idea should extend to that of an animal that is being shepherded –

> "The Lord *is* my shepherd;
> I shall not want.
> **2** He makes me to lie down [*rabats*] in green pastures;
> He leads me beside the still waters.
> **3** He restores my soul;
> He leads me in the paths of righteousness
> For His name's sake." Psalm 23:1-3

David equates the Lord to a Shepherd of animals and himself to one of His flock. The Lord causes David to fold his legs under him, meaning to rest in the field.

Understanding this, the woman asks where his flocks crouch in the double-light. The word is the plural of *tsohar*, a window or a light. Thus, it is the double-light, meaning when the sun is at the highest point in the sky. The expanded plural form gives the sense of intense light and, thus, intense heat.

As it is the heat of the day, the heat of the sun is too much for the animals during this time. Thus, one can more fully appreciate David's words in the 23rd Psalm. He was a shepherd who tended to his father's flocks –

> "And Samuel said to Jesse, 'Are all the young men here?' Then he said, 'There remains yet the youngest, and there he is, keeping the sheep.'
> And Samuel said to Jesse, 'Send and bring him. For we will not sit down till he comes here.'" 1 Samuel 16:11

David understood this type of life and used the concept in metaphor to describe the Lord's care of him. It is a most tender analogy when understood. He is equating himself to a little lamb being carefully tended to by the Lord.

This woman is asking about her beloved's flock – where he is pasturing it and where it crouches in the heat of the day. When set side by side, one can see the two lines are not two thoughts but one set in parallel lines –

Where pasture?
Where crouch in the double-light?

With this understood, the words which cause so much anguish to scholars and translators now arrive...

7 (con't) For why should I be as one who veils herself

The words begin with an abbreviated relative pronoun: *shalamah ehyeh k'otyah* – "That why become according to covering?" At first, the words seem almost incomprehensible.

The use of this abbreviated relative pronoun in Scripture (*she-*) is quite rare. It is seen twice in Judges, in the Israelite sections of the books of Kings and also in the Psalms, the Song of Songs, and Ecclesiastes.

The first in the Song of Songs was in verse 1:6 (twice) when the woman described herself – "that I swarthy" and "that tanned me." Here, she says, "That why become (1st person) according to covering."

The verb *atah* comes from a primitive root meaning to wrap. Thus, it signifies to cover. To get the words to make sense, various translations say, "one who is veiled," "one who veils herself," "like a veiled woman," etc.

The veiling is then equated to different things such as mourning, the sign of a prostitute (as in Genesis 38), doing something wrong, etc. The speculations about what is being said go on and on. However, the word is a verbal participle and needs to be translated as such, "covering."

Others, because of the seemingly impossible nature of what is said, argue that letters have been transposed. That is convenient. When a problem arises, we can just emend (to correct by textual alterations) the text to clear things up! This is a short part of a long and difficult commentary from the scholars at Cambridge –

"The Syriac, the Vulgate, and Symm. apparently read, 'wanderer,' <u>transposing the letters</u> and making *ʻôtîyyâh* into *tôʻ iyyâh*, the participle of the verb 'to wander.' Archdeacon Aglen's suggestion in Ellicott's *Commentary for English Readers*, that as the

word ‘*âtâh* in Isaiah 22:17 is given the meaning of ‘erring,’ or ‘wandering about,’ by the Rabbinic commentators, probably the idea they had in their mind was that a person with the head wrapped up has difficulty in finding his way, and thus, even without any transposition of the letters, the word might come to be translated ‘wandering,’ is interesting and plausible. He would translate *as one blindfold*. This seems the best rendering.”

Through one of two ways of manipulating the intent, they arrive at a word that signifies to wander. Flocks wander, so that must be it! Hence, “to wander after the flocks” (Douay-Rheims), “wander like a prostitute” (NLT), “like a sheep which has gone astray” (Lamsa Bible), “as a stray in the flock of your sheep” (Peshitta Bible), etc.

None of these translations, nor any of the comments I read, align with the context. Without that, the words naturally seem unattainable. However, what was she talking about in the previous verses while using this rare relative pronoun? Her darkened state –

> “Black, I, and beautiful, daughters Jerusalem –
> According to tents Kedar,
> According to curtains Solomon.
> **6** Not seeing me, that I [*she-ani*] swarthy,
> That tanned [*she-shezaphathni*] me the sun.
> Sons my mother burned in me.
> Set me keeping the vineyards.
> My vineyard, that to me, not kept.”

She is continuing the thought: “That why [*sha-lamah*] (I) become according to covering?” She is speaking about her state of darkness still. After that, she says...

7 (con’t) By the flocks of your companions?

Every translation I checked, almost forty of them, follows every other, repeating the same thing again and again. Rather: *al edre khaverekha* – “Upon flocks your associates?” The word *al*, meaning upon, over, or above, is used. When it is translated as “by” such as in the words of Psalm 137, it still carries the sense of a downward aspect –

> “By the rivers of Babylon,
> There we sat down, yea, we wept
> When we remembered Zion.” Psalm 137:1

When you sit by the waters, you are actually sitting above the waters. Saying "by" is merely implied because you aren't sitting in the waters. The misguided idea of saying "by," as in "next to," makes it impossible to know what thought the woman is conveying.

She is saying that the animals of their flocks are covered (verbal participle – covering) in dark colorings. This is seen, for example, in Genesis 30 –

> "Let me pass through all your flock today, removing from there all the speckled and spotted sheep, and all the brown ones among the lambs, and the spotted and speckled among the goats; and *these* shall be my wages. **33** So my righteousness will answer for me in time to come, when the subject of my wages comes before you: every one that *is* not speckled and spotted among the goats, and brown among the lambs, will be considered stolen, if *it is* with me." Genesis 30:32, 33

This is what has eluded rabbis, Christian scholars, and translators for thousands of years. And yet, when it is seen, it is perfectly obvious. To paraphrase the entire thought –

"I am black and beautiful, O daughters of Jerusalem –
According to the tents Kedar [I am black],
According to curtains of Solomon [I am beautiful].
6 Don't look at me like that! That I am swarthy,
Just because the sun tanned me.
You see, the sons of my mother made my skin dark.
They set me as the keeper of the vineyards.
And so my vineyard (meaning my appearance) went unkept (I got dark).

Declare it to me, you whom my soul loves,
Where are you pasturing?
Where are you crouching in the heat of the day?
Lest I become according to covering, (If she doesn't find him, she will only get darker with the blazing heat of the sun on her, a darkness which is) upon the flocks of your associates."

She is saying that while he is resting during the heat of the day at the time his flocks also rest, she is out searching for him. Hence, he can retain his light skin. She, on the other hand, will continue to darken as she searches for him.

This sufficiently resolves the mystery of these otherwise unattainable words. It maintains the overall context, and it also requires no fudging of the text. The verbal participle is properly used, which is something that none of the other translations do.

When verse 7 is considered in the context of the rest of Scripture, it is hard not to see a parallel to missions, which then become established areas of churches. Where is the Lord pasturing His flock? In other words, where is the flock at this time, ready to feed? The church wants to know and go there.

It has been in the vineyards (verse 6) which represent various cultural expressions tending to them (missions). But there are flocks out there that belong to the Lord. The church wants to know where in order to participate in what the Lord is doing (pasturing).

The book, "Song the songs," is the expression of God's love as detailed in various ways throughout the rest of Scripture. A woman is being prepared as a bride to Solomon and a church is being prepared as a bride to the Lord.

With that hint of scriptural typology explained, the song continues...

8 If you do not know, O fairest among women,

im lo ted'i lakh hayapha banashim – "If not know to you, the beautiful in the women." It is debated who is speaking here. Some think it is the daughters of Jerusalem. Others maintain that it is her beloved. There are no gender indicators to tell which is the case.

Either way, the words are given in response to her question, "Where pasture?" Whoever the speaker is, the words begin the answer and then provide a high compliment, confirming her beauty despite (or because of) her swarthy complexion.

Saying "the beautiful in the women," is rightly paraphrased as "fairest among women." Her darkened skin sets her off as more, not less, beautiful. With that noted, the answer to her question is...

8 (con't) Follow in the footsteps of the flock,

ts'i lakh b'iqvei ha'tson – "Go out, to you, in heel the flock." The speaker is telling her to follow in the footsteps of the flock. Wherever they take her, just keep following along, and she will find the one she is looking for. Once she finds the location...

8 (con't) And feed your little goats
Beside the shepherds' tents.

ur'i eth g'diyothaikh al mishk'noth ha'roim –

“And pasture your kids,
Upon tabernacles the pasturing.”

The word translated as kids, *g’diyah*, is found only here in Scripture. It is the feminine form of *g’diy*, a kid. She is being instructed to take her flock of female kids, follow along in the footprints of the other shepherds, and then pasture her flocks upon the spot where the others are pasturing.

As a point of speculation, the feminine form may point to the New Testament term translated as children. It is a neuter word in Greek, but Hebrew has no neuter. Thus, to offset the young immature believers, the feminine might be used here. The term children is frequently used in this way in the New Testament –

“My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you, **20** I would like to be present with you now and to change my tone; for I have doubts about you.” Galatians 4:19, 20

It is speculation, but it does fit the intent.

How fair is My beloved in My eyes!
With all My affection, I will focus my doting love
Of her extravagant beauty, to her, I will apprise
For among all other women, she is heads above

My heart is set on her, and she shall be Mine
With cords of love, I will draw her unto Me
A bride, radiant and divine
Together forever upon the glassy sea

The song of songs we will sing forever
In bonds of love, unending and pure
This bride is composed of any, whosoever
Such as will be Mine, eternally secure

II. My Querida (verses 9-11)

With the previous thought complete, the words begin a new section. The woman has come into the presence of her beloved, and so he now addresses her...

[9] I have compared you, my love,
To my filly among Pharaoh's chariots.

Following the KJV, the NKJV has flipped the clauses and otherwise failed to give a reasonable sense of the words: *l'susathi b'rikhvei phar'oh dimithikh rayathi* –

"To my mare, in chariots Pharaoh
Compared you, my querida."

Solomon uses metaphor to explain how his eyes find her beauty. His mare is his personal horse. This is the only use of the word *susah*, mare, in Scripture. It is a feminine form of *sus*, a horse. Therefore, it is a mare. Of the mare, Clarke says –

"Mares, in preference to horses, were used both for riding and for chariots in the East. They are much swifter, endure more hardship. and will go longer without food, than either the stallion or the gelding." Adam Clarke

Being the king, it would be the finest mare of all, standing out above the rest. Despite this, some are offended at the comparison of a woman to a horse.

It is a ridiculous sentiment. The number of animal comparisons to humans in Scripture is not small. Though they are often somewhat demeaning, such as being compared to a grasshopper or a brute beast, at times, they are high compliments.

As for the horse, the Lord gives it a lofty and honorable description of it in the Book of Job –

> "Have you given the horse strength?
> Have you clothed his neck with thunder?
> **[20]** Can you frighten him like a locust?
> His majestic snorting strikes terror.
> **[21]** He paws in the valley, and rejoices in *his* strength;
> He gallops into the clash of arms.
> **[22]** He mocks at fear, and is not frightened;
> Nor does he turn back from the sword.
> **[23]** The quiver rattles against him,
> The glittering spear and javelin.
> **[24]** He devours the distance with fierceness and rage;
> Nor does he come to a halt because the trumpet *has* sounded.
> **[25]** At *the blast of* the trumpet he says, 'Aha!'

He smells the battle from afar,
The thunder of captains and shouting." Job 39:19-25

Saying, "in chariots Pharaoh," reflects what is said in 1 Kings 10 –

> "Also Solomon had horses imported from Egypt and Keveh; the king's merchants bought them in Keveh at the *current* price. **29** Now a chariot that was imported from Egypt cost six hundred *shekels* of silver, and a horse one hundred and fifty; and thus, through their agents, they exported *them* to all the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Syria." 1 Kings 10:28, 29

Calling them Pharaoh's chariots (plural) does not mean the mare was used on various chariots. Rather, it is a way of saying the chariots of Israel were of Egyptian origin, bought from Pharaoh's realm.

Solomon's chariot, among all the Egyptian-imported chariots, adorned with his personal mare – the finest of the land – is then said by him to be, "Compared you, my querida."

Here is a word introduced into Scripture, *rayah*. It will be used nine times, all in "Song the songs." It is used once in the verbal reading of Judges 11:37, but not in the written reading. It signifies a female associate. Saying, "my love" is a poor paraphrase.

There are many words that could be used, such as darling, dearest, sweetheart, sweetie pie, pet, honey pie, etc., but these can refer to either a man or a woman depending on the speaker.

However, the Spanish word querida is used only when speaking to a female sweetheart. It is a term of endearment for a man's beloved or lovable person. Thus, it exactly fits the intent.

In the Philippines, the word is transliterated as *kerida*, which signifies a married man's mistress, but that is not the intent here. Of his swarthy querida, he says while probably still thinking of his mare...

10 Your cheeks are lovely with ornaments,

The words are striking but also rare: *navu l'khayayikh batorim* – "Beautified, your cheeks, in the face-chains." The word *naah*, comes from a primitive root meaning "to be at home." Therefore, by implication, it signifies to be pleasant or beautiful.

When a woman goes out, she puts on stuff to make herself attractive. At home, such may not be the case. Therefore, this is speaking of a woman who is naturally beautiful, even at home, without all the extras. The word is used once in relation to the house of the Lord in Psalm 93:5 and once more in Isaiah 52 –

> "How beautiful [*naah*] upon the mountains
> Are the feet of him who brings good news,
> Who proclaims peace,
> Who brings glad tidings of good *things,*
> Who proclaims salvation,
> Who says to Zion,
> 'Your God reigns!'" Isaiah 52:7

In this case, the word *naah* is in the perfect aspect. Thus, her cheeks are "beautified." Solomon next says that they are *batorim*, in the face-chains. The word *tor* is seen only four times, twice in Esther and twice here.

It signifies a succession. It is something that occurs in an interval. In Esther, it speaks of Esther's "turn" to go into the king as a virgin of the harem. There was a succession of virgins, and she was next. A great deal of speculation is given as to what these face chains are, but the context gives the meaning.

These are on her cheeks. That is all we need to know. Though nobody translates it this way, it is the Mideastern and Indian fashion called a face chain. There are innumerable styles of them, but they can go from a single chain crossing the face to an entire facial covering hanging from the forehead down.

Solomon's horse would have hangings that looked like these dangling on it as well to accentuate its curves and to highlight the king's prominence among all other horse and chariot riders. Next, he says...

10 (con't) Your neck with chains *of gold.*

Rather: *tsavarekh bakharuzim* – "Your nape in the beads." The word *tsavar* is generally associated with the back of the neck, the nape. It is derived from *tsur*, to bind or besiege. For example, when a yoke is placed on someone, it is on the back of the neck.

The word *kharuz* is also used, and it is only found here in Scripture. It comes from an unused root, signifying to perforate. As such, it refers to beads of pearls or stones that have been pierced.

Again, it is likely that Solomon's horse would have such elaborate ornamentation on it. The lines then are set in parallel –

1) "To my mare, in chariots Pharaoh,
   Compared you, my querida."
2) Beautified, your cheeks in the face-chains,
   Your nape in the beads.

Next, the words return to the plural...

[11] We will make you ornaments of gold
With studs of silver.

torei zahav naaseh lakh im n'qudoth ha'kaseph –

"Face-chains gold make (1st pers. pl.) to you,
With speckles the silver."

It is the last use of *tor*, face-chains, in the Bible. The plural is because of the chorus of women as seen in verse 4. The king was captured by the beauty of the woman. That beauty was accentuated by the face-chains. But now, these women call out that they will make her even more alluring to the king by replacing her common face chains with those of gold that are speckled with silver.

As for the speckles, the noun *n'quddah*, is found only here. It is a feminine word derived from the same source as the adjective *naqod*, spotted. Thus, it refers to speckles. The face chains of gold with speckles of silver are intended to drive Solomon absolutely bonkers.

If John Gill's assessment from last week is correct, meaning that the plural and the singular feminine voices are one, as seems possible, then this is speaking of an entity that is singular but composed of many. As he said –

"**We;** both I thy spouse, and the virgins my companions. And this change of numbers teaches us that the spouse in this book is one great body, consisting of many members, of whom therefore he speaks sometimes in the singular, and sometimes in the plural number." John Gill

If this is correct, isn't this final verse what the people in the church should be doing for the church? As the harem of women promises to adorn this woman, so we should be adorning the church with beauty in preparation for joining with the Lord.

Each person should be willing to do his or her utmost for the cause of the whole. Unfortunately, this is not always the situation. Many individual churches place little emphasis on the thought of beautifying the church. Some seem to want to do the opposite.

But that is their choice. As for this church, we can and should be willing to adorn the overall church with right doctrine, sound believers, increasing faith, joy in our salvation, and so forth. The day is coming when the time for our union with the Lord will arrive.

It would be a shame if we are presented without having offered anything of ourselves. The "Song the songs" is the greatest song of all because it provides shadows and details for us concerning the love of God in Christ.

When it is read on Passover by the Jews each year, they still remain blind to the overall redemptive plan God has set forth. But once in Christ, the veil is lifted, and our eyes can see Scripture for what it really is, meaning the most intimate love letter ever penned.

As love sums up the "Song the songs," it sums up the whole tenor of Scripture. God in Christ! What a marvelous thing He has done to bring us back to Himself. Praise God for His wonderful, loving hand upon us because of Jesus.

Closing Verse: *"Let all those who seek You rejoice and be glad in You;*
Let such as love Your salvation say continually,
'The Lord be magnified!'" Psalm 40:16

Next Week: Song of Songs 1:12-17 *She deserves a hip-hip-hoorayda...* (My Querida) (4th Song of Songs sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. He alone is the perfect example of love – untarnished, unblemished, and completely pure and holy. He offers this love to you. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Song of Songs 1:7-11 (CG)

7 Declare it to me whom loved, my soul –

Where pasture?
Where crouch in the double-light?
That why become according to covering,
Upon flocks your associates?
8 If not know to you, the beautiful in the women,
Go out, to you, in heel the flock,
And pasture your kids,
Upon tabernacles the pasturing.
9 "To my mare, in chariots Pharaoh
Compared you, my querida."
10 Beautified, your cheeks in the face-chains,
Your nape in the beads.
11 Face-chains gold make to you,
With speckles the silver.

Song of Songs 1:7-11 (NKJV)

7 Tell me, O you whom I love,
Where you feed *your flock,*
Where you make *it* rest at noon.
For why should I be as one who veils herself
By the flocks of your companions?
8 If you do not know, O fairest among women,
Follow in the footsteps of the flock,
And feed your little goats
Beside the shepherds' tents.
9 I have compared you, my love,
To my filly among Pharaoh's chariots.
10 Your cheeks are lovely with ornaments,
Your neck with chains *of gold.*
11 We will make you ornaments of gold
With studs of silver.

SONG OF SONGS 1:12-17
(BEHOLD YOU! BEAUTIFUL!)

During one of my classes in college, a guest speaker came who was in the process of getting a PhD. The main subject of his dissertation was the concept of beauty. Yes, really. He was absolutely captured by the thought of what beauty actually is.

At first, it seems simple enough to define. The Google definition begins with –

"Beauty is the quality of something or someone that gives pleasure to the senses or intellect, or provides meaning or satisfaction. It can be a characteristic of objects like landscapes, sunsets, and works of art, or of people who possess traits that are valued by society."

We can shake our heads in affirmation, thinking it has captured the essence of what beauty is. And yet, the more we consider beauty, the less we can grasp and hold onto it.

Beauty can be temporary, meaning that at a specific point, the beauty will end. Beauty can be transitory. A moment in a sunset may be stunningly beautiful, but a moment later, it no longer exists. It can also come in gradations, such as one sunset being more beautiful than another.

Beauty is said to be in the eye of the beholder. But the same beholder can find someone beautiful one moment and repulsive the next. The physical beauty of a woman, for example, stops seeming so beautiful because of some morally objectionable quality that suddenly surfaces.

Beauty can be a part of something that isn't all beautiful, like an ugly person's beautiful hands that make her a lot of money in advertising. Many people find spiders horrifying, but we might find what they do, spinning webs, for example, beautiful.

Text Verse: *"One thing I have desired of the Lord,*
That will I seek:
That I may dwell in the house of the Lord
All the days of my life,
To behold the beauty of the Lord,
And to inquire in His temple." Psalm 27:4

The concept of what is beautiful has driven some artists to the brink of insanity as they strove to capture something beyond their ability to attain. One might capture the colors and the shapes, but there are a million nuances in the scene that cannot be captured. Van Gogh is one who searched for beauty, and some say Van Gogh's works are beautiful.

Don McLean said that Van Gogh had a surpassing beauty of his own –

For they could not love you
But still, your love was true
And when no hope was left in sight on that starry, starry night
You took your life, as lovers often do
But I could have told you, Vincent
This world was never meant for one as beautiful as you

Some say the words of Don McLean's song about Van Gogh are astonishingly beautiful. So, the concept of beauty can also build upon other beauty, forming something else that is beautiful.

However, we can tire of seeing the same painting or hearing the same song. As the beholder of beauty, we then have to look for something else that we find beautiful if we want to be satisfied with beauty. But we can return to a painting or song that we tired of years ago and the beauty of it returns to us.

Time, familiarity, circumstances, and so many other things can affect our perception of beauty.

David, however, spoke of an unceasing beauty when he said, "all the days of my life." He understood that dwelling in the house of the Lord and seeing His beauty would never be tiresome. Is that true? If so, how? What is it about the beauty of the Lord that extends beyond any other beauty?

Careful contemplation of who He is and what the Bible says about Him will give us an answer if we stop and think it through. Such great truths as this are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and… May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. My Beloved to Me (verses 12-14)

12 While the king *is* at his table,

The words are highly debated and widely translated: *ad shehamelkeh bimsibo* – "Until which the king in his surrounding." The word *ad* gives the sense of until, as far as, up to, etc. Saying "while" would mean "as long as he does XX."

So either the woman is waiting until the king comes, or she is speaking of the time that he is present. Based on the next clause, I would go with the former.

The next complicated word is *bimsibo*, literally "in his surrounding." The noun *mesav* indicates that which is around. In 1 Kings 6, it refers to the surrounding walls in the temple. In 2 Kings 23:5, it refers to the area surrounding Jerusalem.

Some say it is a divan, a round seat for the king. One would think, however, that it would say "upon the divan," not "in the divan." Some say it speaks of a round table where the advisers of the king sat. Rather than a round table, that could still be a divan, though. The historical meaning of the word divan is a legislative body that surrounds the king. Today, we might say, "He is among his inner circle."

I would simplify the matter and say that she is waiting for the king to come into where she is, meaning his surrounding (as in 1 Kings 6). She will wait for him there, and as she waits, she says...

12 (con't) My spikenard sends forth its fragrance.

nirdi nathan rekho – "My nard gave its odor." In other words, she is where the king will be, whether in his personal room, harem, etc. While she is there, she is poetically saying that her nard is wafting on the air, calling to him as it gives off its wonderful smell.

As for the perfume, nard (spikenard) is the Hebrew *nerd* (not like the guy at school, though). It is referred to three times in the Old Testament, all in "Song the songs." Of it, The Natural History of the Bible, page 485, says –

"Spikenard or nard is exclusively an Indian product, procured from the Nardostachys jatamansi, a plant of the order Valerianaceae, growing in the Himalaya mountains, in Nepal and Bhotan. It has many hairy spikes shooting from one root. It is from this part of the plant that the perfume is procured, and prepared simply by drying it."

This perfume was highly esteemed in ancient times. It retained its Indian name in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. It is referred to in the New Testament at a crucial moment in John 12 –

> “Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead. **2** There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him. **3** Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.” John 12:1-3

While she sits and awaits her beloved, she thinks about him and what he is likened to in her thoughts...

13 A bundle of myrrh *is* my beloved to me,

ts’ror ha’mor dodi li – “Sachet the myrrh, my beloved to me.” The noun *ts’ror* comes from the verb *tsarar*, to bind, besiege, afflict (because of being hemmed in), etc. Thus, this is something bound up, such as a bag, a parcel, and so forth.

Because what is bound is myrrh, an aromatic resin used in perfuming, the word sachet exactly describes what it is bound in. This spice, *mor,* myrrh*,* comes from *marar*, bitter. The name gives the sense of “distilling in drops.” It was seen in Exodus 30 in making the special incense for burning in the tabernacle.

Myrrh comes from a shrub. It can be obtained in one of two ways. The first is the purest form where it naturally exudes from the plant. This is the “myrrh of freedom,” or “free-flowing myrrh.” Inferior myrrh comes from incisions made in the bark.

Myrrh is fragrant to smell but bitter to taste. Looking at the uses of myrrh in the Old Testament, the prominent idea that it symbolizes is love. More especially, however, love in intimate union, but not necessarily sexual in nature.

Myrrh was presented to Christ at both His birth by the Magi, and at His death when mixed in wine to deaden His pain, something He refused.

As for this sachet of myrrh, she is saying that his presence scents her as they embrace. One can see the parallelism between her and him –

“My nard gave its odor.”
“Sachet the myrrh, my beloved to me.”

She is perfumed with nard while he, whether actually perfumed or not, is like a sachet of myrrh. Specifically, he is a sachet...

13 (con't) That lies all night between my breasts.

ben shaday yalin – "Between my breasts lodges." The word *lun* signifies to remain, dwell, lodge, etc. At times, it signifies an overnight stay. Her beloved is likened to a sachet of myrrh that dwells between her breasts.

Thus, if he is actually present, he is making her his pillow while his fragrance mingles with hers. The words would then speak of intimacy and union. However, she may just be comparing him to such a sachet without him being present. Next, she says, using words of parallelism...

14 My beloved *is* to me a cluster of henna *blooms*

eshkol ha'kopher dodi li – "Cluster the henna, my beloved to me." The *kopher*, translated here as henna, means a cover. When Noah used pitch on the ark, it was a *kopher* to it. When a person is ransomed, the payment is a covering over of a misdeed, a *kopher*.

In this case, it refers to henna which is used to form a covering over the skin. This is the known meaning because the henna plant produces blossoms in the form of a cluster. Of this blossom, John Lange's Commentary says –

"...in respect to the fondness of oriental women for this aromatic plant the testimony of a recent traveller in the 'Ausland,' 1851, No. 17.0 'The white Henna-blossoms, which grow in clusters and are called Tamar-henna, have a very penetrating odor, which seems disagreeable to the European who is unaccustomed to it; but the Orientals have an uncommon liking for this odor, and prefer it to any other. The native women commonly wear a bouquet of Tamar-henna on their bosom.'"

With that stated, she next says...

14 (con't) In the vineyards of En Gedi.

b'kharme ein gedi – "In vineyards En Gedi." As seen elsewhere, the vineyard represents the cultural side of humanity. There are various vineyards that represent various cultures. In her words, she speaks of the vineyards of En Gedi, meaning Fountain *of a* Kid.

The name suggests that this was a location, a spring in the wilderness, where young goats gathered. In that location, vineyards were planted, and among the vineyards, clusters of henna came up. The parallelism between the previous two verses is evident –

* Sachet the myrrh, my beloved to me,
  Between my breasts lodges.
* Cluster the henna, my beloved to me,
  In vineyards En Gedi.

She equates him to a sachet of myrrh resting between her breasts and as a cluster of henna in En Gedi's vineyards. Depending on how one views her words, she is either completely poetical in her comparison, as if the sachet and cluster are only like him, or she is actually speaking of him when he lies between her breasts and when he is in the vineyards of En Gedi.

It would be unwise to stretch the intent of these verses too far, but they appear to be providing us with a picture of events in the redemptive process.

In verse 12, the woman is awaiting her beloved. As she does, the nard on her beckons him, giving off its odor. Christ was covered in nard for a particular reason –

> "But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son,* who would betray Him, said, **5** 'Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?' **6** This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.
> **7** But Jesus said, 'Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. **8** For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always.'" John 12:4-8

Those who are redeemed are symbolically covered in the nard of Christ's death. Christ's death was a type of baptism. We are then likewise baptized into His death. Thus, we bear the fragrance of the death of Christ –

> "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?
> **2** Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? **3** Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? **4** Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Romans 6:1-4

This leads to the next idea –

> "Now thanks *be* to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. **15** For we are to God the

fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. **16** To the one *we are* the aroma of death *leading* to death, and to the other the aroma of life *leading* to life. And who *is* sufficient for these things?"
-2 Corinthians 2:14-16

Thus, the picture of verse 12 is of those in Christ beckoning Him through their own lives, which carry the aroma of His sacrificial death. It is a reminder to Him that we are His, and we await His arrival.

In verse 13, the woman made the first of two parallel thoughts, stating that her beloved is a sachet of myrrh between her breasts. The *ts'ror*, sachet, is derived from *tsarar*, to bind. Myrrh, *mor*, is from *marar*, to be bitter. Without contestation, Christ is the binding of bitterness for the human soul.

As for the words "Between my breasts lodges," they are poetic. Just as a sachet rests between a woman's breasts, so the heart rests. Thus, it would not be a stretch to paraphrase the thought, "In my heart lodges" –

"For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **15** from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, **16** that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, **17** that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, **18** may be able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the width and length and depth and height— **19** to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God." Ephesians 3:14-19

After that, she compared her beloved to a cluster of henna. The word *eshcol*, cluster, comes from the word *eshek*, meaning testicle. Sin transfers from father to child. The semen, which is generated in man's testicles, is what transfers that sin.

However, this is a cluster of henna, *kopher*, meaning a covering, such as a ransom –

"Those who trust in their wealth
And boast in the multitude of their riches,
7 None *of them* can by any means redeem *his* brother,
Nor give to God a ransom [*kophar*] for him—
8 For the redemption of their souls *is* costly,
And it shall cease forever—

[9] That he should continue to live eternally,
And not see the Pit." Psalm 49:6-9

To understand the word more fully, look at the word *kapporeth*, the covering or mercy seat. Exodus 25 says –

> "You shall make a mercy seat [*kapporeth*] of pure gold; two and a half cubits *shall be* its length and a cubit and a half its width. [18] And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work you shall make them at the two ends of the mercy seat [*kapporeth*]. [19] Make one cherub at one end, and the other cherub at the other end; you shall make the cherubim at the two ends of it *of one piece* with the mercy seat [*kapporeth*]. [20] And the cherubim shall stretch out *their* wings above, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and they shall face one another; the faces of the cherubim *shall be* toward the mercy seat [*kapporeth*]. [21] You shall put the mercy seat [*kapporeth*]on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the Testimony that I will give you. [22] And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat [*kapporeth*], from between the two cherubim which *are* on the ark of the Testimony, about everything which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel." Exodus 25:17-22

This mercy seat, *kapporeth*, and the *kopher* of verse 13 are both derived from the same root. The word *kapporeth* corresponds directly to the Greek *hilastérion*, as seen in the Greek Old Testament and in Hebrews 9:5, which says, "and above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat [*hilastérion*]." That same word is used by Paul when referring to Christ Jesus –

> "But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, [22] even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; [23] for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, [24] being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, [25] whom God set forth *as* a propitiation [*hilastérion*] by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, [26] to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus."
>
> -Romans 3:21-26

Thus, the cluster of henna looks to the "seed" of the covering of Christ –

> "He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. **9** Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God." 1 John 3:8, 9

From biblical symbolism, the vineyards of En Gedi can be paraphrased as "the cultural expressions of the fountain of the cut off." The kid, *gedi*, comes from a root signifying to cut off. As we saw in Judges, it is what finishes a matter.

Sin is cut off in Christ. The fountain of the cut off thus refers to the Holy Spirit dwelling in those who are the seed of God because of the work of Christ. The words of the woman, who represents the redeemed of humanity, speak of the completed work of Christ.

In a world filled with sensation and delight
Nothing compares to the Lord
Every smell, taste, feel, and sight
Came through His spoken word

He is the Source of all things
And so nothing can Him excel
To see His face and hear His voice, my heart sings
On the day of the heavenly wedding bell

Oh! To be joined to the Lord for all eternity
To see Him, and in Him to delight
Until that Day, I wait a tad impatiently
Until my faith has turned into sight

II. My Querida (verses 15-17)

15 Behold, you *are* fair, my love!
Behold, you *are* fair!

The pronouns of verse 15 are feminine, meaning that a male is speaking to a female: *hinakh yaphah rayathi hinakh yaphah* –

"Behold you! Beautiful, my querida,
Behold you! Beautiful!"

The beloved is overtaken by her exquisite beauty. The use of the interjection, behold, emphatically draws attention to what he is about to say. Making the proclamation twice is the Bible's way of emphatically declaring a thing.

It is as if he has lost his breath over what his eyes are feasting on. In this stunned state, he next says...

15 (con't) You *have* dove's eyes.

Rather, more emphatically: *einayikh yonim* – "Your eyes – doves." The comparison is not to dove's eyes but that she has eyes like doves – glistening, beautiful, shapely, and so forth.

The word *yonah*, dove, is from the same root as *yayin*, wine. This root signifies to effervesce. Thus, the dove is lively and animated and carries with it a sense of warmth and love.

As she blinks, he thinks of its wing flitting. As she looks left or right, he thinks of the dove darting through the air. When he looks at the whites, he sees purity, and in the pupil, he sees gentleness and innocence. He is enraptured with her, especially captivated by her dovelike eyes. With that said, the words return to the woman...

16 Behold, you *are* handsome, my beloved!

hin'kha yapheh dodi – "Behold you! Beautiful my beloved." He had proclaimed her beauty and explained it to her with metaphor. Without rejecting that, she calls out that her beloved is more so than she. She does this by changing the next words from his exclamation to her...

16 (con't) Yes, pleasant!

aph naiym – "Also, delightful!" The word *aph* gives the sense of ascension or addition. Not only is he beautiful as he stated she is, but she adds that he is *nayim*, a word signifying pleasant, delightful, lovely, etc.

It is a word that, at times, conveys both an experiential and an aesthetic sense. The experiential form of the word in a plural adjective is found in Psalm 16 –

"You will show me the path of life;
In Your presence *is* fullness of joy;
At Your right hand *are* pleasures [*nayim*] forevermore." Psalm 16:11

With that, she next adds words indicating the beauty of their surroundings...

16 (con't) Also our bed *is* green.

aph arsenu raananah – "Also, our bed verdant." The word *raanan* comes from a root signifying to be green. Other than Psalm 92:10, it is used when speaking of vegetation, especially that which is healthy and full of life. But even in that psalm, it gives the sense of that which is luxurious or fresh –

"But my horn You have exalted like a wild ox;
I have been anointed with fresh [*raanan*] oil." Psalm 92:10

Because of this, in this case, she is not speaking of an actual bed that is green in color, but of the place where they would meet, meaning a beautiful garden setting.

There, they lay on the soft grass, passing the time in one another's presence and reveling in the beauty that surrounded them. It is what adds to the beauty of one another as they merge the exquisite beauty of the natural world with the delightful beauty of looking at one another.

That symbolism continues with the next words...

17 The beams of our houses *are* cedar,

qoroth bateinu arazim – "Rafters our houses – cedars." The rafter signifies a thing meeting or fitting into another thing, as rafters do. Houses normally have lots of rafters, but an actual house is not the intent here, as is evident from the plural words "houses" and "cedars."

While lying in the green grass, they would look up at the beams and rafters of all of the cedars above them, noticing how the branches interlocked into a canopy, one tree adjoining another forming a series of houses above them.

Think of a sense of royal abundance, having house after house as their own. With that thought stated, she next says...

17 (fin) ***And*** **our rafters of fir.**

rakhitenu b'rothiym – "Our wainscoting – cypresses." The word *rakhit*, wainscoting, comes from *rahat*, which is something like a channel or watering box, such as a trough. Thus, it is a panel that would resemble a trough. From that, one gets the sense of wainscoting.

She looks around at their many houses and sees them adorned with *beroth*, cypress trees, as well. This is the only time this word is used in Scripture, but it is believed to be an Aramaic word akin to the word *berosh*, a type of wood generally translated as cypress or fir. The word is derived from *beer*, a well, or pit.

Seeing their large and well-formed trunks led her to think of them as the fancy wainscoting inside a palatial mansion.

There they lay, enjoying the time in their idyllic garden setting. There is enough sun to allow soft green grass to grow, and yet there is a canopy of trees above them to shade them from the heat of the sun, which would otherwise be blazing down upon them.

In Isaiah 60, when referring to a temple of the future that will be built in Jerusalem, it says –

> "The glory of Lebanon shall come to you,
> The cypress, the pine, and the box tree together,
> To beautify the place of My sanctuary;
> And I will make the place of My feet glorious.
> **14** Also the sons of those who afflicted you
> Shall come bowing to you,
> And all those who despised you shall fall prostrate at the soles of your feet;
> And they shall call you The City of the Lord,
> Zion of the Holy One of Israel." Isaiah 60:13, 14

The woods said to be used in this temple include those just noted by the woman in their garden palace. As such, the words may be an anticipation of the beauty of what lies ahead for the redeemed of the Lord.

His temple on earth is a type of the greater heavenly dwelling that awaits those who are His. As Paul says –

> “Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, **20** having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner*stone,* **21** in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, **22** in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.” Ephesians 2:19-22

We are being given insights and glimpses into what is on the mind of God as He brings us closer and closer in type and picture to the heart of “Song the songs,” which is, specifically, the greatest love that exists. That love is the love of God for His Son.

However, the love of the Son includes those who are in the Son, meaning God’s redeemed. When the Lord looks at His bride, He sees only beauty. When we look at the Lord, we see the One who is surpassing in beauty, both aesthetically and experientially.

Because He is the Creator, He is the Source of all beauty. As such, any beauty that exists stems from Him and cannot compare to the surpassing beauty from which it is derived.

Likewise, in the sense of experience, the same truth applies. There is no physical, moral, or spiritual experience of beauty that can surpass the Source of those things. What we experience is only a part or portion of the whole.

Therefore, the words of the woman to her beloved rightly express the ascension of intent that must come from us when we return a compliment to the Lord. He may find us captivating, but it is only because of what He has already accomplished through Jesus in getting us to that point.

When we are returned to paradise, something we cannot even comprehend at this time, even that will be overshadowed by the glory that radiates from our Beloved.

No matter how expansive heaven is, and no matter how long we continue there, the beauty and glory we perceive in it will always continue to be outshined by the surpassing glory of the One who created it for us to fellowship with Him in it.

David understood this and proclaimed it in the 27th Psalm when he spoke of beholding the beauty of the Lord all his days. Throughout eternity, we will never tire of beholding His beauty as Jesus ceaselessly and eternally radiates out the beauty of His unseen Father to us.

Beauty is a possible state in something that exists. However, apart from God's perfection, it is unfortunately only a possible state. But more, because of our imperfect ability to perceive how things are or what they signify, we often miss true beauty.

If you were in Israel at the time of Jesus' crucifixion, you might have passed by numerous people dying on crosses. You wouldn't think they were beautiful, and so when you walked by Jesus on His cross, you might turn away in horror at the mass of bleeding flesh as He was agonizingly dying.

And yet, for two thousand years, people have spoken, written, and sung about the beauty of the cross of Christ. If only you knew what you were turning away from, you might instead marvel at the infinite beauty of God's plan of reconciliation for fallen man as it was being completed right before your eyes.

You might look at the blood seeping down the tree as an instrument of beauty, purifying humanity as His life ebbed away. You would think of the beauty of the grave that was going to receive His earthly remains, knowing that your sin was being carried in there with His lifeless body.

And you would rejoice at the beauty of the tomb's emptiness that was just a moment in time away. You would revel in the beauty of God's handiwork and rejoice at the glory of what He accomplished. You would say, "This cross is... beautiful."

The perception, understanding, and acceptance of the event would define it as beautiful. True beauty is an understood perfection that transcends any accompanying real or perceived imperfections. But until the perfection is seen as such, the beauty is missed.

Therefore, may our imperfect eyes, hearts, and understandings see and appreciate the perfections of God, who alone defines and reveals true, eternal beauty.

Closing Verse: *"He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end." Ecclesiastes 3:11*

Next Week: Song of Songs 2:1-7 *He is so wonderful, my precious dove...* (His Banner Upon Me - Love) (5th Song of Songs sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. He alone is the perfect example of love – untarnished, unblemished, and completely

pure and holy. He offers this love to you. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Song of Songs 1:12-17 (CG)

12 Until which the king in his surrounding,
My nard gave its odor
13 Sachet the myrrh, my beloved to me,
Between my breasts lodges.
14 Cluster the henna, my beloved to me,
In vineyards En Gedi.
15 Behold you! Beautiful, my querida,
Behold you! Beautiful!
Your eyes – doves.
16 Behold you! Beautiful my beloved.
Also, delightful!
Also, our bed verdant.
17 Rafters our houses – cedars,
Our wainscoting – cypresses.

Song of Songs 1:12-17 (NKJV)

12 While the king *is* at his table,
My spikenard sends forth its fragrance.
13 A bundle of myrrh *is* my beloved to me,
That lies all night between my breasts.
14 My beloved *is* to me a cluster of henna *blooms*
In the vineyards of En Gedi.
15 Behold, you *are* fair, my love!
Behold, you *are* fair!
You *have* dove's eyes.
16 Behold, you *are* handsome, my beloved!
Yes, pleasant!
Also our bed *is* green.
17 The beams of our houses *are* cedar,
And our rafters of fir.

SONG OF SONGS 2:1-7
(HIS BANNER UPON ME – LOVE)

In 2019, I got to go on quite an adventure with two friends, Sergio and Yosi. They were both living in Israel at the time and were planning to hike from Jericho to Jerusalem, filming the adventure as they went.

When I heard what they were planning, I asked if I could join them. Sergio didn't believe I was serious, knowing I am not one to take time off, especially for traveling. When I convinced him, I was serious, he figured out the timing of the walk, let me know, and got things in order.

I had to prepare as well. First, my passport needed to be updated. Then I had to complete and schedule work in advance so that it would be posted while I was gone, and I decided to do so without letting anyone know that I was going. I would be gone for three days. For those who asked, I said I was going to Boston. It was true, just not the whole truth as it was my port of departure from the US.

My son and his girlfriend (now wife) drove me to Miami to get a passport. They never asked why I needed a passport ☺. When I arrived in Israel, we got things together and left early in the morning from Nazareth to get to our starting point for the walk.

Though we prepared for the walk, we were actually unprepared for it...

Text Verse: *"The Lord is your keeper;*
The Lord is your shade [tsel] at your right hand.
6 The sun shall not strike you by day,
Nor the moon by night." Psalm 121:5, 6

That walk is one of the highlights of my life. There were so many things along the way that we could tie into our understanding of Scripture, both in the physical landscape as it is described in the Bible as well as in the metaphors that the Bible uses concerning various things we interacted with.

For example, because of an error in planning, we ran short of water. Dangerously short. Despite the difficulties we faced, this led to a much greater appreciation for what the Bible tells about water, such as Jesus' words concerning "living water."

Another metaphor that was applicable is derived from the word *tsel*, shadow or shade. As in the text verse, it is used to describe a protection, a defense, etc.

At one point in our walk, we were so utterly exhausted we needed to stop. Fortunately, one of us was smart enough to bring an Arab keffiyeh, the large cloth headdress that is worn by the various desert tribes with colors or patterns that reflect their tribal identity.

That fortunate soul was able to sit in the open sun and not be overheated while he rested. The other two, however, only had broad hats that covered their heads to some extent but not much else. The spot we had to stop was completely exposed to the sun, with the exception of one 6-8-inch outcropping in the side of a cliff.

And so, while I sat on a post in the open sun, almost unaffected by the heat, the other two stood under this tiny slice of shade, resting and being protected by its defense. But they were standing while I sat ☺.

We learned what the Bible meant about shade in a very real and personal way along that walk. That moment is etched in my mind as the prime example of it ever since. The Lord is our Shade. And He is so much more to those who have placed themselves under His protective care.

Such great truths as this are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and… May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Sweet to My Palate (verses 1-3)

As Chapter 1 ended, the lovers were on a green field with trees above and around them. Whether that scene has ended or not isn't stated. They may still be in that field, or this may be a new encounter between them. Either way, in verse 1:15, the beloved had said to her –

> "Behold you! Beautiful, my querida,
> Behold you! Beautiful!
> Your eyes – doves."

What appears to be a tacit denial of that, or at least a humble moderating of it, she next says...

[1] I *am* the rose of Sharon,

ani khavatseleth ha'sharon – "I wildflower the Sharon." This location, the Sharon, is probably the area known as Sharon, which is along the Mediterranean coast between Joppa and Mount Carmel. There is another area known as the Sharon in 1 Chronicles 5:16 where the Gadites dwelt. Thus, it is an area across the Jordan.

Rather than Sharon, however, some translations say "the field" or "the plain." This is because Sharon comes from *yashar*, to be straight, level, even, etc. As such it may simply be she is saying, "I am just an ordinary flower in the open plain," or "I am like a wildflower in the open plain."

As for the flower itself, it is a word seen only here and in Isaiah 35:1, *khavatstseleth*, a word of uncertain origin. Some translations say rose, crocus, etc.

Some translations simply punt and say flower. However, other words in the Bible translate as a flower, so that isn't preferred. As the identity isn't known, saying "wildflower" provides a sort of catchall. That would be suitable to Isaiah 35:1 as well –

(Certainly) rejoices, wilderness and desert,
And shall twirl Aravah and blossom according to the wildflower. (CG)

As such, she may be saying she is merely a wildflower among many wildflowers. She may have loveliness, but it doesn't stand above any other. She continues with...

1 (con't) ***And*** **the lily of the valleys.**

Rather: *shoshanath ha'amaqim* – "Lily the vales." She uses no article before lily. She is simply a lily among the lilies that are found in the many vales of Israel. She may be beautiful, but not more than any of the others.

As for the flower, lilies are mentioned eight times in this book. They are also noted in 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles when describing the flowery decorations in the temple and the shape of the Bronze Sea there as well. They are also noted in the headings of some of the Psalms. Last, they are mentioned once in Hosea.

In Song of Songs 5:13, she will equate his lips with lilies, thus identifying them as red. Some, therefore, identify this as the *anemone coronaria*, a type of flower with various colors, including red. Though it's not a true lily, this is a possible description of it. With her statement made, her lover accepts but elevates the description...

2 Like a lily among thorns,

k'shoshanah ben ha'khokhim – "According to lily between the thorns." He is essentially saying, "Yes, you may be a lily, but you stand alone among thorns." Her radiant beauty is thus highlighted and set in complete contrast to those around her. The metaphor is next explained...

2 (con't) So is my love among the daughters.

ken rayati ben ha'banoth – "Thus, my querida between the daughters." All of the other women among whom she dwells are nothing but lowly, irksome, and painful compared to her. She is beautiful and filled with grace in comparison to them.

Her attempts at humble modesty have been overridden by his expressive words of compliment and exaltation. Next, she speaks in what Delitzsch says is a "contest of mutually eulogistic love"...

3 Like an apple tree among the trees of the woods,

k'tapuakh baatse ha'yaar – "According to apple in trees the forest." She makes a similar type of metaphor just used of her and applies it to him. In a forest are many trees, but the apple will stand out when it is in blossom. All the other trees will go out of focus when one encounters a blooming apple tree.

Likewise, when it has fruit, it stands out from all the others. They are merely shades of green among the green. But the apple will be highlighted with its colorful fruit.

As for the *tappuakh*, apple, what type is unknown. It could actually be a quince, an orange, or some other tree. And even if not native to Israel, they go all the way back to at least the time of Joshua. In Joshua 12:17, it notes the king of Tappuakh. The location was named for the apple, and so he may have been the first to grow it domestically, or it was a place known for cultivating them.

The word comes from *naphakh*, to puff, breathe, blow, etc. Therefore, the tree is named for its fragrance. It is not only because of its flower and fruit, but its wonderful fragrance is another way that it stands out from the other trees. Like his words to her, this high compliment is next given as a comparison...

3 (con't) So *is* my beloved among the sons.

ken dodi ben ha'banim – "Thus, my beloved between the sons." As she is like a lily among thorns, meaning daughters, he is like an apple tree among the other trees, meaning sons.

Without trying to insert too much into the symbolism, for example, Israel or the church, but rather keeping things simple concerning the "Song the songs," an apt comparison would be the relationship between the Lord and His redeemed at any given time.

God looks at His redeemed with delight and as people noticeable above all others. Likewise, His people understand Him in a similar fashion. Moses' words of Exodus 15 are a clear match to the thought presented here –

> "Who *is* like You, O Lord, among the gods?
> Who *is* like You, glorious in holiness,
> Fearful in praises, doing wonders?" Exodus 15:11

Even if there are so-called "gods" among the nations, the Lord stands out above them all because He is the one true God, the one loved by His people. As for the words of the woman, she continues with...

3 (con't) I sat down in his shade with great delight,

The words are simpler: *b'tsilo khimadti v'yashavti* – "In his shade delighted and dwelt." The metaphor of him being an apple tree continues here. Of all the trees, she has chosen him to sit under.

The word *yashav* means to sit, but that is more often than not a metaphor for dwelling. As such, she is saying that she delightedly accepts his protection and places herself under it as her covering. As noted in the introduction, this is quite often how the *tsel*, or shade, is portrayed in Scripture, such as –

> "He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High
> Shall abide under the shadow [*tsel*] of the Almighty." Psalm 91:1

> "For wisdom *is* a defense [*tsel*] *as* money *is* a defense [*tsel*],
> But the excellence of knowledge *is that* wisdom gives life to those who have it."
> -Ecclesiastes 7:12

These and other references give a sense of what she is saying. He is her beloved, and she is utterly delighted to reside with him as he provides protection and safety for her. She next says...

3 (con't) And his fruit *was* sweet to my taste.

uphiryo matoq l'khiki – "And his fruit sweet to my palate." The fruit from the apple tree delights her palate, and thus, she has come to dwell under it in his protection. As for fruit, besides the literal meaning of that which is produced by fruit-bearing plants, it has numerous metaphorical meanings.

It speaks of offspring, such as the fruit of the womb. It refers to a reward, such as the fruit of the righteous. It speaks of works, good or bad, such as the fruit of one's labors. It also refers to the words of a person, as in the fruit of one's mouth.

Each of these gives the sense of that which is produced by someone or something, but it identifies the nature of the source. The nature of a parent (for example, a human) can be deduced by looking at a human child. The nature of a workman can be determined by the quality of the work he puts forth.

One does not need to see the source to know what it is. One can look at an apple and say, "That came from an apple tree." In this case, she knows both the tree and its fruit, but she intimately knows the nature of the tree because of its fruit.

To look upon the cross of Christ
And consider what God has done
What a cost for which my soul was priced
The life of my Savior, God's own Son

To redeem me back from the devil's power
To set me on high where angels trod
His final cry, that terrible hour
The life of my Savior, the Son of God

What is the value you see in us?
How can it be that this You have done?
That You would send for us the Lord Jesus
To die on the cross, Your precious Son?

II. His Right Hand Embraces Me (verses 4-7)

[4] He brought me to the banqueting house,

heviani el beith ha'yayin – "Brought me unto house the wine." There are various suggestions as to what "house the wine" is referring to. Some think it is a place known for its wine. Others, as seen in this translation, say it is a banqueting house.

However, she has been speaking in metaphor, and so it seems that continues here. Wine in Scripture represents our reasoning and that which can change our minds. A perfect example of this is found in Jesus' words of Matthew 9 –

> "Nor do they put new wine into old wineskins, or else the wineskins break, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved." Matthew 9:17

Jesus was speaking of the law and grace. The new wine is the new dispensation of grace to come. The old wine was the dispensation of the law. If one introduced the new concept into the old, it would not work because the two are incompatible.

Only if the new wine is put into the new wineskin (the new dispensation) is the mind able to be changed. Therefore, her metaphor likely means that he has brought her to a place where her reasoning will be matched with his. She will be overcome, as if intoxicated, with the intentions for him that he has for her.

The daughters of Lot used wine to effect their intentions upon their father. They essentially brought him into "house the wine." In Deuteronomy, Moses refers to Israel with the wine metaphor –

> "Their wine *is* the poison of serpents,
> And the cruel venom of cobras." Deuteronomy 32:33

The reasoning of the people was poisonous venom, leading to their destruction. Their "house the wine" was a storage of wickedness and corruption. In the case of her lover's reasoning, symbolized by the storage of wine from which he draws, the result towards her is...

[4 (con't)] And his banner over me *was* love.

v'diglo alay ahavah – "And his banner upon me – love." The word *degel* is used fourteen times in Scripture. The first thirteen are in Numbers when referring to the standards of

the tribes of Israel. It is derived from *dagal*, a verb signifying being conspicuous. That word is used four times, three of which are in this book.

She is saying that what is conspicuous upon her, his banner, is love. It is on full display for all to see. Thinking of the wineskin metaphor makes this more understandable. Those who reason from the law are bannered in old wineskins. Those who reason from grace are bannered in new wineskins. His banner upon her, based on his reasoning, is love.

Next, she speaks about this state...

[5] Sustain me with cakes of raisins,

The verbs are plural. She is not speaking to her lover but to those who hear, calling out for them to come and help her: *samkhuni baashiyshoth* – "Prop me (pl. you all) in the pressed-cakes." It is as if she is swooning and will go down for the count if she isn't propped up. With her strength gone, she needs sustenance because she is completely overcome by his love.

As for the *ashiyshah*, or raisin cakes, the word is derived from *ashiysh*, a foundation. Thus, it is something pressed down. Raisin cakes is a good guess, but it could be dates or some other treat that is pressed. It is not a flagon, as older translations state, based on an unsupportable rabbinic interpretation.

Like a diabetic who needs to get the sugar level up, she is fading fast. And so she calls out in an almost antithetical parallel thought for another possible remedy...

[5 (con't)] Refresh me with apples,

rapduni batapukhim – "Spread me (pl. you all) in the apples." The word *raphad* means to spread. In this case, it is used figuratively. Just as a bed is spread for one who is tired to provide relief, "Spread me in the apples" is a petition to be relieved by giving her apples.

One can see the antithesis in a direct translation. Both clauses give the sense of providing refreshment or comfort, but one is a propping up, the other is a spreading out–

Prop me in the pressed-cakes
Spread me in the apples.

The interesting imagery is lost in a normal translation. With her stimulating words of petition stated, she next explains why she needs this...

5 (con't) For I *am* lovesick.

Although the translation gets the sense across, her words are more descriptive, using a verbal participle: *ki kholath ahavah ani* – "For rubbing love – I." The meaning is that she is being rubbed out or worn down through her love. Without the food, there will be nothing left, as if someone took an eraser and rubbed her away.

She next explains the reason for her state of near swoon...

6 His left hand *is* under my head,

s'molo takhath l'roshi – "His left under 'to my head.'" One can almost sense the position. He is holding her, and she, in the process of swooning, has her head back as he supports it with his left hand. She's probably gasping in the process. Along with this tender gesture from him, she says...

6 (con't) And his right hand embraces me.

vimiyno t'khab'qeni – "And his right embraces me." The picture becomes even more vivid. It is as if she is standing there, fainting from the overwhelming state of being with him, and she starts falling backward.

So, he rushes his left hand up behind her to support her head while pulling her in closer with his right arm embracing her from behind. It is a scene exactingly repeated numerous times on Hollywood's memorable celluloid presentations.

She is without strength, completely supported by his, and desperately in need of pressed-cakes and apples. The poor dear!

Some scholars and translations turn these words into a desire rather than an actual event –

> "I wish that his left hand were under my head, and that his right hand were embracing me!" (ISV)

This seems contrary to the entire tone of what is being presented. And more, there is only one verb in this verse, and it is imperfect –

His left under ‘to my head,’
And his right embraces me.

She is stating things as they are, presenting facts, not as a desire. They are words of experiential knowledge, and so with this knowledge of the wonderment of his love, she calls for other women to pay heed...

[7] I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem,

hishbati etkhem b’noth y’rushalim – “Adjured you, daughters Jerusalem.” This is the first of four times in the book that she will call out in this manner. There is no reason to assume, as some scholars do, that these words are spoken by anyone other than the woman.

She has experienced love and wants to express her feelings about it to the other young women of Jerusalem. So she presents her words as an adjuration. It is advice to pay heed. She wants them to avoid such a sad fate.

Understanding this, she adjures them...

[7 (con’t)] By the gazelles or by the does of the field,

bitsvaoth o b’ayloth ha’sadeh – “In gazelles or in does the field.” The *tsviy*, gazelle, comes from *tsavah*, to amass or swell, and thus prominent. That leads also to the idea of beauty or splendor which is a prominent trait. As such, the word is used to describe the gazelle because of its graceful beauty.

The *ayyalah*, doe, is the feminine form of *ayal*, a stag. That, in turn, ultimately comes from a root signifying strength.

These are what she adjures them by. However, the difficulty of these words is not to be underestimated. In Deuteronomy 6:13 and 10:20 it says that those of Israel were to swear, *shava*, by the name of the Lord, implying not swearing in any other way –

> “You shall fear the Lord your God and serve Him, and shall take oaths in His name.” Deuteronomy 6:13

Keil, without using any biblical support, says –

"It is permitted to the Israelites to swear, נשבע, only by God (Genesis 21:23); but to adjure, השביע, by that which is not God, is also admissible, although this example before us is perhaps the only direct one in Scripture."

The lack of biblical support is probably why the Greek translation of this verse says –

"I have charged you, ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the powers and by the virtues of the field, that ye do not rouse or wake *my* love, until he please."

It appears the Greek translation takes the root meanings of the animal's names from the Hebrew, prominence and strength, and uses them as if she is applying them to the Lord. This seems to be the case, even though they have the two reversed from the Hebrew.

This is probably not the intent here because the words "of the field" still call out for something earthly. But it seems they were trying to avoid getting stuck in a theological quagmire.

What seems likely is that rather than adjuring the ladies by the gazelles and the does, as if they are the subjects, she adjures them without any article – "in gazelles and does the field." They are not the subject of the adjuration but an explanation of it. In essence, "You daughters of Jerusalem, I adjure you to be like gazelles or does in the field."

Therefore, the meaning would be, "Ladies, I adjure you to be timid and wary like gazelles or does in the field in this matter." If it was an adjuration with the animals as the subject, one would think she would say, "in <u>the</u> gazelles **and** in <u>the</u> does of the field." However, this cannot be.

1) The articles are omitted, and 2) rather than and, it says or. The two clauses are not for one adjuration but are a repetitive explanation to highlight the matter.

With that, she tells them what they should be timid about...

7 (con't) Do not stir up nor awaken love

The words are repetitive, both verbs are imperative, and the first is causative: *im tairu v'im t'or'ru eth ha'ahavah* – "If wakens, and if awakens the love." Saying "stir up" gets the causative point across, but the sense of the repetition found in the Hebrew is lost. She is imploring them to be shy and timid about rushing things.

Instead, they are to be wary that they might otherwise blow something that could be memorable or miss something that could be far better than they settled for. Instead, they are not to awaken love...

7 (fin) Until it pleases.

The words bear personification: *ad shetekhpats* – "Until she inclines." It is as if love is a person that can be manipulated in a way that could be disastrous. Instead of rousing her from her sleep, imploring her to get up and get active, they should let her sleep blissfully until she decides to arouse herself and get about the business she is truly meant to accomplish.

These verses complete the first major break in the song. Three more breaks are yet ahead at 3:5, 5:1, and 8:4. In today's verses, there lies a unique connection between the Lord and His redeemed –

I wildflower the Sharon.
Lily the vales.

The redeemed, understanding their position in the presence of the Lord, naturally feel insignificant. "I am nothing special, just another person among the billions on the planet, and yet I am here with the King." Despite this, the Lord calls out...

According to lily between the thorns,
Thus, my querida between the daughters.

Among all of the people on the planet, your beauty is surpassing. While they are as painful thorns, you are more beautiful than all of those around you. Hence, I have focused my attention on you.

One must remember that such a statement by the Lord is not based on physical beauty but on the beauty of a soul demonstrating faith in Him and in the word that tells of Him.

According to apple in trees the forest,
Thus, my beloved between the sons,
In his shade delighted and sat,
And his fruit sweet to my palate [*l'khiki*].

The One who breathed [*naphakh*, the basis of *tappuakh*, apple] life into man (Genesis 2:7) is the true God. He is my Beloved among all of the "gods" of the nations.

I will rest in His shadow and dwell there all my days. His fruit, meaning the work of the Lord as displayed in the Person of Jesus Christ, which has been detailed in His word, is what I delight in –

> "How sweet are Your words to my taste [*l'khiki* – to my palate],
> *Sweeter* than honey to my mouth!" Psalm 119:103

Brought me unto house the wine,
And his banner upon me – love.

The Lord has brought me into His house of wine, His place of reasoning –

> "'Come now, and let us reason together,'
> Says the Lord,
> 'Though your sins are like scarlet,
> They shall be as white as snow;
> Though they are red like crimson,
> They shall be as wool.'" Isaiah 1:18

In this state of mutual agreement, the banner of the Lord, His love, as evidenced in the cross of Jesus Christ and all it signifies, is made manifest.

Prop me in the pressed-cakes,
Spread me in the apples,
For rubbing love – I.

The *ashiyish*, the foundation, is the root of the *ashiyshah*, the pressed-cakes. It is a poetic way of saying that we are sustained, propped up, by Christ, the Foundation of our faith (1 Corinthians 3:11).

Likewise, the breath [*naphakh*, the basis of *tappuakh*, apple], anticipating the Spirit of God, our Comforter, Helper, etc., is the confirmation that Jesus is God, that He has given us rebirth, the breath of God once again.

In the Greek translation, the word in Genesis 2:7 for when God breathed the breath of life into man is ἐνεφύσησεν/*enephusesen*, the same word in the same form used only once in the New Testament –

So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." **22** And when He had said this, He breathed [ἐνεφύσησεν: *enephusesen*]

on *them,* and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. **23** If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the *sins* of any, they are retained.” John 20:21-23

This is what makes us love-sick, rubbed with love. It is the hope-filled, eager, and constant anticipation of being with Christ Jesus –

> “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, **12** teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, **13** looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, **14** who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself *His* own special people, zealous for good works.” Titus 2:11-14

His left under ‘to my head,’
And his right embraces me.

The symbolism is to be taken as the total welcoming care and protection of the Lord for His redeemed.

Adjured you, daughters Jerusalem,
In gazelles or in does the field –
If wakens and if awakens the love,
Until she inclines.

The idea here is to have one’s priorities right. We are not to fall in love with any god. The people of the world are to be on alert, wary of anything that could awaken inappropriate love in us.

Rather, we are to allow the love (*agapē*, noun, fem.) of God, embodied in the Person of Jesus Christ, to awaken ‘the love’ that is truly love, as John says, “for God is love [*agapē*, noun, fem.]” (1 John 4:8).

They are the same words as found in the Greek translation of this verse, “if you should arise and awaken the love [*ten agapen*: the love].” God is love. God in Christ is the embodiment of God’s love. We are being given insights into the very heart of God as He poured out His heart in the “Song the songs.”

It is all centered on what He has done through Jesus Christ. This is the reason this poem is read each year at the Passover. The time and event of the crucifixion of Christ is the pinnacle of what God has done in the stream of human existence.

The “Song the songs” tells us to look to the cross of Jesus to find our true source of love and fellowship with God once again. Nothing could be clearer than this truth as it is revealed in the pages of His Superior Word.

Closing Verse: *“When I remember You on my bed,*
I meditate on You in the night watches.
7 *Because You have been my help,*
Therefore in the shadow [tsel] of Your wings I will rejoice.
8 *My soul follows close behind You;*
Your right hand upholds me.” Psalm 63:6-8

Next Week: Song of Songs 2:8-17 *In it, I will surely rejoice...* (Cause Me to Hear Your Voice) (6th Song of Songs sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. He alone is the perfect example of love – untarnished, unblemished, and completely pure and holy. He offers this love to you. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Song of Songs 2:1-7 (CG)

1 I wildflower the Sharon.
Lily the vales.
2 According to lily between the thorns,
Thus, my querida between the daughters.
3 According to apple in trees the forest,
Thus, my beloved between the sons,
In his shade delighted and sat,
And his fruit sweet to my palate.
4 Brought me unto house the wine,
And his banner upon me – love.
5 Prop me in the pressed cakes,
Spread me in the apples,
For rubbing love – I.
6 His left under ‘to my head,’
And his right embraces me.
7 Adjured you, daughters Jerusalem,
In gazelles or in does the field –
If wakens and if awakens the love,
Until she inclines.

Song of Songs 2:1-7 (NKJV)

1 I *am* the rose of Sharon,
And the lily of the valleys.
2 Like a lily among thorns,
So is my love among the daughters.
3 Like an apple tree among the trees of the woods,
So *is* my beloved among the sons.
I sat down in his shade 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 Sustain me with cakes of raisins,
Refresh me with apples,
For I *am* lovesick.
6 His left hand *is* under my head,
And his right hand embraces me.
7 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
By the gazelles or by the does of the field,
Do not stir up nor awaken love
Until it pleases.

SONG OF SONGS 2:8-17
(CAUSE ME TO HEAR YOUR VOICE)

For the Christian, one thing that the Bible is clear about is doctrine matters. It is something that is seen in typology throughout the Old Testament. It is also on prominent display in the New Testament.

A particular passage might, on the surface, be thought of as a basis for proper Christian doctrine. For example, a passage in the gospels or in Acts. A teacher may make a convincing argument as to why something is expected of Christians because of what is said there. And yet, because he failed to consider the context, what he teaches is completely false.

The verses today include a few lines that hint at maintaining proper doctrine. A general reading of them might make one question how. But in understanding the broader context taught throughout Scripture and the meaning of the words, it becomes clear and understandable.

This is one of the marvelous facets of God's word. The more you study it, and the more you consider what is presented, the more it begins to harmoniously come together in your mind.

Text Verse: *"And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage), [5] to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you." Galatians 2:4, 5*

Paul speaks of false brethren. False brethren bring with them false doctrine. The two go hand in hand. Peter, who had been with Jesus throughout His ministry, was duped by false brethren. He accepted a false teaching, and Paul had to openly call him out for it.

The words of Paul are recorded in Galatians. Thus, they are given as a permanent reminder that even a person who has all of the knowledge you might expect to keep him from such things can still be led astray. Admittedly, Peter's failing was less from not knowing than it was from simply being weak in his adherence to what he knew.

What can we do to avoid such pitfalls? First, read and know your Bible. Second, determine to not get lulled into falsity for any reason whatsoever. And third, pray to the Lord for wisdom in the word and stamina in pursuing right doctrine.

Such things are necessary lest we stumble in our walk with the Lord, as will be seen in our verses today. Learning and maintaining proper doctrine is a hugely important aspect of His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and… May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Blossoming From the Lattices (verses 8 & 9)

Verse 2:7 ended with the first noticeable break in the "Song the songs." They were the words of the woman saying –

> Adjured you – daughters Jerusalem,
> In gazelles or in does the field,
> If awaken and if awaken the love –
> Until she inclines. (CG)

Thus, it completed the first song within the song. With those verses complete, the second song now begins. Without being dogmatic, it appears that the woman is going back in time to when she first was enticed by her beloved.

The rest of the chapter will then be an explanation of her doing exactly what she just adjured the daughters of Jerusalem to do...

8 The voice of my beloved!

qol dodi – "Voice! My beloved." The words can be rendered either as the NKJV says, "I hear the voice of my beloved," or as an interjection, "Hark! My beloved." The decision in translation is like that of Genesis 4:10, where the same word, *qol*, voice, is used –

> "The LORD said, 'What have you done? Listen [*qol*]! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground." (NIV)

> "'What have you done?' replied the LORD. 'The voice [*qol*] of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground.'" (BSB)

Based on the next clause, it seems she is calling out an interjection. Her beloved has been gone, and now he is returning.

The length of their separation is unknown. Some believe these individual songs cover the days of a marriage festival. Thus, this begins the second day.

Verse 11 notes the ending of the winter. Therefore, some think there was an extended separation. They were previously in a green garden, which meant summer or fall, and then they separated until the spring. But this is poetry, so that seems unnecessary.

Steinbeck wrote *The Winter of Our Discontent*. It wasn't just a literal winter he was referring to. Other writers and poets have used similar literary devices. No matter the length of separation, in the return of her beloved, she calls out...

8 (con't) Behold, he comes

hineh zeh ba – "Behold! This coming!" One can see how the previous clause might logically be taken as an interjection. If taken in that manner, it forms parallelism, something which the two clauses after this certainly do –

Voice! My beloved.
Behold! This coming!

She is using the word *qol*, voice, to call attention to who he is in relation to her. She then calls for him to be beheld, highlighting his coming with verbal explanations. This would be a possible translation of Isaiah 40:3 –

> Voice! [Listen!] Crying in the wilderness.
> Prepare way Yehovah!
> Straighten in the Aravah –
> Highway to our God! (CG).

Either way, in this clause, she is calling out an interjection, "Behold! This coming!" She is preparing the minds of her audience, making them anticipate more words...

8 (con't) Leaping upon the mountains,

m'daleg al heharim – "Springing upon the mountains." The word *dalag* comes from a primitive root signifying to spring. It is as if he is excitedly bouncing upon the mountains as he approaches.

In Scripture, a *har*, mountain, is a lot of something gathered. In typology, it is synonymous with a large but centralized group of people. With her first verbal descriptor called out, she calls out again in parallel words, highlighting his approach...

8 (con't) Skipping upon the hills.

m'qapets al hag'vaoth – "Leaping upon the hills." She now uses the word *qaphats*. It is derived from a primitive root signifying to draw together. One can see him contracting his limbs (drawing them together) and then leaping up. It is the same imagery as the previous clause –

Springing upon the mountains.
Leaping upon the hills.

The mountains of the previous clause are now restated as *givah*, hills, in this clause. The word is etymologically connected to the New Testament Aramaic word Gabbatha, the Stone Pavement upon which Christ stood and was judged by Pilate. The name indicates it was a raised platform, like a hill.

The woman's words are intended to equate her lover to an animal of the wilderness in the minds of her audience. This is what they should mentally see, but to ensure they get it, she next says...

9 My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag.

domeh dodi litsvi o l'opher ha'ayalim –

"Comparing my beloved
To gazelle or to fawn, the stags."

She has already noted the gazelle and the stag in previous verses. Now, she brings in the *opher*, a fawn of the stags. The word is derived from *aphar*, dust, thus signifying the dusty color of the fawn.

The *ts'viy*, gazelle, comes from *tsavah*, to amass or swell, and thus prominent. That leads also to the idea of beauty or splendor which is a prominent trait. As such, the word is used to describe the gazelle because of its graceful beauty.

The *ayyalah*, doe, is the feminine form of *ayal*, a stag. That ultimately comes from a root signifying strength. Being the fawn of the stags, one can see a strong form but one which is dusty in appearance.

She has transitioned the use of these animals from their speed and agility (springing and leaping on the mountains and hills) to their beautiful form and appearance. Her imagery paints a marvelous picture of her beloved for her audience. With his approach complete and her description noted, she next says...

9 (con't) Behold, he stands behind our wall;

hineh zeh omed akhar katlenu – "Behold! This standing behind our wall." She uses a word found only here in Scripture, *kothel*, a wall. It comes from an unused root meaning to compact, as in gathering in or enclosing.

It is the same word used today to describe *ha'kothel*, The Wall, which refers to the Western Wall of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. She is saying that the beautiful animal (this) – a metaphor for her beloved – that leaped across the mountains and hills to come to her has come as close as the wall itself.

Who "our" is referring to is not stated. Some think she is looking back to when she lived with her family at their first meeting. Some think it is her with the court ladies. Etc.

The words do not say. The point is not when, where, etc. Attempting to determine this removes the words into a world of our own speculation, something not intended. Rather, we are to take the words as they come and see the excitement in the interactions between the two.

He has come, he is here, he is outside the wall, and...

9 (con't) He is looking through the windows,

More simply: *mashgiakh min ha'khalonoth* – "Looking from the windows." The meaning of the word *min*, from, has to be determined based on the context. In this case, she described him as having approached to where she is. Thus, he is outside looking in through the windows.

The window is not like what we have today, meaning something paneled with glass. Rather, it is an opening in a wall. It would normally be framed in and then have a lattice

or shutters that could be opened, partially closed to block wind or sun, or they could be fully closed and locked tightly when necessary.

Understanding this explains the next words which are parallel in thought...

9 (con't) Gazing through the lattice.

metsits min ha'kharakim – "Blossoming from the lattices." She uses a rare and beautiful word to describe his peering, *tsuts*. It comes from a primitive root signifying to twinkle. Thus, it means to glance. But to get the sense of the word, by analogy, it means to blossom. This is seen in Numbers 17:8 when Aaron's rod blossomed overnight –

> "And was from morrow, and comes Moses unto Tent the Witness, and behold, bloomed rod Aaron – to house Levi – and outs bloom, and blossoms [*tsuts*] blossom, and ripens almonds." (CG)

Even though she is describing him glancing through the lattices, she is poetically noting his eyes as they glance, being like opened blossoms. As for the *kharakim*, lattices, it is a plural word also found only here in Scripture.

It is derived from *kharak*, to braid. Thus, it signifies netting and, by analogy, lattices. She is spying his eyes as they blossom through these lattices. It is a beautiful image for the mind's eye to behold.

The time was set for Christ's coming
And He arrived just as the word foretold
Like beating an anvil or someone steadily drumming
The event was carefully controlled

God united with humanity to repair the breach
An infinite gap that laid between the two
But in Christ, reconciliation is reached
The God/Man did it, and nothing else will do

Now for His redeemed, there is work to be done
Until the day He calls us to Himself
We are to share the gospel of God's only begotten Son
So let's get at it! Don't leave it on the shelf

II. My Beautiful (verses 10-17)

[10] My beloved spoke, and said to me:

anah dodi v'amar li – "Answered, my beloved, and said to me." To answer does not necessarily mean responding to something said. The Hebrew thought is inclusive of responding to a situation, need, etc. We see this in the New Testament also, such as –

> "Then they laid their hands on Him and took Him. [47] And one of those who stood by drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. [48] Then Jesus answered and said to them, 'Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? [49] I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize Me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled.'" Mark 14:46-49

Jesus didn't answer a question. Rather He answered to a situation. This is what is happening here. Her beloved has come to her from a distance, then to the wall, next to the window, and now stands opposite her. He answers to the situation...

[10 (con't)] "Rise up, my love, my fair one,
And come away.

qumi lakh rayati yaphati ul'khi lakh –

"Arise, to you, my querida, my beautiful –
And walk to you."

He is asking her to join him and walk outside. This was his purpose in coming. He wanted to be with her, and it is a beautiful day to go out and behold the creation together...

[11] For lo, the winter is past,

ki hineh has'thav avar – "For, behold, the winter passed over." The word *sethav*, winter, is found only here in the Bible. It is derived from an unused root meaning to hide. Thus, it is the dark season, where the sky is veiled in clouds.

The usual word for winter, *khoreph*, signifies the end of the harvest season when the crops are gathered. This is followed by the time of dormancy in the land.

The idea is that the veiled skies of clouds and gray came and finally passed over. They have come to the other side of it. Whether actual or poetic, the idea is that a time of change from dull to lively has taken place. To complement that thought, he next says...

11 (con't) The rain is over *and* gone.

ha'geshem khalaph halakh lo – "The rain slid by – walked to it." With the passing of the clouds, the rain slid by as well. One can mentally imagine the scene, watching as the clouds and rain disappear into the distance. As they go, it is as if the streams of rain in the distance are like legs, walking away. Next, something else takes their place...

12 The flowers appear on the earth;

hanitsanim niru baarets – "The inflorescences seen in the land." Here is another word found only this once in Scripture, *nitstsan*. It comes from *nets*, a flower. That comes from *natsats*, to glare or sparkle. The word inflorescence refers to the budding and unfolding of blossoms, particularly in how they are arranged on an axis.

As such, it is like the grouping of sparkles in the arrangement of the flowers. As other words are used to describe both flowers and blossoms, saying inflorescences gives uniqueness to this also unique Hebrew word. Along with this wonder, a parallel thought is stated...

12 (con't) The time of singing has come,

eth hazamiyr higiya – "Time the song touched." Some versions incorrectly translate this as "pruning" instead of singing. Pruning, however, is accomplished in the dormant months, not after they have ended.

The word is *zamir*, which is etymologically connected to *zamar*, to prune, and also to make music. The connection is that when one plays a stringed instrument, his hands clip at it, like when a person clips with his pruners.

The idea expressed here is that of beauty, joy, and the life of spring, hence, singing. Whether this is of man, of bird, or both, the time is one of song. Next comes a third parallel thought...

12 (con't) And the voice of the turtledove
Is heard in our land.

v'qol ha'tor nishma b'artsenu – "And voice the turtledove heard in our land." The *tor*, turtledove, isn't what one would think of as a singing bird. Rather, it is a cooing bird. The idea is not that the bird's voice is given as a parallel to singing. Instead, its voice signifies it is present. Thus, the parallel is to the time of year –

"Even the stork in the heavens
Knows her appointed times;
And the turtledove [*tor*], the swift, and the swallow
Observe the time of their coming.
But My people do not know the judgment of the LORD." Jeremiah 8:7

Knowing this, we can see the parallelism –

Flowers appearing
Voices singing
Arrival of the turtledove

It is the springtime, the time of renewal. It is the time of Christ's death and resurrection. As such...

[13] The fig tree puts forth her green figs,

hat'enah han'tah pageha – "The fig spiced her crudes." The word *khanat* signifies to spice. Thus, it is used when referring to embalming. The meaning isn't that of putting forth but of the sweetening, or spicing, of the fruit as it ripens for harvesting. This process then explains the word *pagah*, a crude, meaning an unripe fig.

The fig is already on the tree, but until it goes through the spicing process, it otherwise remains an inedible crude unless it is properly prepared to make chutneys, jams, and preserves. However, once it is spiced by the season, it becomes edible right off the tree.

In Scripture, the fig does not refer to Israel, the nation. That misinterpretation has been passed around for eons. Rather, the fig speaks of the spiritual connection between God and man.

When this was lost in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve attempted, by their own works, to restore that connection through the use of fig leaves covering the disconnect, the shame of sin.

When Jesus cursed the fig tree, it was a parable concerning the place He was coming from and going to, the temple, which is the place where the spiritual connection with God was effected for the people.

In His words, “Let no one eat fruit from you ever again” (Mark 11:14), He was indicating that the temple that served the law would never again be the source of connection to God. Instead, that connection would only come through Him.

The beloved continues his words...

13 (con’t) And the vines *with* the tender grapes
Give a *good* smell.

More precisely: *v’hagphaniym s’madar nat’nu reakh* – “And the vines cluster – gave aroma.” The *s’madar*, cluster, is introduced. It will only be seen two more times, both in “Song the songs.” The grapevine puts out its arms with leaves and tendrils. As it continues, it puts out clusters that start with teeny weeny, eensy weensy flowers that pollinate.

These then turn into teeny weeny, eensy weensy grapes. It is these clusters that continue to grow into the large, super delicious, and ultra yummy grapes that adorn the vine, are clipped off, and used for the many things grapes ultimately become.

It is the time of the flowering of the grapes that is being referred to as their aroma wafts into the surrounding area. The flower clusters first emerge on the vine about mid-March, and they typically bloom in May.

In Scripture, the vine represents the basic expression of a thing. Jerusalem is equated to an outcast vine in Ezekiel 15. It was only good to be burned. The expression of Judah was supposed to reveal God, but it was worthless and revealed nothing of value.

Jesus, however, says He is the true vine in John 15. He is the true expression of God. His branches, His people, come forth from Him as an expression of Himself to bear fruit in that new state in which they exist.

As for the man, because the time of year is so beautiful and aromatic, he calls out to his beloved...

13 (con’t) Rise up, my love, my fair one,
And come away!

Rather, the written Hebrew reads: *qumi lekhi rayathi yaphathi ul’khi lakh* –

“Arise, walk, my querida, my beautiful –

And walk to you."

The text is read differently than it is written –

"Arise, <u>to you</u>, my querida, my beautiful –
And walk to you."

This was written this way because of a clause in verse 10 that would otherwise be identical to this clause.

> 10: "Arise, <u>to you</u>, my querida, my beautiful –
> And walk to you."
> 13: "Arise, <u>walk</u>, my querida, my beautiful –
> And walk to you."

The Jews must have thought some scribe along the way made an error, so they amended the words to read consistently with verse 10. However, it is a perfectly natural expression seen elsewhere. In 2 Samuel 13:15, Amnon told his half-sister whom he had just raped, *qumi lekhi* – "Arise, walk!" In that case, he was telling her to beat it.

In this verse, the change is completely expected. "You arise..." "Arise and walk." It is a way of stressing the walk this time over the first instance.

We do the same thing all the time. "C'mon, let's go for a walk." A bit later, "C'mon, walk with me! Let's go for a walk!" The change with added repetition is its own stress. He is antsy about adorning the already beautiful creation with his even more beautiful beloved, enjoying her presence in the midst of the land...

[14] "O my dove, in the clefts of the rock,

yonati b'khagve ha'sela – "My dove in rifts the rock." In verse 1:15, he said her eyes were doves. Now, he says this of her in toto. To him, she is glistening, beautiful, shapely, and so forth. He wants to get her out where he can see her with the wonder of the world around her, accentuating her beauty.

The clause introduces a word into the Bible that will only be seen again in Jeremiah 49:16 and Obadiah 1:3, *khagavim*. It is from an unused root signifying to take refuge. Thus, he is comparing her to a dove which secrets itself away in the rifts of the rocks.

He is probably still standing on one side of the lattices while she is on the other side. As such, it is as if she is hidden away in such a rift, just out of his reach. She is...

14 (con't) In the secret *places* of the cliff,

All translations paraphrase the words: *b'sether ha'madregah* – "In cover the step." The word *sether* comes from a verb indicating to hide by covering. Thus, this is a cover that could be paraphrased as a hiding place, a secret place, etc.

That is said to be on the *madregah*, a word introduced here and which will only be seen again in Ezekiel 38:20. It comes from an unused root signifying to step. Thus, it is a step. Only by implication does it refer to a steep or inaccessible place.

For all we know, he is thinking about seeing a dove resting in a step of an ascent of some sort, something not uncommon. It is what she would resemble standing there behind the lattices. And so he says...

14 (con't) Let me see your face,
Let me hear your voice;
For your voice *is* sweet,
And your face *is* lovely."

The words form an a/* b/+ c/+ d/* pattern, and the verbs are in a form that is causative and imperative: *harini eth marayikh hashmi'ini eth qolekh ki qolekh arev umarekh naveh*–

a) "Cause me to see your appearances,*
b) Cause me to hear your voice.+
c) For your voice+ – pleasant,
d) And your appearance* – beautiful."

Rather than merely saying "let me," it is more like Jean Luc Picard, as he instructs her to "Make it so." In other words, "Come out so I can see you and hear you!" But then he moderates his words, explaining with enticing commendations why he so commands her to come out.

As for the plural, appearances, it is a way of saying, "Let me see you in all your beauty by viewing you from every angle." He is looking at her through lattices, only catching glimpses of her as he talks. He wants more than this. That is explained by the final clause, noting that her appearance (the whole) is beautiful.

He also uses a word, *arev*, pleasant, found only here. It is derived from *arav*, to pledge or become surety. As such, there is an intermingling that takes place, making something agreeable, pleasant, or sweet. The sound of her voice is, to him, agreeable and thus pleasant.

The direction of the narrative changes as the words are in the plural. It is debated who says this, but it is likely her in an answer to the words, "Cause me to hear your voice."

In other words, she starts singing to him a song of the vineyard workers, something she would have either heard or made up while tending to the family vineyard that made her so dark and attractive to him in the first place...

15 Catch us the foxes,
The little foxes that spoil the vines,

That this is a song sung by the woman seems correct. The words flow naturally and beautifully when sang: *ekhezu lanu shualim shualim q'tanim m'khab'lim k'ramim* –

"Grasp to us foxes,
Foxes little, binding vines."

Foxes are known to be a giant problem with vinedressers. They dig holes in the vineyards, exposing roots. They gnaw at the roots, break the branches, and mangle the leaves. Cambridge notes that some foxes in Australia have been found with nothing in their stomachs but grapes. Thus, they "bind" the vines.

The word is *khaval*, which means to bind, specifically by a pledge. In taking a pledge, the one whose pledge is taken can be brought into a difficult ordeal or even destroyed. As such, the word is widely translated as destroy, ruin, or broken. It can even refer to a woman in labor.

15 (con't) For our vines *have* tender grapes.

ukramenu s'madar – "And our vines cluster." It is at the beginning of the grape growing season when the vines are starting to put out their *s'madar*, cluster. The same word was introduced in verse 2:13. The foxes could reap havoc on the vines at this time, even before the grapes have a chance to develop.

She is probably singing this song as an excuse for why she is staying behind the wall. The *shual*, fox, comes from *shoal*, hollow hand, or handful, and the meaning extends to this.

The connection is that foxes dig out a hollow to live in. In the gospels, Jesus said, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head” (Matthew 8:20). In Luke, it says –

> “On that very day some Pharisees came, saying to Him, ‘Get out and depart from here, for Herod wants to kill You.’
> 32 And He said to them, ‘Go, tell that fox, “Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.”’ 33 Nevertheless I must journey today, tomorrow, and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem.” Luke 13:31-33

The significance of a fox is that of a hole digger, and thus, one who is there to trip others up. She wants nothing to trip up their relationship, so she sings the song of the vineyard to him hinting as to why she stays secluded. Next, to reassure him that she isn’t going anywhere else for a relationship, she says...

16 My beloved *is* mine, and I *am* his.

dodi li vaani lo – “My beloved to me, and I to him.” She reassures him of her love. She knows he loves her, and she isn’t worried about him walking away from this. She, too, feels that way. She then poetically describes him, saying...

16 (con’t) He feeds *his flock* among the lilies.

The words are a paraphrase. Rather: *ha’roeh bashoshanim* – “The ‘pasturing in the lilies.’” Using a verb as a noun, which is quite common in both testaments, she describes him. He has already been identified with pasturing in Chapter 1.

At the beginning of this chapter, she said she was a lily of the vales. He, in turn, called her a lily between the thorns. As such, she may be speaking metaphorically of him being a shepherd among the beautiful women. This seems likely based on what it will say in Chapter 6 –

> “There are sixty queens
> And eighty concubines,
> And virgins without number.
> 9 My dove, my perfect one,
> Is the only one,
> The only one of her mother,
> The favorite of the one who bore her.

The daughters saw her
And called her blessed,
The queens and the concubines,
And they praised her." Song of Songs 6:8, 9

Because she is one of his lilies, and reassuring him as such, she now follows through with her adjuration to the daughters of Jerusalem by practicing what she preached...

[17] Until the day breaks

ad sheyaphuakh hayom – "Until that puffs the day." The meaning is when the day begins to wane, and the evening breeze gives a puff upon the land. That is then set in parallel to the next words...

[17 (con't)] And the shadows flee away,

v'nasu hatslalim – "And flit the shadows." It speaks of the setting, not the rising, of the sun. At the sun's rising, the shadows begin to form. Here, they flit away into the oncoming darkness. She is telling him that until then, he is to...

[17 (con't)] Turn,

The word is imperative, as a command: s*ov* – "Revolve!" The word *savav* can mean to circle, encompass, revolve, etc. The sense here is like that of when Joseph spoke with his brothers –

"And he turned himself away (*savav*) from them and wept. Then he returned to them again, and talked with them. And he took Simeon from them and bound him before their eyes." Genesis 42:24

She is telling him to revolve away from her until the time when evening sets in...

[17 (con't)] my beloved,
And be like a gazelle
Or a young stag

The NKJV fiddles with the structure and blows the meaning: *dameh l'kha dodi litsviy o l'opher ha'ayalim* –

"Resemble to you, my beloved

To gazelle or to fawn, the stags."

In revolving away from her, she tells him to be just as she described him when he came in verse 2:9, "Comparing my beloved to gazelle or to fawn, the stags." In that verse, she used the same word, *damah*, to excitedly *compare* him to one of these animals. Now, she tells him to *resemble* one of them.

In other words, "You were like this when you came, now be like this as you depart." He must depart until the set time. As such, "Go like the gazelle or the fawn of the stags..."

17 (fin) Upon the mountains of Bether.

al harei bather – "Upon the mountains division." The word is *bether*, a section, a part, or a piece, coming from *bathar*, to cut up or divide. Thus, it refers to division.

The meaning, though lost to almost all translations, is that she is calling the same mountains that he leaped over to come to her, thus uniting them, the mountains that will now again divide them.

Most translations do not understand the context, incorrectly translating *bether* into something it doesn't mean. Or, like the NKJV, they punt, calling them the mountains of Bether. Though not incorrect, they could translate Bether as a proper name, Division, but saying Bether doesn't explain anything.

She will continue alone, and he will head back over the mountains and hills that will separate them until the time when *the love* is awakened and she is so inclined.

We can now turn our focus to evaluating a few of the verses to learn the tenor of what is being presented concerning Christ and the redeemed.

Arise, to you, my querida, my beautiful (the redeemed of the Lord) –
And walk to you (to walk is the conduct of one's life, as in Ephesians 2, etc.).
11 For, behold, the winter passed over (the hidden time, before Christ's coming),
The rain slid by – walked to it (the rainy season, the time of preparation for the harvest cycle, is over).
12 The inflorescences seen in the land (life and abundance has come).
Time the song touched (a time of jubilation and joy),
And voice the turtledove heard in our land (the *tor*, dove and emblematic of Christ, is given as an offering for trespasses, as in Leviticus 5, etc.).

13 The fig spiced her crudes (the time of Christ's cross, his interment, being "spiced" as in John 19:40, which then brings about the restored spiritual connection to God, represented by the fig),
And the vines cluster – gave aroma (the time when the basic expression of the True Vine is revealed and His branches begin their growth to maturity).
Arise, walk, my querida, my beautiful –
And walk to you (begin the conduct of the redeemed).

Then the Beloved described how His beloved appears to Him, asking to see her appearances and hear her voice. It is the call of Christ for His people to conduct their lives properly and proclaim the word.

Her song of the vineyard was an appeal to grasp the foxes that bind the vines. It is a note by the redeemed to keep anything that trips one up (foxes) out of the vineyard. In other words, it is a note of protecting against false doctrines within the vineyard, the opposite of what Israel did as noted by Jesus in Matthew 21:33-44.

Without stretching the typology too far, the notes concerning Christ are exceptional. The time of His coming, the time of year that He was crucified, the events surrounding it, such as in the giving of the Spirit at the time when the grape clusters begin to turn to fruit approximately fifty days after the first appearance of the buds (Pentecost), etc., fit perfectly with what is presented here.

This explains why "Song the songs" is read at the Passover each year. It explains the love of God for the people of the world that is found in Christ, the true Passover Lamb.

God has set the cycles, seasons, geography, etc., in Israel so that they match the life and events of Jesus and His ministry. God is telling the people of the world a story that revolves around His life and which is directed toward those who are His, the redeemed of mankind.

The time of night, when the day has puffed, refers to the time when our work will cease and the Lord will return for His beloved. Our closing verse will explain that.

The cross of Jesus Christ is the highest expression of God's love for the people of the world. To appropriate what it signifies, God merely asks you to believe the gospel. He is looking for faith from His faithless creatures. Be a person of faith. Believe!

Closing Verse: *"But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.* [5] *You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor*

of darkness. [6] Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. [7] For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. [8] But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. [9] For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, [10] who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him." 1 Thessalonians 5:4-10

Next Week: Song of Songs 3:1-5 Such a beautiful passage, not a part but the whole... (I Shall Seek Whom Loved, My Soul) (7th Song of Solomon Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. He alone is the perfect example of love – untarnished, unblemished, and completely pure and holy. He offers this love to you. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Song of Songs 2:8-17 (CG)

8 Voice! My beloved –
Behold! This coming!
Springing upon the mountains,
Leaping upon the hills.
9 Comparing my beloved
To gazelle or to fawn, the stags.
Behold! This standing behind our wall –
Looking from the windows,
Blossoming from the lattices.
10 Answered, my beloved, and said to me:
Arise, to you, my querida, my beautiful –
And walk to you.
11 For, behold, the winter passed over,
The rain slid by – walked to it.
12 The inflorescences seen in the land.
Time the song touched,
And voice the turtledove heard in our land.
13 The fig spiced her crudes,
And the vines cluster – gave aroma.
Arise, walk, my querida, my beautiful –
And walk to you.
14 My dove in rifts the rock,
In cover the step,

Cause me to see your appearances,
Cause me to hear your voice.
For your voice – pleasant,
And your appearance – beautiful."
15 Grasp to us foxes,
Foxes little, binding vines,
And our vines cluster.
16 My beloved to me, and I to him –
The "pasturing in the lilies."
17 Until that puffs the day,
And flit the shadows.
Revolve!
Resemble to you, my beloved
To gazelle or to fawn, the stags,
Upon the mountains division.

Song of Songs 2:8-17 (NKJV)

8 The voice of my beloved!
Behold, he comes
Leaping upon the mountains,
Skipping upon the hills.
9 My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag.
Behold, he stands behind our wall;
He is looking through the windows,
Gazing through the lattice.
10 My beloved spoke, and said to 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 singing has come,
And the voice of the turtledove
Is heard in our land.
13 The fig tree puts forth her green figs,
And the vines *with* the tender grapes
Give a *good* smell.

Rise up, my love, my fair one,
And come away!
14 "O my dove, in the clefts of the rock,
In the secret *places* of the cliff,
Let me see your face,
Let me hear your voice;
For your voice *is* sweet,
And your face *is* lovely."
15 Catch 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 feeds *his flock* among the lilies.
17 Until the day breaks
And the shadows flee away,
Turn, my beloved,
And be like a gazelle
Or a young stag
Upon the mountains of Bether.

SONG OF SONGS 3:1-5
(I SHALL SEEK WHOM LOVED, MY SOUL)

Many years ago, I heard the story of a guy who went to China as a missionary. While there, he led a man to the Lord. This Chinese man found that Jesus is the Lord God and that He alone can save mankind.

An understanding of who Jesus is and what He has done logically leads to the conclusion that He is the only way to be reconciled to God. If there is a disconnect between us and God, and if God Himself united with humanity in Christ to make the reconciliation possible, then any other religious expression must, by default, be false.

Why would God in Christ put in all the effort to join with humanity, live out a tiring and trial-filled earthly existence, allow Himself to be nailed to the cross, just to say, "Don't worry, all paths lead to heaven." The thinking is convoluted and extremely short-sighted.

This should be obvious, but only when the process is thought through. Many people are saved and never think deeply about such details. They believe the gospel, they are saved, and the mechanics of theology beyond that are never considered by them.

From a salvation standpoint, there is nothing wrong with this. In fact, it is exactly why God made the gospel simple. Anything more complicated would keep many from being saved. God knows that is just how limited humans are in thinking.

And yet, in its simplicity, it can also keep people from being saved. The thought that something as simple as belief is capable of saving actually hinders many from accepting it. However, their reason for it hindering them is because they want to be a part of the equation.

They think it is either incredible or foolish to suppose that God doesn't need their help. They cannot believe that salvation excludes any participation on their behalf, with the exception of faith, meaning believing the simple gospel. This is a problem that Paul refers to in our text verse –

Text Verse: *"..but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness." 1 Corinthians 1:24*

Paul explains this stumbling block when referring to Israel in Romans 9-11. In those chapters, he discusses the difficulty Israel faced in accepting that the law they had been under for eons was actually not capable of making them righteous before God.

When Jesus came and demonstrated that this was the case, they could not accept it. In Romans 9, Paul says –

> "What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith; **31** but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. **32** Why? Because *they did* not *seek it* by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. **33** As it is written:
> 'Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense,
> And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.'" Romans 9:30-33

The stumbling stone is the message of God in Christ, meaning faith in the simple gospel. The Chinese man that was saved asked the missionary who led him to the Lord, "Why did you wait so long to come and share this message? My father always knew there was a problem and that he needed God's help to get it resolved. He died without ever hearing this."

Being Chinese, all his life he would have been exposed to all kinds of religious teachings, especially from the Buddhist tradition. However, he was able to deduce that what they believed couldn't be true.

Buddha was as a man and became the Buddha. He supposedly went from the imperfect to the perfect, attaining Nirvana. If thought through, anyone can figure out that this is not possible. Christianity teaches that God came in perfection and became as if imperfect when our sin was imputed to Him on the cross.

This is not only possible, but it also fully explains how we can be made perfect. Great truths such as this are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and… May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. I Shall Compass In the City (verses 1-5)

1 By night on my bed I sought the one I love;

Rather, it is plural: *al mishkavi balaeiloth biqashti eth sheahavah naphshiy* –

"Upon my bed in the nights
Sought whom loved, my soul."

The plural, nights, is variously explained by scholars. Some see it as a repeating event, from night to night. Others see it as something like "in the night hours," or some other poetic use of the word.

It seems likely she is using the word to indicate "night after night." This is how the same expression is used elsewhere –

> "Behold, bless the LORD,
> All *you* servants of the LORD,
> Who by night [*balaeiloth,* lit: in the nights] stand in the house of the LORD!
> **2** Lift up your hands *in* the sanctuary,
> And bless the LORD.
> **3** The LORD who made heaven and earth
> Bless you from Zion!" Psalm 134

She is lying on her bed, seeking out the one she loves. Literally, "whom loved, my soul." As such, it is accepted by many that this is referring to a repeated dream that fills her sleeping hours, and which she is now telling others about.

This may be the case, or it may be a waking dream as we all have, something that fills the hours and keeps us from sleeping. It is still a dream world, but it is one that is based on a reality that exists, not one that the mind merely formulates.

There she is lying on the bed and yearning for her beloved. In this state...

1 (con't) I sought him, but I did not find him.

biqashtiv v'lo m'tsativ – "Sought him, and no found him." She is in her dreamish world, searching for him. No matter where she turns, he is not there. With that stated, the meaning of her next words depends on how the words of verse 1 fit into the timeline...

2 "I will rise now," *I said,*
"And go about the city;

The verbs are cohortative. It is almost as if she is commanding herself to act: *aqumah na vaasov'vah bair* – "I shall arise, pray, and I shall compass in the city." The question

concerning these words is whether they follow verse 1 in time, or if they explain the thought of verse 1.

If the former, she had a dream about looking for her love and couldn't find him. When she woke up from it, she went out to find him for real. If the latter, she stated her unsuccessful search for him and now more fully describes the contents of what she just said.

One can see this second option in the inserted words "I said" of the NKJV. "I was lying on my bed having a dream. I couldn't find my love. So, I said to myself, "I will get up and find him." This seems probable. She began to tell of her thoughts on the bed, and then she explained what was lacking in her first words.

It would be something like this –

I went out on the sea to find my fortune.
It was a rough and difficult life.

I decided when I was young that I would be a sailor.
When I was old enough, I walked to the docks and offered my services.
Off I went to lands of diversity and beauty,
But each stop was also fraught with trials and troubles.
I never attained the wealth I dreamt of.

The first two lines are given as an opening thought that is more fully fleshed out by what is then presented. It is similar to the structure of many passages in the Bible. For example, Genesis 1 provides the essential details to set up the rest of the narrative.

Genesis 2 then backs up to the sixth day of creation and fills in the detail. Understanding this, she implored herself to get up and find her beloved. She couldn't stand not being with him and so she rose to act, even though this has occurred on her bed, meaning in a dream. In rising, she went...

2 (con't) In the streets

bash'vaqim – "In the streets." This is the fourth and last use of *shuq*, a street, in the Bible. All four uses are in the writings of Solomon. It is derived from the verb *shuq*, to overflow. One can think of a vat overflowing and running along like a stream. Hence, such a street is a place where there is the running to and fro of activity.

One can see this in Ecclesiastes 12 –

> "When the doors are shut in the streets [*shuq*],
> And the sound of grinding is low;
> When one rises up at the sound of a bird,
> And all the daughters of music are brought low.
> **5** Also they are afraid of height,
> And of terrors in the way;
> When the almond tree blossoms,
> The grasshopper is a burden,
> And desire fails.
> For man goes to his eternal home,
> And the mourners go about the streets [*shuq*]." Ecclesiastes 12:4, 5

The streets are filled with the sounds of busy life (verse 4), and yet the aged cannot hear the boisterous sounds because of hearing loss. Eventually the person died and was mourned by the paid wailers hired for such occasions in biblical times. They would go up and down the streets wailing for the dead, calling attention to all concerning his passing.

The woman is willing to go out into the busy streets to find him...

2 (con't) and in the squares

u-barkhovoth – "and in the plazas." The *rechov* is a broad open area within a city like our modern plaza. Quite often, they were in front of each city gate, but depending on the size of the city, there might be other places set aside for performances, proclamations, and so forth.

Wherever people are gathered, she will make a diligent search for him. She knows he is there and she is determined to find him.

The words in these clauses are set in parallel to the final words of the previous clause –

I shall compass in the city,
In the streets and in the plazas.

She has determined to go all around the city in order to find the one she loves. Whether he is idling in a café on a busy side street or listening to a musical in an open plaza, she has set her mind on finding him...

2 (con't) I will seek the one I love."

Again, the verb is cohortative: *avaqashah eth sheahavah napshiy* – "I shall seek whom loved, my soul." It is as if she is commanding herself to arise and go out to find him. His love is driving her to the point of impatience to see him. And so, up she goes at the internal command, heading out. However...

2 (con't) I sought him, but I did not find him.

biqashtiv v'lo m'tsativ – "Sought him, and no found him." In her dream world, she has failed in her endeavor. She looked, but he elusively remained out of her reach, something quite common in such dream or dreamlike states.

The words here tend to confirm the thought that verse 2 is an explanatory description of verse 1 –

Upon my bed in the nights sought whom loved, my soul,
Sought him, and no found him.

I shall seek whom loved, my soul.
Sought him, and no found him.

She started with the basic thought, backed up, and then presented the fuller thought. Understanding that, she is not finished with the expanded explanation of events...

3 The watchmen who go about the city found me;

She uses verbs to explain those she encountered: *m'tsauni ha'shom'rim hasv'vim bair* – "Found me, the guardings, the 'compassings in the city.'" As she is going throughout the city, those who guard it, regularly compassing it while looking for miscreants, found her. She has searched and come up with nothing. However, maybe they came across him...

3 (con't) ***I said,***
"Have you seen the one I love?"

The NKJV continues with its explanatory inserts. The words are briefer and give the sense that the events are happening as she speaks them: *eth sheahavah naphshiy r'item* – "Whom loved, my soul, seen?"

In her dream, she is wandering about the city, not finding her love. So desperate is she to find him, that her mind remembers that guards walk around the city as well. And so she whips them up in her thoughts. Upon meeting them, she eagerly asks if they have come across him.

Some scholars have noted that this must be in the past, in her hometown, because she doesn't explain who her beloved is. Therefore, they must know her and know who he is. As such, they deduce that it is a small city where everyone knows everyone else.

Such an analysis fails to consider the type of literature. It is poetic and only briefly explanatory. The few words could involve them stopping, having an extended conversation where she describes him to them, their answer in the negative, her thanking them, followed by all of them saying goodbye.

And more, if this is a dream, the brevity is perfectly in line with dreams. Everything in such an encounter is implied in a meeting, but the dream itself presses on toward the goal without giving all the minute details. There is no need to assume the account is in her hometown and not in Jerusalem.

The narrative isn't focusing on the where of it. Therefore, such details are left unstated. Everything that happens is short, to the point, and dramatic as she explains the unfolding dream.

Whether they stopped and talked and told her they had not seen him or they ignored her question and continued on, the point is that her beloved remained unfound by her. However, good news lies ahead...

4 Scarcely had I passed by them,

kim'at sheavarti mehem – "According to little, which passed from them." Though the NKJV is a paraphrase, it expresses the intent well. She saw the guards walking around on their watch and she asked if they had seen her beloved. Whatever the response from them involved, it didn't help her out. But then, just moments after passing them by it was...

4 (con't) When I found the one I love.

ad shematsathi eth sheahavah naphshiy – "Until which found whom loved, my soul." The tension in her dream, which has built up since the first words of verse 1, is now

relieved. Moments after the disappointment of not being told where her beloved was, he is there. She has found him! And...

4 (con't) I held him and would not let him go,

The aspect of the first verb is perfect while the second is imperfect: *akhaztiv v'lo arpenu* – "Seized him, and no release him." The word *akhaz*, seize, is generally used in a strong and even forceful manner. Along with the act is normally the idea of holding what is seized in possession.

Adding to that, she uses the word *raphah*, to slacken. Thus, the words give the sense of, "I seized him, holding fast, and there is no way I am letting my tight grip go."

She searched, finally found him, and now there she was ensuring that he would not get out of her hands...

4 (con't) Until I had brought him to the house of my mother,

ad shehavitiv el beith imi – "Until which brought him unto house my mother." At this point, the intent could be anything. "Mom, I finally found the man of my dreams." Or she may be using the thought of her mother's house to speak of the whole family, "Hey everyone, I have found the man of my dreams."

We are left to speculate what is on her mind. However, the unspecified nature of the act is immediately brought to clarity...

4 (con't) And into the chamber of her who conceived me.

v'el kheder horathi – "And unto chamber my conceiving." The meaning is obvious, "This is where I was conceived. Let us repeat the event that took place on that day so new birth will take place."

She is dreaming of the moment that will take place. In the previous chapter, he had come to her and asked her to come out so he could hear her voice.

She would not come out, but she did sing him a song of the vineyard. However, at evening time, she had told him to scamper home –

My dove in rifts the rock,
In cover the step,

Cause me to see your appearances,
Cause me to hear your voice.
For your voice – pleasant,
And your appearance – beautiful.

15 Grasp to us foxes,
Foxes little, binding vines,
And our vines cluster.

16 My beloved to me, and I to him –
The 'pasturing in the lilies.'

17 Until that puffs the day,
And flit the shadows.
Revolve!
Resemble to you, my beloved, to gazelle or to fawn, the stag,
Upon the mountains division.

When he was gone, she went to bed and dreamt the same dream she always had. Someday she would go out to find him, and bring him into the very place she was conceived. With that, she again charges the daughters of Jerusalem with the same words as verse 2:7...

5 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
By the gazelles or by the does of the field,
Do not stir up nor awaken love
Until it pleases.

hishbati etkhem b'noth y'rushalim bitsvaoth o b'ayloth hasadeh im tairu v'im t'or'ru eth haahavah ad shetekh'pats –

"Adjured you, daughters Jerusalem,
In gazelles or in does the field –
If wakens and if awakens the love,
Until she inclines."

Because the words are letter-for-letter identical to verse 2:7, refer back to that sermon if you need to refresh your mind concerning what is being said. The main point of them, though, is that she adjures the daughters of Jerusalem to be like the gazelles or does of the field. They are to be timid and wary as they go about in search of love.

With these words complete, the second major break in the song is realized. Two more are yet ahead at 5:1 and 8:4.

I will seek the Lord until I find Him
I know He is there, but I'm not sure what to do
Everything I have checked out is forbidding and grim
But the truth is there. And God, through it, I will find You!

You have instilled in us the knowledge of good and evil
I certainly know that this is true
And so, I can run from every lie of the devil
Until the day I find the truth, and come running to You

If I never find it and my life passes away
There is one thing I still will never do
I will not accept what is false. I will never go that way
Because I know there is truth that would have led me to You

II. Seeking the Lord

The main point of these five verses is diligence in seeking. They also focus on not awakening love until the appropriate time. As they are words in "Song the songs," meaning the greatest of all songs ever penned, there must be an underlying lesson in what is stated.

The woman is going back in time to the repeated thoughts on her bed about the one whom her soul loves. She is explaining the thoughts to those who would hear and, hopefully, emulate. That is seen in the charge that she has given them.

She didn't just say, "I want a man, and I'm going out to find one." Rather, she has one man in mind that she will search for until she finds him. When she finds him, she will grasp him and not let him go. That was seen in the aspect of the verbs in verse 4. The first was perfect while the second was imperfect.

She knew he was out there, she searched thoroughly, and when her goal was attained, she held him continuously. He was not getting out of her hands until her goal was realized. Then she spoke the exact same adjuration she had made before, to the letter, in fact –

Adjured you, daughters Jerusalem,
In gazelles or in does the field –
If wakens and if awakens the love,
Until she inclines.

As explained in the previous sermon, the idea of these words is to have one's priorities right. We are not to fall in love with any god. The people of the world are to be on alert, wary of anything that could awaken inappropriate love in us.

Rather, we are to allow the love (*agapē*, noun, fem.) of God, embodied in the Person of Jesus Christ, to awaken 'the love' that is truly love, as John says, "for God is love [*agapē*, noun, fem.]" (1 John 4:8).

As we saw, it is the same words as found in the Greek translation of this verse, "if you should arise and awaken the love [*ten agapen*: the love]." God is love. God in Christ is the embodiment of God's love. The adjuration of the woman is to not be led astray by other loves but allow the love of God in Christ to awaken God's love.

But she has said this in these verses after noting her search –

Upon my bed in the nights sought whom loved, my soul,
Sought him, and no found him.

2 "I shall arise, I pray, and I shall compass in the city,
In the streets and in the plazas,
I shall seek whom loved, my soul.
Sought him, and no found him.

If the symbolism as presented is correct, there is a point being made here that escapes many in the church based on a faulty evaluation of what the Bible is saying.

We have seen in the previous sermons that this woman is being used as a type of the redeemed of the Lord. She is conveying to her audience how she came to find the love that she possesses. Her desire is the beloved she now has and whom she has been interacting with throughout the book.

The book began with the attraction the two felt for one another, explaining why it was so. The first chapter ended with the two in the garden together. After that, the first verses of Chapter 2 presented how that union in the garden came about, finishing with

the adjuration to not waken love until she inclines. That was the end of the first main section.

The next section, which formed the content of last week's sermon, went back to explain why she so adjured them. It gave hints of the time of the coming of Christ and of the establishment of the church age. What God in Christ is doing during this age is the love that all should seek after.

Think of the Chinese man who heard the gospel and received it. Like his father, he knew what was false, but until he heard the truth, he didn't have any idea how things between God and him could be reconciled.

These five verses take the woman back further to her (meaning the redeemed of the Lord) attitude even before she met Him. She sought Him night after night but didn't find Him.

At this point, we can think of the father of the Chinese man. He knew there was a problem between himself and God, but he didn't know how it could be resolved. He just knew that the religious ideas he had been exposed to were not correct.

He sought diligently but could not find what he was looking for. However, in this process, he didn't try to awaken love, meaning go after false gods. Instead, he waited for what never came. This is what the woman in "Song the songs" has done.

She has looked for her beloved night after night, knowing He is there, and yet not finding Him. Eventually, however, she found Him and seized Him, refusing to slacken her grip until she had brought Him to her place of conception.

Though the story refers to a human union, the details anticipate the union between the Lord and believers in the new birth. They were conceived in the flesh. There is now a desire to be birthed in the Spirit. Peter explains this in his first epistle –

> "Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,
> **23** having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever." 1 Peter 1:22, 23

This is the reason why the second adjuration is placed here concerning awakening love until it inclines. The woman, seen as a type of the redeemed, finds her true love, holds

fast to Him, and refuses to let Him go. The meaning is that the redeemed maintain their doctrine to the end.

To let go of proper doctrine is to not hold onto the true love. This doesn't mean a loss of salvation for the saved, but a lack of salvation for those who could otherwise be redeemed.

As noted already, the main point of these verses is that of diligence in seeking. One cannot seek unless he is able to do so. The "Song the songs" has been structured so far in a manner that goes backwards to explain how this greatest song is realized.

One cannot be intimate with the Lord prior to meeting Him. One cannot meet Him unless there is a mutual attempt at it coming about. But that couldn't occur unless He came and made the union possible.

But even if He came, without people wanting to participate in His coming, there wouldn't be any reason for Him to come. This is the point of today's verses –

> "The woman said to Him, 'I know that Messiah is coming' (who is called Christ). 'When He comes, He will tell us all things.'" John 4:35

This woman at the well would not have said that if she didn't believe He was coming. And more, she expected to learn from Him when He came. She may not have been actively seeking Him at the time, but she was aware that His time would come.

As I just said, one cannot seek unless he is able to do so. The passage today tells us that people can, in fact, seek the Lord. Pretty much everyone on the planet is seeking "God" in some form or fashion. Most are just doing it wrong.

To say that Muslims are not seeking God would be a laughable statement. To say that people who convert to Islam are not seeking God would be even more laughable. They are, in fact, seeking Him. But they have not properly thought through the details or they have ignorantly rejected what has been presented (as Paul says Israel has done in Romans 9-11).

By taking verses out of context, including Paul's words of Romans 3, various doctrines have arisen, like Calvinism, that claim that man has no capacity or will to seek after God. That is proven false in humanity every day of the year. They are seeking. Most are just wrong in their approach –

> “By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, ‘and was not found, because God had taken him’; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God. **6** But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him,* for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” Hebrews 11:5,6

In fact, when Paul spoke to those in Athens, it was one of his main points of doctrine –

> “And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, **27** so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us”.
>
> -Acts 17:26, 27

The word Paul uses there is *zéteó*. It signifies “to seek by *inquiring*; to investigate to reach a *binding* (*terminal*) resolution; to search, ‘getting to the bottom of a matter’” (HELPS Word Studies).

It is the same word that the Greek translation of the Old Testament uses three times in the first two verses of our sermon today. She sought out, looking for her beloved. In type, she is humanity who not only searches out God but does so to get to the bottom of the matter and, thus, becoming the redeemed of the Lord.

This is why this book is labeled “Song the songs” or the greatest song ever written. It is a song about the mutual, not forced, love of God for His people and His people for the true God as He has revealed Himself in the Person of Jesus Christ.

Although the book is very difficult and even confusing, it is laid out in a way that shows us how the message can be easily understood. The love between God and His people will bring us back to a place that resembles the original garden of Eden in its beauty and perfection.

To understand how that will come about, the successive verses have so far been structured to keep taking us back in order to understand how to go forward. In other words, “Here is how we got to this stage, but to get to that stage, we had to go through this one. And to understand how we got there, we need to go back again and see what happened.”

At this point, the book is not presenting the same type of exacting typology of the earlier historical writings. Understanding the allegorical nature of the book requires understanding the overall presentation of redemption as found throughout the Bible.

In doing so, we can then understand the process of God's redemption as portrayed in the loving relationship of these two people. Their desires, hopes, and aspirations for being with one another reveal the same characteristics in the mutual relationship that arises between the Lord and His redeemed.

Without understanding the cross of Jesus Christ, and how what it signifies is properly procured by His people, the book remains a mystery. But in grasping the back-and-forth nature of the relationship between these two, we can then grasp the same in our relationship with God and He with us.

Therefore, be sure to seek the Lord, search for Him diligently, and then hold fast to Him, even as He is holding fast to you. Be sound in your doctrine and be firm in what it presents, not waffling or being blown about by others who would seek to ruin your precious relationship with the glorious Lord who came to bring us back to Himself.

Closing Verse: *"Let all those who seek [Greek LXX: zéteó] You rejoice and be glad in You; Let such as love Your salvation say continually,*
'The LORD be magnified!'" Psalm 40:16

Next Week: Song of Songs 3:6-11 *Who is this that my soul will bless...* (Ascending From the Wilderness) (8th Song of Songs sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. He alone is the perfect example of love – untarnished, unblemished, and completely pure and holy. He offers this love to you. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Song of Songs 3:1-5 (CG)

1 Upon my bed in the nights
Sought whom loved, my soul,
Sought him, and no found him.
2 "I shall arise, I pray, and I shall compass in the city,
In the streets and in the plazas,
I shall seek whom loved, my soul.
Sought him, and no found him.

[3] Found me, the guardings, the ‘compassings in the city’ –
Whom loved, my soul, seen?
[4] According to little, which passed from them,
Until which found whom loved, my soul.
Seized him, and no release him,
Until which brought him unto house my mother,
And unto chamber my conceiving.
[5] Adjured you, daughters Jerusalem,
In gazelles or in does the field –
If wakens and if awakens the love,
Until she inclines.

Song of Songs 3:1-5 (NKJV)

[1] By night on my bed I sought the one I love;
I sought him, but I did not find him.
[2] “I will rise now,” *I said,*
“And go about the city;
In the streets and in the squares
I will seek the one I love.”
I sought him, but I did not find him.
[3] The watchmen who go about the city found me;
I said,
“Have you seen the one I love?”
[4] Scarcely had I passed by them,
When I found the one I love.
I held him and would not let him go,
Until I had brought him to the house of my mother,
And into the chamber of her who conceived me.
[5] I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
By the gazelles or by the does of the field,
Do not stir up nor awaken love
Until it pleases.

SONG OF SONGS 3:6-11
(ASCENDING FROM THE WILDERNESS)

The words of the passage today are exciting to read, even if they are difficult to understand. There is so much imagery in them that the mind is stimulated to form pictures as one progresses.

Reading one version of them will give you an idea of what the translator thinks is going on. Reading another version, and a completely different picture of what is presented will arise. Having said that, the more they are considered, the more confusing they can become.

Who is coming out of the wilderness in verse 6? What is the fear of the night in verse 8? Questions like these seem obvious until you read commentaries and discover there are vastly different scholarly views concerning them. You might ask, "How can that be? This is what it says."

The NKJV, for example, doesn't just translate the words, but they also add in extra-biblical identifiers intended to help the reader know what is going on. For example, all six verses in the passage are classified by the identifier, "The Shulamite."

I have avoided using that term so far because her identification as a Shulamite doesn't actually come until Chapter 6.

Another problem with saying "The Shulamite" is that the translators could be wrong. How do we know it's not Solomon speaking? How do we know it isn't a narrator talking about Solomon? How do we know it isn't a narrator talking about the woman?

Text Verse: *"Gird Your sword upon Your thigh, O Mighty One,*
With Your glory and Your majesty." Psalm 45:3

A passage like the one today is complicated. I was still working on the first verse two hours after I began. Several times during the day, I had to go back and retype things because I realized what I had typed initially was rong.

Each word has been meticulously chosen to slowly and methodically reveal what is going on. To miss a single point can lead to a completely different conclusion. And even when

a line of thought is considered correct, there are times where I will still say something like “Either way,” indicating that I am not entirely certain.

One might be inclined to think, “C’mon, this thing was written 2500 years ago! Enough people have looked at it to know exactly what is being said.” If you think that way, your thinking is amiss.

Typology has been evident throughout the books of Moses and the historical writings we have looked as so far. Most commentators don’t discuss that in their analyses. But in “Song the songs,” they almost exclusively focus on typology and allegory.

Unfortunately, their ideas about what is being hinted at from an allegorical or pictorial perspective are so outlandish that I don’t even bother considering them.

That tells us how difficult the words really are. Books that are specifically intended to give us typology, such as Joshua, are ignored in that regard. So far, this book only gives general hints of such things. And yet, it is almost exclusively evaluated as if this was its only purpose.

In the end, I hope you will enjoy what is presented. The typology of Christ is a bit more pronounced than some of the other passages we have seen so far. It is still a love song with vivid descriptions of the character for us to revel in.

Such wonderful things are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and… May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Dread in the Nights (verses 6-8)

6 Who *is* this coming out of the wilderness

mi zoth olah min ha’midbar – “Who this ascending from the wilderness?” The words “this” and “ascending” are feminine. As such, it is generally accepted that this is referring to the woman being brought forth in a bridal procession.

A minority opinion is that the next verse will explain what the “this” is while the “who” is speaking not of an individual, but as a feminine whole, such as “who is this procession.” The same words, *mi zoth*, are used again in verses 6:10 and 8:5 where they are certainly speaking of the woman.

Either way, being poetic, the words introduce what will only later be identified. They are intended to bring a sense of wondering and anticipation to the minds of those hearing the lines.

As for the wilderness, it is any place that is uncultivated, usually with sparse vegetation. Therefore, the contrast to the one coming out of the wilderness is highlighted. She is coming...

6 (con't) Like pillars of smoke,

k'thimaroth ashan – "According to columns smoke?" The one coming from the wilderness is coming "according to" not "with." As such, this may not be speaking of people actually surrounding a bridal procession with incense. Rather, it is referring to how she appears as she ascends.

When Israel came out of the wilderness, they were preceded by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night (Numbers 14:14). Someone in the distance may see the sight and say, "That looks like a column of smoke."

In fact, that is how many interpret this. They say it is speaking of Israel as they were brought out of the wilderness after forty years of wanderings. That seems forced because there was one column, it was of cloud, and the word here is not the same.

This word is *timarah*, a word believed to be derived from *tamar* or *tomer*, both of which refer to a palm. It is a column reaching upwards like a palm. This word is found only here and in Joel 2 –

> "And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth:
> Blood and fire and pillars [*timarah*] of smoke." Joel 2:30

What seems most likely is that the man is saying this woman is ascending from the wilderness like columns of smoke. It is her physical appearance as she approaches that is poetically being described. One can think of her in Mideastern robes, ascending to him. As she does, the garments move like palm fronds swaying in the wind.

With this vivid picture in mind, he continues...

6 (con't) Perfumed with myrrh and frankincense,

The verb is passive: *m'qutereth mor u-l'vonah* – "Smoked – myrrh and frankincense." It is as if the columns, her flowing garments, are being continuously smoked with myrrh and frankincense as she ascends, allowing the fragrances to waft upon the winds.

As was seen in Chapter 1, myrrh, *mor*, is an aromatic resin used in perfuming. It is derived from *marar*, bitter. The name gives the sense of "distilling in drops." It was seen in Exodus 30 in the making of the special incense for burning in the tabernacle.

Myrrh comes from a shrub and can be obtained in one of two ways. The first is the purest form where it naturally exudes from the plant. This is the "myrrh of freedom," or "free-flowing myrrh." Inferior myrrh comes from the bark when incisions are made in it.

Myrrh is fragrant to smell, but bitter to the taste. The prominent idea that it symbolizes is love. More especially, love in an intimate union, but not necessarily sexual in nature.

Frankincense, *levonah*, comes from *lavan*, white. That is derived from *lavan*, to be or make white or to purify. It also signifies to make bricks because bricks whiten when they are dried. The name is perhaps given because of its white resin and resulting white smoke when it is burned.

Myrrh was used in making the holy anointing oil recorded in Exodus 30. Frankincense was used in making the incense, also recorded in Exodus 30. Both were presented to Jesus by the magi in Matthew 2:11. Along with these two, it next says...

6 (con't) With all the merchant's fragrant powders?

Rather: *mikol avqath rokhel* – "From all powder peddling." It is not that the pillars were being smoked with all of the fragrances, including these two, but these two specifically were being used by her out of all of the fragrances that the peddler sold.

The word *rakal*, to peddle, is a verb. It signifies to travel for trading. In this case, it speaks of the dealings of a spice merchant.

7 Behold, it *is* Solomon's couch,

hineh mitatho shelishlomoh – "Behold! His bed, that to Solomon." As noted in the previous verse, a lesser opinion concerning the passage is that the words explain what the "Who this" were speaking of –

“Who this ascending from the wilderness,”
“Behold! His bed, that to Solomon.”

The word bed, *mittah*, ultimately comes from a root signifying to stretch out or bend away, including moral deflection. It is feminine, so this opinion is that the whole scene that surrounds his bed is being referred to with the singular words “who this.” If this is the case, then the bed is being used in parallel with the word palanquin, which will be noted in verse 9.

This is how the NKJV translates the entire passage, meaning that all six verses are referring to the coming of Solomon. In 2 Samuel 3:31, the word *mittah* is used to describe a funeral bier, a bed for the dead which was being carried. Thus, this interpretation is not impossible. The palanquin would be a traveling couch for reclining rather than merely a seat.

If the previous verse was speaking of the woman, then this verse supposedly switches from focusing on her to focusing on him.

However, I argue for a third possibility. The entire passage is referring to the woman who is being brought out of the wilderness. Solomon has sent his palanquin to carry her to Jerusalem.

Whichever is correct, the meaning of the name Solomon is most likely Recompense. Of this bed of Solomon, it next says...

7 (con’t) *With* sixty valiant men around it,

shishim giborim saviv lah – “Sixty mighties around to it.” Whether the bed is the palanquin or not, and whether it is Solomon or the woman on it, the words here are simple enough. The bed itself is surrounded by sixty warriors. However, the word is an adjective, *geber*, signifying strong or mighty. Being plural, it is sixty mighties. They are...

7 (con’t) Of the valiant of Israel.

migiborey Yisrael – “From mighties Israel.” These would be specially selected men who were chosen out of the army to act as a security guard, like the honor guard who serve before the president.

8 They all hold swords,

Rather: *kulam akhuze kherev* – "They all seized sword." It is not that they are holding swords, something a coming clause will refute. The word *akhaz* signifies to seize, often with the added idea of holding in possession. The meaning is that they all seized swords, taking the life of a warrior as their profession. Their state is...

8 (con't) ***Being*** **expert in war.**

m'lum'de milkhamah – "Taught war." Having seized the sword, meaning taking on the life of a warrior, they were then taught war. The use of participles is telling a story about them, explaining why they were selected to serve Solomon.

Because of their decision to be warriors, followed by their training and conditioning in becoming mighties, they were qualified to serve as attendants to the king. As such, they surrounded his bed...

8 (con't) **Every man** ***has*** **his sword on his thigh**

ish kharvo al y'rekho – "Man – his sword upon his thigh." This tells us why the translations that say they are holding their swords are wrong. They are men who have seized the sword, trained in war, and who now stand as guards around the king as his protectors. Their swords are on their thighs, ready to be grasped if necessary. They are "just in case" men...

8 (con't) **Because of fear in the night.**

mipakhad baleloth – "From dread in the nights." The word fear is not speaking of Solomon's fear, as if he was terrified of going to sleep, so he surrounded himself with warriors. Instead, it is the object that could harm, here called fear. This is how it is used, for example, in Psalm 91 –

> "You shall not be afraid of the terror by night,
> *Nor* of the arrow *that* flies by day." Psalm 91:5

Because of the way things are being portrayed here, the scene seems to make the most sense as being the woman, not Solomon, who is the main subject. She was pictured as ascending from the wilderness.

From there, Solomon's traveling bed was presented to her to carry her to him. The words of this verse are given as a description of the details of her protection as she traveled.

Any terror that may come against the caravan on its way to meet the king would be dealt with by the warriors assigned to protect her. The trip from Shunem, which is believed to be the modern city of Sulam, which is in the tribal allotment of Issachar, would take 25 to 50 hours depending on how fast a person walks.

Therefore, "dread in the nights" is a term that covers the night stops along the way. Anything that may arise as a threat was of no concern as she rested while surrounded by sixty mighties. As for the number sixty, it is the product of six and ten.

Six is a number stamped with the thought of human labor. It is the number of man, especially fallen man. Of the number ten, Bullinger says –

"Completeness of order, marking the entire round of anything, is, therefore, the ever-present signification of the number ten. It implies that nothing is wanting; that the number and order are perfect; that the whole cycle is complete." EW Bullinger

Consider what you see and take it to heart
Contemplate what your eyes behold
Don't be in a rush to make a jump start
Go slow and remember what you have been told

If you want joy and gladness of heart
You will take my advice
Don't be in a hurry to make a jump start
Consider my words once and then consider them twice

When you see true happiness, note it as such
And be patient for it to come to you
Rushing ahead is not a sound crutch
Rather, being patient is the thing you should do

II. Go Out and See (verses 9-11)

[9] Of the wood of Lebanon
Solomon the King
Made himself a palanquin:

The NKJV jumbles up the clauses: *apir'yon asah lo ha'melekh sh'lomoh meatse hal'vanon* –

“Palanquin made, to him, the king – Solomon,
From woods the Lebanon.”

The word translated as palanquin is found only here in Scripture, *apir’yon*. The BDB Lexicon says there is “no plausible Shemitic etymology” for it. It’s not just that there is no Hebrew root for it, but there is no root found in any of the languages which descend from Noah’s son Shem.

Therefore, they refer to the *Yule Glossary of Anglo-Indian Words* where the Sanskrit *paryanka*, a litter-bed, is identified as the possible source. Indians descend from Japheth, not Shem. Having an Indian word still makes sense based on other words in the Song which have an eastern flavor, such as the nard of verse 1:12.

The Greek translation uses the word *phoreion*, coming from *phero*, to bear. Greeks also descend from Japheth. Due to the Japheth connection, *paryanka* of the Indian Sanskrit seems likely.

Due to this, it is, therefore, a palanquin large enough to lay down in. These were common in India and were often highly decorated. Someone traveling to obtain nard and other Indian items may have been questioned about the things he saw while there, and such a palanquin might have been mentioned.

That would explain the words, “Palanquin made, to him, Solomon.” He heard the idea, liked it, and so, he directed one to be made. It is speculation, but there is a similar thought presented in 2 Kings 16 –

> “Now King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria, and saw an altar that *was* at Damascus; and King Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the design of the altar and its pattern, according to all its workmanship. [11] Then Urijah the priest built an altar according to all that King Ahaz had sent from Damascus. So Urijah the priest made *it* before King Ahaz came back from Damascus.”
>
> -2 Kings 16:10, 11

Of this Indian style palanquin, it is described as having been built, “From woods the Lebanon.” In other words, it wasn’t of one type of wood, but several, each having been imported from Lebanon. Notable woods from Lebanon include the cedar, cypress, and algum.

The name Lebanon comes from the same word, *lavan*, that frankincense is derived from. The land is identified with the white mountain, covered in snow. That then identifies the whole mountain range that crosses the area.

The narrator next turns to a more meticulous description. Not only was it made from woods of Lebanon but also...

[10] He made its pillars *of* silver,

amudav asah kheseph – "His pillars, made silver." Because the previous verse said Solomon made the palanquin "to him," meaning for himself, it is as if he is fashioning his personal articles. Thus, rather than "its," they are "his" pillars, supports, etc.

The *amud*, pillar, comes from *amad*, to stand. It is the same word used to describe the pillar that went before Israel in the wilderness, the pillars of the temple in Jerusalem, etc.

These would be pillars from the base to hold up a roof or canopy covering the bed. In the Bible, silver, *keseph*, consistently pictures redemption. Next...

[10 (con't)] Its support *of* gold,

r'phidato zahav – "His spreading, gold." It is another word found only here in Scripture, *rephidah*. It is derived from *raphad*, to spread or relax, which was used in verse 2:5, "spread me in the apples." It is widely translated as base, canopy, covering, bottom, support, seat, reclining place, floor, rail, back, pavement, top, etc.

Those options cover pretty much the entire structure. Due to the lack of agreement, a literal translation, spreading, may be the best option. This avoids misleading the reader and it allows the mind to make its own mental images as to what it might be.

However, if I was to guess, I would go with canopy or covering for several reasons:

1) There was certainly a covering, based on the fact that there are supports. But more than that, to not have a covering would be undignified, like carrying a dead person on a bier.
2) It is logical to identify what the supports hold up after identifying the supports.
3) No covering is otherwise described which would be a seemingly impossible omission.
4) As it is what covers the palanquin, it would:

a) Be an appropriate symbol for the king, meaning a covering of gold.
b) Radiate the heat of the sun, keeping things cool.
c) Provide a beautiful sight to behold.

5) The interior is described next. One would assume the description of the outside would be finished before starting on the inside.

Next, it notes...

10 (con't) Its seat *of* purple,

mer'kavo argaman – "His seat, purple." The word *merkav* comes from *rakhav*, to ride or mount. As such, this is its rider, meaning the place where the king would sit or lie. The word is used elsewhere to describe a saddle and also chariots.

The color, *argaman*, signifies purple formed from a mixture of blue and red. Its meaning is thus a combination of what those two colors mean, which is the law for blue, and war, blood, and/or judgment for red.

10 (con't) Its interior paved *with* love

tokho ratsuph ahavah – "His midst, tessellated – love." Again, a word is found only here, *ratsaph*. Strong's defines it as a denominative from *retseph*, a noun signified by a burning coal. If one were to "coal" an interior, it would thus be tessellated.

There would be repeated shapes, like a mosaic pattern, adorning the inside. This would be done with inlays, overlays, stampings, or some other way that was unique and beautiful.

Affixing the word love provides scholars with all kinds of guesswork as to what the exact intent is. Some place the word paved as being an advanced accusative, as in "paved with love." Some say it should be taken as an adjective, "paved in a lovely manner," or as a noun, "paved of love."

Rather, being a noun, it is an independent thought given to describe the state of the tessellation. It is paved love. The tessellation was carefully and meticulously done with the care only a woman could provide, becoming a state of love that exists. Only with that understood as its inherent state, does it next say...

10 (con't) By the daughters of Jerusalem.

mib'noth y'rushalim – "From daughters Jerusalem." The women of Jerusalem may love their king, something evident in various ways. But their tessellation is a provision of love expressed to him.

To understand, we can all know that God loves us because of His care for us. He sent Jesus who is as love from Him. The crucifixion of Jesus was accomplished with love from Him. However, if in our minds we look at the cross with the beaten, bloody, and dead body of the Lord on it, knowing what it signifies, we can rightly say that Jesus is crucified – love.

If somebody asked us what we were looking at, we could respond, "That is love. It is from God." Likewise, every time Solomon got into his palanquin, he could express the same thought, "This is love. It comes from the daughters of Jerusalem."

That thought becomes a perfect segue to the next words...

[11] Go forth, O daughters of Zion,

ts'enah ur'enah b'noth Tsiyon – "Go out and see! Daughters Zion." Scholars seem in agreement that these are not the same women as the daughters of Jerusalem just mentioned. But that seems like a giant stretch. Rather, the words are being presented synonymously.

They were just noted as having tessellated love. Now, rather than repeating the same designation, they are redesignated for emphasis. The women of Jerusalem are the daughters of Zion.

The name Zion, even if not originally Hebrew, is believed to come from the same root as *tsiyun*, a signpost, meaning a monumental or guiding pillar, or *tsiyah*, dryness or drought.

Therefore, it is translated as either Very Dry or Signpost. The connection between the two words is not as disparate as it may seem. In an arid location, something standing would be conspicuous.

[11 (con't)] And see King Solomon with the crown

ba'melekh sh'lomoh – "In the king Solomon." These words are connected to the words "and see" of the previous clause, "Go forth and see...in the king Solomon." The word

raah means to see. However, this is as often as not a way of expressing something more abstract, such as considering, deeming, understanding, etc.

God *saw* that each step of the creation was good. Eve *saw* that the tree of life was good for food. Yehovah came down to *see* Babel as to what was going on there.

If these women were just called to *see* Solomon, it would have said so, "Go see Solomon." However, it says, "in the king Solomon." They are being asked to consider what they see, evaluating him...

11 (con't) With which his mother crowned him

baatarah sheit'rah lo imo – "In the crown that crowned, to him, his mother." This is not referring to the crown of his coronation, but a wedding crown, as will be noted in the next clause. Repeating the word "in" means that what they are to consider continues this first thought –

Go forth and consider –
in the king Solomon
in crown

A particular point in Solomon's life is being highlighted. The crown refers to the one that his mother crowned him with...

11 (con't) On the day of his wedding,

b'yom khathunato – "In day his wedding." It is a word found only here as well, *khathunnah*. It is derived from *khathan* to give away in marriage, and thus to contract affinity by marriage.

Solomon may have been crowned with many crowns. He may have gotten a crown for being the best wrestler at Zion High School. He may have gotten a crown for best archery skills at Ir David College. He may have gotten crowns from other kings for various reasons.

However, the daughters of Jerusalem are being pointed toward considering Solomon for a particular crown that highlights a particular event –

Go forth and consider –
in the king Solomon

in crown
in day his wedding

But even that isn't the end of the "ins." Solomon eventually had lots of weddings. 1 Kings 11 says that he had three hundred wives. Many of them were certainly arranged marriages. However, there is one wedding that stands out. We know this because it is recorded in "Song the songs." It was...

11 (fin) The day of the gladness of his heart.

u-v'yom simkhath libo – "And in day cheerfulness his heart." Solomon truly loved this woman. His heart was cheerful at the thought of marrying her. He may have married other women in order to make an alliance, but if the daughter presented to him was a dud, he probably wouldn't be very cheerful about the union.

However, this is the woman that stole his heart. They are being asked to consider this –

Go forth and consider –
in the king Solomon
in crown
in day his wedding, and
in day cheerfulness his heart

This meticulously worded sentence is intended to take us back to verse 3:5 –

Adjured you, daughters Jerusalem,
In gazelles or in does the field –
If wakens and if awakens the love,
Until she inclines.

A man might marry many women, but a woman was set to marry just one man. The adjuration was made to the women. These words are a concrete example of why a woman should be patient and not stir up love.

Solomon had plenty of chances to get married, but he had one marriage that was set apart from all others. The daughters of Zion, who are the daughters of Jerusalem and who had tessellated love for Solomon, are being instructed on what love is.

What thing can we do to purify ourselves?
Is there something that will make God favor us?

Or should we put our deeds up on the shelves
And simply trust in the work of Jesus?

We are already stained with sin
So it appears there isn't much we can do
In fact, it seems we are already done in
Isn't there some way we can start anew?

It is certain that Jesus is the only way
That's what the word says, claiming it's true
If you want reconciliation on that Day
Call on Jesus! He will carry you through

III. Christ in the Contents

The ongoing narrative has placed the woman, the beloved, as a type or picture of the redeemed of the Lord. She is ascending from the wilderness, a place of God's grace and of closeness to Him, but also a place of testing.

Out of all of the fragrances of the peddler, she is smoked with myrrh and frankincense. Myrrh speaks of bitterness. Frankincense refers to the process of purification but also of works. Both are derived from Jesus' work on the cross. It is He who suffered for His people. It is His works that provide purification for them.

It next noted Solomon's bed. As was seen, the root word indicates stretching out and is inclusive of the idea of moral deflection. Christ's grave would signify such a place. It is the place where man's sin was ultimately disposed of.

The sixty mighties form a unified picture of Christ's work. They are from the mighties of Israel, an apt description of the mighty spiritual men of Israel, but these sixty, anticipating the Lord, together seized the sword. Christ is the ultimate warrior who seized the law and held onto it.

Remembering the typology from many previous sermons, the *kherev*, sword, is identical in spelling to Horeb, the mountain of the law and, thus, emblematic of the law - חרב. The only things that makes the two distinguishable are the later added vowel points.

It doesn't say they all seized swords. Rather, they all seized sword. Christ was taught the war of law. He seized it and prevailed over it. With that, it then said, "Man – his sword upon his thigh." The words are excitingly reflected in Psalm 45:1, our text verse.

The bed, the palanquin as it is later described, was guarded "From dread in the nights." It is a note of the protection of the Lord because He is the Fulfiller of the law. The one who is watched by Him is secure. That is reflected in the first words of Psalm 91 –

> "He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High
> Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
> [2] I will say of the LORD, '*He is* my refuge and my fortress;
> My God, in Him I will trust.'" Psalm 91:1, 2

This psalm was cited earlier to show that the "dread" was not a personal feeling but the object of dread. The number of warriors is also an anticipation of Christ.

Sixty is a product of six and ten. It speaks of His human labor under the law in the appearance of fallen man (6) who completed everything necessary for His redeemed, demonstrating that nothing is wanting and the whole cycle is complete (10).

The focus next changed, describing the palanquin. It is a carrier for a king, but which is used for conducting His betrothed. It was first described as being made from "woods the Lebanon," meaning its trees.

Trees are given as an identification of something. The olive tree has its own symbolism. The cedar, cypress, and oak, each have particular symbolism. The trees of the Lebanon, not being further defined, are thus identified by Lebanon.

As seen, it has the same root as frankincense. Thus, these trees signify what Lebanon signifies, works leading to purification. As this is the king's carrier, anticipating Christ, it would anticipate the works of Christ as the carrier of the one inside.

It is Christ's works, not those of the redeemed, that allow them to be carried to Him. The pillars, standings, of silver anticipate the firm redemption of the Lord. They remain (stand) and endure because of His redemption.

That is then highlighted by the *rephidah*, the spreading. I argued it was a canopy. However, regardless of what it actually is, the gold speaks of Christ's kingship and deity. That is the support which ensures that His works and redemption are capable of restoring us to God – because He is God.

The rider, the *merkav*, is that which carries or transports. Its only description was that it is *argaman*, a mixture of blue and red. It speaks of Christ's embodiment of the law (blue)

and His death in fulfillment of it (red) where judgment was rendered. It is that which carries the redeemed.

The last description was “His midst tessellated – love.” It is a description of the sum total of the mosaic of Christ’s existence, His inner being, which is love. This was said to be “from daughters Jerusalem.”

The form of the word, *mib’noth*, from daughters, is found sixteen times. In all the other fifteen times, it is not referring to “from” as in “this came from her” but “out of” as in “she is from (out of) the daughters of Israel.” Taken in this manner, it would say, “from the daughters of Foundation of Peace.”

Reading it in that manner exactingly describes Christ as the product of the line leading to His incarnation. God set forth the Foundation of Peace in the women in Christ’s genealogy, many of whom are noted in Scripture, such as both daughters of Lot, Tamar of Genesis 38, Rahab the Harlot, etc., leading finally to Mary.

The final verse was its own implied adjuration. The daughters of Zion, Signpost, were essentially being instructed to behold Solomon in the day of his wedding and to consider what they saw through the carefully constructed words.

Solomon, Recompense, is being given as a type of Christ, the Recompense of the Lord for the sins of man. He is the fair payment required for restoration to be realized.

The hints of Christ and the redeemed are being seen throughout the book. It explains why the book is read each Passover.

The roots of each selected word keep pointing to the Person and work of Christ, culminating in the cross. The Passover was given in anticipation of that event. And so, when the Jews read this book each Passover, it is a call for them to see the true “Song the songs.”

Jesus, His life and work, culminating in the cross, is the highest expression of God’s love. They should recognize this each Passover and consider what God has done. As a nation, that has not yet happened. But someday, it will take on a new life that will excite them all their days.

For those who know Jesus, we can read this book and understand that the greatest love song ever written is an event in history that centers on the coming of Jesus to restore us

to God. What a marvelous song it is. Thank God for Jesus Christ who makes intimate and eternal union with God possible.

Closing Verse: *"And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh." Matthew 2:11*

Next Week: Song of Songs 4:1-6 *It is amazing, four sure, and it is intense...* (Myrrh and Frankincense) (9th Song of Songs sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. He alone is the perfect example of love – untarnished, unblemished, and completely pure and holy. He offers this love to you. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Song of Songs 3:6-11 (CG)

6 Who this ascending from the wilderness,
According to columns smoke?
Smoked – myrrh and frankincense,
From all powder peddling.
7 Behold! His bed, that to Solomon –
Sixty mighties around to it,
From mighties Israel.
8 They all seized sword –
Taught war.
Man – his sword upon his thigh.
From dread in the nights.
9 Palanquin made, to him, the king – Solomon,
From woods the Lebanon.
10 His pillars, made silver,
His spreading, gold,
His seat, purple,
His midst, tessellated – love
From daughters Jerusalem.
11 Go out and see! Daughters Zion,
In the king Solomon,
In the crown that crowned, to him, his mother,
In day his wedding,
And in day cheerfulness his heart.

Song of Songs 3:6-11 (NKJV)

6 Who *is* this coming out of the wilderness
Like pillars of smoke,
Perfumed with myrrh and frankincense,
With all the merchant's fragrant powders?
7 Behold, it *is* Solomon's couch,
With sixty valiant men around it,
Of the valiant of Israel.
8 They all hold swords,
Being expert in war.
Every man *has* his sword on his thigh
Because of fear in the night.
9 Of the wood of Lebanon
Solomon the King
Made himself a palanquin:
10 He made its pillars *of* silver,
Its support *of* gold,
Its seat *of* purple,
Its interior paved *with* love
By the daughters of Jerusalem.
11 Go forth, O daughters of Zion,
And see King Solomon with the crown
With which his mother crowned him
On the day of his wedding,
The day of the gladness of his heart.

SONG OF SONGS 4:1-6
(MYRRH AND FRANKINCENSE)

Some of the wording in this passage may seem odd based on our modern understanding of the world. But we have to remember that things have not always been as they are now. One of the verses speaks of the woman's teeth in a metaphor that is easily understood.

There may need to be a bit of explanation, but it is apparent that Solomon is elated about the condition of her teeth. Even today we get excited about nice teeth. But in America, unless the teeth are just exceptional, we would instead be inclined to note the defects rather than the good points of someone's teeth.

However, until recent history, it would have been just the opposite. To understand why, a bit of tooth care history is cited here from a response provided by Google –

> Tooth brushing became common in the United States after World War II, when the military required soldiers to brush their teeth daily. Soldiers brought the practice home with them and spread it to their families.

Here are some other milestones in the history of tooth brushing:

1780: William Addis developed the first mass-produced toothbrush in England.
1938: The first nylon toothbrush was made.
1939: The first electric toothbrush was made.
1960: The first electric toothbrush widely used in the U.S. was invented.

Before this national movement to enhance dental hygiene, it was not a common practice to spend much time on one's teeth. Stained and missing teeth were common, bad breath ruled the day, and people just lived with it.

Text Verse: *"I will greatly praise the LORD with my mouth;*
Yes, I will praise Him among the multitude." Psalm 109:30

Google gave a bit more information on oral hygiene for us to consider –

> Before World War II, only 7% of American households brushed their teeth or had toothpaste. During World War I, the military considered dental disease a national

crisis. The U.S. government issued hygiene kits to soldiers that included toothbrushes, toothpaste, or tooth powder.

Before the toothbrush, people used cloths or sponges dipped in mixtures of honey, salt, and herbal concoctions to clean their teeth. Tooth powders and toothpastes were used as long ago as 5000 B.C. in Egypt.

What was once a practice that was rather laborious and quite often neglected, as can be evidenced in parts of the world to this day, we now have the time, accessibility to quality brushes and pastes, and the modern desire to have healthy teeth.

That knowledge alone is enough to tell us that God isn't worried about halitosis as we praise Him. He is also not concerned if we are missing teeth. If these things were a consideration, the praise from His people for millennia, along with the praise of many in the world today, would be offensive to Him.

God's focus isn't on such things. He desires our praises to be true and heartfelt. The references to healthy teeth in the woman are not to be taken to some unintended extreme as so often happens by people who take something from Scripture out of its intended context.

How Solomon saw the woman in a physical sense is how God looks at us in a spiritual sense. When we keep such boxes straight in our minds, we will avoid a lot of unsound thinking.

Such truths as this are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and… May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. All Twinned (verses 1 & 2)

[1] Behold, you *are* fair, my love!
Behold, you *are* fair!

The words are identical to verse 1:15. The pronouns are feminine, meaning that a male is speaking to a female: *hinakh yaphah rayathi hinakh yaphah* –

"Behold you! Beautiful, my querida.
Behold you! Beautiful!"

The beloved is overtaken by her exquisite beauty. The use of the interjection, behold, draws attention to what he is about to say. Making the proclamation twice is the Bible's way of emphatically declaring a thing.

It is as if he has lost his breath over what his eyes are feasting on. In this stunned state, he next says...

1 (con't) You *have* dove's eyes

These words are also the same as found in verse 1:15. They are more emphatic than the NKJV renders them: *einayikh yonim* – "Your eyes – doves."

The comparison is not to dove's eyes, but that she has eyes like doves – glistening, beautiful, shapely, and so forth.

The word *yonah*, dove, is from the same root as *yayin*, wine. This root signifies to effervesce. Thus, the dove is lively and animated. It carries with it a sense of warmth and love.

As she blinks, he thinks of its wing flitting. As she looks left or right, he thinks of the dove darting through the air. When he looks at the whites, he sees purity, and in the pupil, he sees gentleness and innocence. He is enraptured with her, especially captivated by her dovelike eyes. He continues with...

1 (con't) behind your veil.

These words are new, not found in verse 1:15: *mibaad l'tsamathekh* – "From behind to your veil." The NKJV is not incorrect, but it lacks the fullness of the Hebrew. He is speaking of her eyes from a reference point, which is the veil. "From behind" is the position of her eyes, while "to your veil" is the point of reference.

It is as if there are two doves sitting in a protected alcove as one looks into it to see them. The word *tsamah*, veil, is introduced here. It will be seen twice more in this book, and once in Isaiah 47:2. Some translations say "locks," as if it is referring to her hair. This doesn't seem likely based on how the word is used in Isaiah –

> "Come down and sit in the dust,
> O virgin daughter of Babylon;
> Sit on the ground without a throne,
> O daughter of the Chaldeans!

For you shall no more be called
Tender and delicate.
2 Take the millstones and grind meal.
Remove your veil [*tsamah*],
Take off the skirt,
Uncover the thigh,
Pass through the rivers.
3 Your nakedness shall be uncovered,
Yes, your shame will be seen;
I will take vengeance,
And I will not arbitrate with a man." Isaiah 47:1-3

Further, Strong's notes it is derived from an unused root meaning to fasten on. Thus, a veil seems likely. This is probably not the revolting burka-styled veil forced on women in the Mideast. Rather it is more likely a sheer, small veil like one might see on a harem girl (think of *I Dream of Jeannie*). It is a veil of modesty which accentuates the eyes.

Next, he continues describing her beauty...

1 (con't) Your hair *is* like a flock of goats,

sarekh k'eder ha'izim – "Your hair according to flock the goats." The sense here is that as he looks at her hair, it is the color of goats. But more, it is how goats appear to flow as they walk in clusters, some here, some there, rolling along.

Hair, *sear*, is used in Scripture to signify the existence of an awareness, particularly an awareness of sin. The *ez*, goat is used as an offering for sin, such as –

"And to the children of Israel you shall speak, saying, 'Take a kid of the goats [*s'iyir izim*] as a sin offering, and a calf and a lamb, *both* of the first year, without blemish, as a burnt offering.'" Leviticus 9:3

"And he shall take from the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats [*s'iyire izim*] as a sin offering, and one ram as a burnt offering."
-Leviticus 16:5

The words, *sear*, hair, and *sa'iyr*, kid, are etymologically connected. For example, *sear* is used in Genesis 25:25 when describing Esau as being born hairy, while *sa'iyr* is used in Genesis 27:11 to describe his hairy state.

Intricate connections to other parts of Scripture are being conveyed to us as the man describes his beloved. Of her hair being like goats, he next says...

1 (con't) Going down from Mount Gilead.

shegal'shu mehar gilad – "Which cascaded from Mount Gilead." It is another new and rare word, *galash*. It will only be seen again in verse 6:5. The word gives the sense of rolling, heaping up, or piling up.

Of these words, the BDB Lexicon says, "of flocks of goats, in the simile of a woman's hair; construction & sense rather awkward." It appears they are worried about the verb, which is in the perfect aspect. However, when one understands how goats descend, it isn't awkward at all.

Solomon is thinking of a shepherd leading his flocks down the side of a mountain, in this case Mount Gilead. They would be clumped together in various areas, appearing to be rolling down the hills. Solomon isn't speaking of them as they are cascading, but as they have cascaded – a moment in time.

In his mind, he sees goats on the side of the mountain and compares them to her hair at that moment. It could even be that they stopped on the side of the mountain and reclined, thus "heaped up" as curled locks would appear. Either way, the picture is beautiful to consider.

As has been seen many times in Joshua and Judges, a *har* (mount) is a lot of something gathered. It is synonymous with a large but centralized group of people. Gilead means Perpetual Fountain. Next, the man turns to another of her striking features...

2 Your teeth *are* like a flock of shorn *sheep*

shinayikh k'eder haq'tsuvoth – "Your teeth according to flock the shorn." The *shen*, tooth, is derived from *shanan*, a verb signifying to sharpen or whet. But it is also used when referring to the inculcation of instruction, as in teaching diligently.

The teeth of humans and animals are noted in Scripture, but teeth are also used metaphorically in various ways, such as devouring, ferocity, destruction, strength, power, etc. The word is also translated as ivory in this book and elsewhere.

In this case, he is speaking of her literal teeth being fabulously straight and white because the sheep are shorn. The word translated as shorn is another rare word,

qatsav. It is derived from a primitive root signifying to clip or chop. It is found only here and in 2 Kings 6:6, where Elisha cut off a stick and threw it into water to make an axe head float.

After sheep are shorn, they aren't bulging with hair. Thus, they look straight and even. Also, the brambles, dirt, and so forth that make them look dull or splotchy have been removed. Instead, they are nice and white. It is as if she has been regularly brushing with Crest Advanced Whitening. Ooh Ahh.

One can see from these words that if the word *tsamah* used above is a veil, it is a sheer fabric. Otherwise, he wouldn't be able to describe her teeth until she removed the veil. With a wispy, sheer fabric, however, he would see her teeth and describe them just as he does here. Of these teeth, metaphorically described by sheep, he says...

2 (con't) Which have come up from the washing,

shealu min ha'rakhtsah – "Which ascended from the washing." Not only were the sheep shorn, but they were then washed to accentuate their whiteness. The word is *rakhtsah*, a feminine noun signifying a bathing place. Thus, it is "the washing." The word is found only here and in verse 6:6. Of her pearly whites, there is more good news ahead...

2 (con't) Every one of which bears twins,

shekulam math'imoth – "Which they all twinned." The verb *taam* means to make double or twin. The meaning is that each tooth in her mouth bears its corresponding tooth. Just like sheep coming up two by two from the washing pool, those teeth on the top row are not without their mate on the bottom row. Hooray, she has all her teeth!

The type of verb used here means "to cause twins," in other words, "making twins." But how can a tooth make a twin? Scholars trouble over this, but it is not at all difficult to discern. When the mouth is open, the verb doesn't apply, but when she closes her mouth while still showing her teeth, the joining of the top and bottom rows "makes twins."

As for this description, it would actually be rarer than one might think. We take brushing as a part of daily life, but as noted in the opening comments, it wasn't something practiced by the masses until much later in history.

In fact, it can be inferred from the words of Job and Amos that having teeth that weren't clean was considered a good thing –

"My breath is offensive to my wife,
And I am repulsive to the children of my own body.
18 Even young children despise me;
I arise, and they speak against me.
19 All my close friends abhor me,
And those whom I love have turned against me.
20 My bone clings to my skin and to my flesh,
And I have escaped by the skin of my teeth." Job 19:17-20

"'Also I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities,
And lack of bread in all your places;
Yet you have not returned to Me,'
Says the LORD." Amos 4:6

Job describes skin on his teeth, meaning that he had a film left from what he ate, but it was just enough to keep him from dying. Cleanness of teeth in Amos means a complete deprivation of food, resulting in teeth that have no skin at all on them.

This doesn't mean that cleaning one's teeth, as this young beauty has done, was looked down on. But the whiteness of teeth, though extremely appealing, wasn't considered overly necessary in society. Rather, older societies had more of a British than American attitude toward dental hygiene.

Stained and even missing teeth were just a part of life that wasn't looked down on, even if a mouth with all of its teeth that were radiant was something to be noted with approval. Next, Solomon speaks in a parallel thought concerning her gnifty gnashers...

2 (con't) And none *is* barren among them.

v'shakulah ein bahem – "And bereaved, none, in them." He is particularly fond of this attribute of hers, so he has spoken the thought a second time as a way of highlighting its truly remarkable nature. This is especially rare because even if people took the time to clean their teeth, they could still get knocked out or cracked or fall out.

If it weren't for modern dental techniques, most of us would be showing empty spots when we smile. For sure, I would 😉. She, on the other hand, had none to mar her glistening smile.

The two clauses contain a play on words not noticeable in translations –
shekulam math'imoth / v'shakulah ein bahem

Which they all [*shekulam*] twinned,
And bereaved [*v'shakulah*], none, in them

The use of parallelism, along with the play on words, especially highlights this notable aspect of hers.

There is also a gender discord in the words "Which they all (masc.) twinned (fem.). Keil, the only person I read who even commented on it, says it is an "incorrect exchange" and thinks this "refers to the mothers, none of which has lost a twin of the pair she had borne."

But that confuses the analogy. What seems likely is that the discord is following the earlier words of the verse –

Your teeth (fem. noun) according to flock (masc. noun).
Which they all (the flock) twinned (teeth).

As for the smitten Solomon, his next words continue with high praises for his beloved...

What is true beauty to the Lord?
Is it fancy clothes and well-cut hair?
Is this how you perceive the word?
Is this the focus of all your care?

The Lord looks at the heart, searching for faithfulness
The externals don't matter to Him at all
He doesn't care about a three-piece suit or a fancy dress
In judging others this way, you're headed for a fall

The least in fashion may have faith galore
And the one who is poor may please God the most
Don't get judgmental toward the guy at the door
And in your appearance, do not boast

Be strong in your faith in Christ
That is how your soul will be greatly priced

II. Pasturing in the Lilies (verses 3-6)

[3] Your lips *are* like a strand of scarlet,

k'khut hashani siphthothayikh – "According to thread, the crimson – your lips." He is noting the beauty of her lips, being like the crimson that is obtained from the crimson grub worm. It is the same set of words used in Joshua 2 –

"So the men said to her: 'We *will be* blameless of this oath of yours which you have made us swear, **[18]** unless, *when* we come into the land, you bind this line of scarlet [*khut ha'shani*] cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you bring your father, your mother, your brothers, and all your father's household to your own home.'" Joshua 2:17, 18

Solomon is equating her lips to such a thread of bright crimson. Next, he says a phrase unique to this verse...

[3 (con't)] And your mouth is lovely.

u-midbareikh naveh – "And your wilderness – beautiful." The word *midbar* means wilderness or desert. Translating this as mouth would be the only time, out of 271 uses of the word, that it was translated this way. However, it is probably what Solomon is referring to, as if when she opens her crimson lips, her mouth looks like a beautiful wilderness.

Thus, the words are somewhat parallel but more complementary. But why would he use the term midbar this way? What seems likely is that he is making dual use of both words, lips and wilderness, forming a great play on two words translated as lips (*saphah*) and the word wilderness (*davar*).

The word lip, *sapah*, refers to a language. The word *davar*, word, refers to speech. These are both seen in their first use in Genesis, "Now the whole earth had one language [*saphah*] and one speech [*davar*]" (Genesis 11:1). Isaiah 36:5 also uses both words –

> "I have said: Only, a word of the lips [*davar shephtayim*]! counsel and might are for battle: now, on whom hast thou trusted, that thou hast rebelled against me?" (YLT).

Likewise, the word *midbar*, wilderness, comes from *davar*, to speak, just noted in Genesis and Isaiah. That is identical to the noun *davar*, word. Without the later added

vowel points, the word is the exact same spelling as a form of the noun "and from your word" found in Psalm 119 –

> "Princes persecuted me gratis,
> And from Your words [ומדבריך] startled my heart!" Psalm 119:161 (CG)

Therefore, he may be complimenting her lips and mouth while making a pun by complimenting her dialect and speech. It would certainly account for the very unusual use of the word wilderness –

According to thread, the crimson, your lips (*saphah*).
And your mouth (*midbar*) – beautiful.

According to thread, the crimson, your speech (*saphah*).
And from your words (*midbar*)– beautiful.

Therefore, Solomon could be making a pun that her lips, meaning her language, are like a beautiful crimson thread, and her manner of speaking is beautiful. Every word is carefully chosen, being pleasing to the ear and soothing to the mind.

This would make a marvelous play on words that seems to have eluded scholars all along. There is no doubt he is describing her physical beauty, but his words convey more than just that. He continues with more difficult words...

3 (con't) Your temples behind your veil
***Are* like a piece of pomegranate.**

The translation is defective and misleading. The subject noun, translated elsewhere in the Bible as temple, is singular: *k'phelakh ha'rimon raqathekh mibaad l'tsamathekh* –

"According to slice the pomegranate,
Your countenance from behind to your veil."

The word is *raqah*, meaning thinness. That is why it is translated as temple when Jael banged a tent peg through Sisera's temple in the book of Judges. However, it doesn't have to speak only of that.

Most translations incorrectly use the plural, temples. Some say cheek or cheeks. But that is another word *lekhi*, the cheek or jawbone. One translation says forehead. If he is seeing behind her sheer veil, he is seeing her forehead, temples, cheeks, etc.

Slicing a pomegranate in half leaves a circle with a Y shape where there is red in the Y and on both sides of it. Thus, I say the singular word countenance because the forehead, temple, and cheeks are the thin areas, corresponding to the outside of the Y.

This would cover the areas of thinness on her face collectively being red, maybe from an application of rouge. This is what one would expect of a woman in a wedding procession. Solomon continues next with...

4 Your neck *is* like the tower of David,

The words are dependent on the next clauses to fully understand: *k'migdal David tsavarekh* – "According to Tower David your nape." The word is *tsvvar*, the same word used in verse 1:10 to describe her neck. However, in this case, it is more specifically the back of the neck. The word comes from *tsur*, to bind, besiege, cramp, etc.

It speaks of the binding of the back of the neck which is just what the next clauses will reveal. Thus, in this case, it is referring to the nape. The back of the neck is where there is strength. He is comparing it to the Tower of David, a high fortified tower. Next...

4 (con't) Built for an armory,

Rather, the noun is plural: *banui l'thalpiyoth* – "Built to parapets." The word *talpiyoth* is found only here. Strong's Lexicon says it comes from *tel*, a hill or mound, and *piyoth*, mouths or openings. However, his concordance says it is from an unused root meaning to tower.

The first is probably right. Either way, the plural complicates things, so translators have to be inventive. Some say built with rows of stones, jeweled with shields, built for weapons, etc. The Greek punts and makes it a proper name. But such translations make the *thalpiyoth* something other than a part of the neck.

However, it is surely a thought complement to the preceding clause and describes the neck, not what hangs on it. The Douay-Rheims, bulwarks, and the Catholic Public Domain, ramparts, are probably closer in thought. I went with parapets because it is the upward extension of a wall at the edge of a roof.

Thus, the word corresponds to the idea of height, like the tower of David. A parapet would have "mouths," being crenelated so that soldiers could launch arrows or other projectiles and then go back behind the high edges of it for safety. The bones in her nape would give the sense of parapets...

4 (con't) On which hang a thousand bucklers,

eleph ha'magen talui alav – "Thousand the shield hang upon it." The word *magen* refers to a shield. In this case, Solomon describes the necklace(s) that hang from her nape. It refers to a traditional coin-style necklace with a multitude of circle pendants, like round shields, that are so common in the Middle East, Northern Africa, India, etc.

One can see a tower with parapets ready for battle, the shields hanging there. When an enemy approaches, the shields are taken off display and held by the warriors. They are...

4 (con't) All shields of mighty men.

kol shilte ha'giborim – "All targets the mighties." The word is *shelet*. It is translated elsewhere as shield. Because it is a different word, using a different word to translate it keeps from confusing the reader. A target is another word for a small round shield or buckler and is thus a fitting translation. The word is used in a fashion similar to what is being described in Ezekiel 27 –

> "Men of Arvad with your army *were* on your walls *all* around,
> And the men of Gammad were in your towers;
> They hung their shields [*shelet*] on your walls *all* around;
> They made your beauty perfect." Ezekiel 27:11

Like the first two clauses, this one is given to complement the previous clause. With the explanation of what has been provided, that can now be seen –

*According to Tower David +your nape,
*Built +to parapets.

^Thousand the shield hang upon +it,
^All targets the mighties.

Solomon is having all kinds of fun using things he is familiar with to describe this beautiful woman. Understanding that, he next gets a bit risqué for some people's sensibilities...

5 Your two breasts *are* like two fawns,

sh'ne shadayikh kishnei ophariym – "Two, your breasts, according to two fawns." He is enamored with her breasts and finds a fitting descriptor to use as a metaphor. The

opher is a fawn, coming from *aphar*, dust. Thus, it speaks of the dusty color of them. Of them, he next says...

5 (con't) Twins of a gazelle,

t'omei ts'viah– "Twins, gazelle." This is the first use of *ts'viyah*, a female gazelle. It will only be seen again in verse 7:3. As seen previously, the *tsviy*, gazelle, comes from *tsavah*, to amass or swell, and thus "prominent." That leads to the idea of beauty or splendor, which is a prominent trait. As such, the word is used to describe the gazelle because of its graceful beauty.

In this case, he equates this swelling splendor to her two breasts. This is what he is thinking of when gazing at her and he is not ashamed to let her know it. The symbolism is correct because he next says...

5 (con't) Which feed among the lilies.

Rather, a verb is used to describe the delightful sight: *ha'roim bashoshanim* – "the 'feeding in the lilies.'" The gazelles are said to be feeding. If one watches a gazelle as it eats, its rump is elevated and rounded. They will also bounce around as they move from spot to spot. At times, they even do so when standing in one place munching down.

As such, he is complimenting her on their shape and youthful elasticity. Obviously, there is nothing wrong with such a thought because it is how God created women, and it is pretty much universal that such things capture the eyes and thoughts of men everywhere.

Equating the color of the lilies to her breast's whiteness and fawns to her nipples, as some scholars do, seems to overstretch the symbolism. This is because she says essentially the same thing about him in verses 2:16 and 6:3. Also, in 5:13, she says his lips are lilies. Therefore, this doesn't necessarily have to be white lilies.

Having provided her with marvelous descriptions of how he regards her beauty, the source of the next words is uncertain...

6 Until the day breaks
And the shadows flee away,

The words are identical to verse 2:17: *ad sheyaphuakh ha'yom v'nasu ha'tselaliym* –

“Until that puffs the day,
And flit the shadows.”

There are no gender markers to indicate whether it is Solomon or the woman. However, because they are the same words as 2:17, which is certainly the woman, modern scholars think it is the woman speaking here as well.

However, the words of 2:16 were also the woman. If the pattern were to follow, then the man continues to speak here –

My beloved to me, and I to him –
The “pasturing in the lilies.”

17 Until that puffs the day,
And flit the shadows.
Revolve!
Resemble to you, my beloved, to gazelle or to fawn, the stag,
Upon the mountains division.

///////

Two, your breasts, according to two fawns –
Twins, gazelle,
The “pasturing in the lilies.”

6 Until that puffs the day,
And flit the shadows.
I walk, to me, unto mount the myrrh,
And unto hill the frankincense.

In 2:16, it is singular, *ha’roeh* (the pasturing), and is thus speaking of him, the one tending the flocks in the lilies. In 4:5, it is plural, *ha’roim* (the pasturing), and refers to her breasts in comparison to the two gazelles.

Either way, the meaning of the words is that until the day is ending, which is at evening time when the wind begins to puff, and the shadows begin to flit away into darkness...

6 (fin) I will go my way to the mountain of myrrh
And to the hill of frankincense.

elekh li el har ha'mor v'el givath hal'vonah –

"I walk, to me, unto mount the myrrh,
And unto hill the frankincense."

Without including all the details concerning these two fragrances as before, the prominent idea of myrrh speaks of bitterness and symbolizes love. More especially, however, love in intimate union, but not necessarily sexual in nature. Frankincense symbolizes purification but also speaks of works.

Because of the symbolism seen in previous chapters, I would suggest that this verse is the woman speaking.

The first five verses are like other such sets of verses which show how the Lord views His redeemed, speaking of them in the most beautiful metaphors. The final verse carries the same symbolism as the parallel verse in Chapter 2.

It is a commitment by the redeemed to continue until the time of night, when the day has puffed, arrives. It is the time when our work will cease, and the Lord will return for His beloved.

The myrrh, the bitterness associated with love, and the frankincense, the process of purification through works, are both derived from Jesus' work on the cross. It is He who suffered for His people because of God's love for them and it is His works that provide purification for them.

Saying, "I walk, to me, unto mount the myrrh and unto hill the frankincense" is a way of saying that God's redeemed commit to walk among the redeemed (symbolized by the *har*, mount) who follow the bitter love of God in Christ, and in the shadow of the cross (symbolized by the *givah*, hill) which purifies His people through His work.

The words of the verses of this passage do not need to be overly spiritualized. They reflect the adoration of the Lord for His people, people of faith who have put their trust in Him. Closing out the verses, the words tell us that it is those who are of faith who are His people. It is not by our works but by trust in His – completed on the cross – that God accepts us.

Again as has been repeatedly stated, the reason for this "Song the songs" being read each year at the Passover is because it points to the cross of Christ. That is why the

words keep repeating the same thoughts. The book is a wake-up call to pay attention to the rest of Scripture and find Jesus as the fulfillment of it all.

If we will view it from that perspective, there is no need to over-allegorize every detail. It is a book giving us details concerning the greatest love that ever could be. It is a book that details the love of God in Christ for the people of the world, exemplified by His love for Jesus, who would be the One to reconcile all the rest to Himself through the cross.

Closing Verse: *"In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." 1 John 4:10*

Next Week: Song of Songs 4:7-11 *I am completely smitten by you, can't you see?...* (Unhearted Me!) (10th Song of Songs sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. He alone is the perfect example of love – untarnished, unblemished, and completely pure and holy. He offers this love to you. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Song of Songs 4:1-6 (CG)

1 Behold you! Beautiful, my querida,
Behold you! Beautiful!
Your eyes – doves,
From behind to your veil.
Your hair according to flock the goats,
Which cascaded from Mount Gilead.
2 Your teeth according to flock the shorn,
Which ascended from the washing.
Which they all twinned,
And bereaved, none, in them.
3 According to thread, the crimson – your lips,
And your wilderness – beautiful,
According to slice the pomegranate,
Your countenance from behind to your veil.
4 According to Tower David your nape,
Built to parapets.
Thousand the shield hang upon it,
All targets the mighties.
5 Two, your breasts, according to two fawns –

Twins, gazelle,
The “pasturing in the lilies.”
[6] Until that puffs the day,
And flit the shadows.
I walk, to me, unto mount the myrrh,
And unto hill the frankincense.

Song of Songs 4:1-6 (NKJV)

[1] Behold, you *are* fair, my love!
Behold, you *are* fair!
You *have* dove’s eyes behind your veil.
Your hair *is* like a flock of goats,
Going down from Mount Gilead.
[2] Your teeth according to flock the shorn,
Which ascended from the washing.
Which they all twinned,
And bereaved, none, in them.
[3] Your lips *are* like a strand of scarlet,
And your mouth is lovely.
Your temples behind your veil
Are like a piece of pomegranate.
[4] Your neck *is* like the tower of David,
Built for an armory,
On which hang a thousand bucklers,
All shields of mighty men.
[5] Your two breasts *are* like two fawns,
Twins of a gazelle,
Which feed among the lilies.
[6] Until the day breaks
And the shadows flee away,
I will go my way to the mountain of myrrh
And to the hill of frankincense.

SONG OF SONGS 4:7-11
(UNHEARTED ME!)

Thus far, the words of "Song the songs" have portrayed a wonderful love story between Solomon and his beloved. As we have seen, this has provided many insights into God's love for His people and their relationship with Him.

In the passage today, we again see Solomon rejoice over her, saying things that show how utterly enraptured he is with her. Believe it or not, that describes how the Lord feels about His people.

You may or may not think He feels this way about you, but if you are a believer in God's promises found in the sending of Jesus the Messiah, you are definitely looked at that way by Him. But what is it that makes it so?

God is not looking at externals. He doesn't care what you look like, how many teeth you have, or if you are always dirty because you live in poor conditions and have no water for washing. These things are earthly, and they will all pass away in time. So what is it that makes the redeemed of the Lord an object of His great affection, even to the point that He is enraptured with them?

Text Verse: *"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, **9** not of works, lest anyone should boast. **10** For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." Ephesians 2:8-10*

We are not saved by our works, but rather by faith. Later I will cite Romans 4, which says we are saved apart from works. This does not mean that we are saved apart from works in the ultimate sense, however. Rather, we are not saved by our works.

Somebody had to do something to restore us to God. That is the point of the law. The man who does the things of the law will live by them. The lesson of the law is that nobody can do those things and live. The infection of sin is too deep.

Thus, God sent Jesus to do the works for us. Being saved apart from works only speaks of what we do. Our faith is to be in the completed works of Jesus. Beyond that, there is nothing in heaven or on earth that can merit salvation for us. This is what grace means. We are getting what we do not deserve, and it comes by faith in what He has done.

How is this pictured in today's verses? Get ready, you'll see as we go. Great things are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and… May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. My Sister – Completer (verses 7-9)

In the previous verses of this chapter, Solomon went into great detail concerning the beauty of his beloved. Verse 6 was a transitional verse without any gender markers. Thus, it could have been either Solomon or the beloved speaking.

I would guess that it was the beloved. She continued in her direction until the day ended. Assuming it was the woman, I logically connected that with the focus of the saints, meaning Christ, until their time ends and He takes His people to Himself. With that transitional verse complete, the words next return to Solomon...

7 You *are* all fair, my love,

kulakh yaphah rayathi – "You all beautiful my querida." Those scholars who assume verse 6 was the woman speaking tend to say that these words include not just her physical beauty but the beauty of her soul as well.

The reason is that the woman has not only displayed physical beauty, but a loving demeanor by what she said in response to his compliments. Assuming it was her speaking, she said –

"Until that puffs the day,
And flit the shadows.
I walk, to me, unto mount the myrrh,
And unto hill the frankincense."

She would continue her walk until the day ended, demonstrating restraint and focus. She is not just physically lovely but wholesome in character as well. Having noted her all-beautiful state, he repeats the thought in parallelism...

7 (con't) And *there is* no spot in you.

u-mum ein bakh – "And blemish not in you." The word *mum* signifies a stain or blemish. It can refer to both physical and/or moral blemishes. The thought was expressed concerning Absalom, David's son –

> "Now in all Israel there was no one who was praised as much as Absalom for his good looks. From the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no blemish [*mum*] in him." 2 Samuel 14:25

Unfortunately, the word concerning Absalom spoke only of his physical perfection as he was a morally corrupt individual. A suitable thought is expressed in the New Testament when referring to the redeemed as having no moral blemish –

> "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, **26** that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, **27** that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish."
>
> -Ephesians 5:25-27

In these words of Ephesians, the moral perfection of God's people, imputed to them because of the substitutionary work of Christ, is referred to. Solomon, looking upon the perfection of her beauty, most likely inclusive of both physical and moral points, continues...

8 Come with me from Lebanon, *my* spouse,

The word "come" is only implied in this clause. In typical fashion in Hebrew, the full thought only comes in a later clause: *iti mil'vanon kalah* – "With me from Lebanon, completer." What appears to be the case is that after complimenting his beloved for her perfection, which is highlighted by the words of verse 6, he still wants her to stay and participate in the union of love.

Putting verse 6 beside verse 8 allows this to be grasped. She says she will walk unto mount the myrrh and unto hill the frankincense. He then calls those locations Lebanon. The reason he can poetically do this is because the spelling of the two is almost identical–

לְבוֹנָה – *l'vonah*, frankincense
לְבָנוֹן – *l'vanon*, Lebanon

Whether she is actually saying that she is going north to Lebanon or not, the fact that she is going to the mount of frankincense is poetically turned into the area of Lebanon –

6. Until that puffs the day,
And flit the shadows.

I walk, to me, unto mount the myrrh,
And unto hill the frankincense.

8. With me from Lebanon, completer,
With me from Lebanon – come!
Turn from top Amana, from top Senir and Hermon,
From habitations lions,
From mountains leopards.

Therefore, instead of yielding to her plans of walking to the mountains until the end of the day, he is poetically asking her to come from the mountains to him.

As we have seen, the name Lebanon comes from the same word, *lavan*, white. That is derived from *lavan*, to be or make white or to purify. It also signifies to make bricks because bricks whiten when they are dried.

This is the first time he has called her *kalah*, completer. No other translation uses the word completer, instead they say bride or spouse. However, that is only a description, not really a translation.

The word *kalah* is derived from *kalal*, to complete or make perfect. Therefore, it is also often translated as daughter-in-law, such as Judah's daughter-in-law, Tamar, or Ruth, the daughter-in-law of Naomi.

The thought is probably that the son, and thus the family, is made complete with the acquisition of his bride. Thus, the designation is bestowed upon her as the one who completes or perfects the son: completer. Solomon is saying that she is the one who completes him. Therefore, he repeats the thought...

8 (con't) With me from Lebanon.

iti mil'vanon tavoi – "With me from Lebanon – come!" Placing the word come at the end of the two clauses rather than at the beginning causes the mind to remain in a state of anticipation. It also provides its own emphasis. He is in an excited state of desire for them to be together. Because of that, he continues with...

8 (con't) Look from the top of Amana,

Rather: *tashuri merosh amana* – "Turn from top Amana." There are two identical verbs that could be used here, both spelled *shur*. The first is shur (שׁוּר) to spy out, survey, look, etc. The second is shur (שׁוּר) to turn, and thus to travel about.

He has just asked her to come from Lebanon. Thus, he isn't asking her to join him in looking from the top of a mountain. Rather, he is repeating the thought of the first two clauses by using a different word – "With me, come! Turn from the top of Amana!"

Further, this doesn't mean that she is in a different location in this clause or in the next clauses. Rather, he is describing Lebanon by her various peaks.

If someone was in Florida and had a girlfriend in New York City, he could poetically say, "Come from New York City! Turn from the Empire State Building, from Trump Tower, and from Rockefeller Plaza!" That is the substance of what is being conveyed here.

As for the name Amana, it is found only here in Scripture. It is derived from the root *aman*, to confirm, support, or be faithful. As such, it is variously translated as Permanent, Confirmation, Constant, Faithful, etc. The Greek translation uses the word *pistis*, Faith. Next, Solomon says...

8 (con't) From the top of Senir and Hermon,

merosh seniyr v'khermon – "From top Senir and Hermon." The poetic use of mountaintops in Lebanon continues. Senir was first mentioned in Deuteronomy 3:9. It is the Amorite name given to Mount Hermon. The name is also used in 1 Chronicles 5:23 and Ezekiel 27:5. It is believed to mean Glittering Breastplate of Ice. Hermon means Sacred. Solomon next continues with...

8 (con't) From the lions' dens,

mim'onoth arayoth – "From habitations lions." The *ari*, lion, comes from *arah*, to pluck. It speaks of the violence of the creature. Thus, he is essentially saying, "Come to me from the place of danger."

The last lion in Israel was killed in the 16th century, but they have been extinct from Lebanon for almost a thousand years. At the time of Solomon, they were common. He implores her to be safe from them. That thought is then repeated with the next words...

8 (con't) From the mountains of the leopards.

mehar're n'meriym – "From mountains leopards." The *namer*, leopard is introduced here. The word is derived from an unused root signifying to filtrate, a process that makes something clear or transparent through filtration. The idea is that of spotting as if by dripping. Hence, you come in thought to the spotted coat of the leopard.

Leopards were found in Lebanon until early in the 20th century but are now extinct. There are leopards in Israel, but most are in captivity. It has been about 15 years since any were seen in the wild.

In saying, "from mountains," it doesn't necessarily mean he is speaking of many mountains. It may be if he is speaking of Amana, Senir, and Hermon separately.

However, if he is only referring to Senir and Hermon noted in the last clause, it could be a poetic way of calling the one mountain with two names as if they are separate mountains. That would be like saying, "Come with me from Petrograd and Leningrad, from the city of palaces, from the city of white nights, from the places of Peter the Great."

Everything in the sentence refers to the same place. Therefore, the last designation in the plural, "places of Peter the Great," is only referring to one place. That seems to be what Solomon is doing here by repeating different names and designations about the same mountain.

However, by making it plural, it can thus provide different typology. In the Bible, a *har*, mountain, is synonymous with a large but centralized group of people. Making it plural would then refer to various large people groups. Having called to her to come from these places, he next says...

9 You have ravished my heart,
My sister, *my* spouse;

The words are more of a paraphrase. The Hebrew is simpler: *libavtini akhoti khalah* – "Unhearted me! My sister – completer." The word is *lavav*, a verb coming from *levav*, the heart. It is in the perfect aspect, so the action is a done deal.

Various translations say ravished, captured, captivated, made my heart beat faster, encouraged me, wounded, bewitched, stolen, etc. All of these depart from the exacting sense of the word. Rather, the simplicity of the word is found in the idea that Solomon has been heartened, but with the meaning of unheartened. It is as if there is nothing left in him for any other.

If she were a genius and he was overwhelmed by her daunting intelligence, he might say, “You have braindeaded me.” If she were a power wrestler with more strength than him, he might say, “You have disarmed me.” The words of Solomon are conveying simplicity of thought.

Also, calling his bride “my sister,” is not without precedent. In Genesis 12 and 20, Abraham truthfully said that his wife was his, *akhoth*, sister. What started as siblings increased to a married couple.

In Genesis 24, the collective household called Rebekah “our sister.” The word can signify a close female relative or a woman of the same people or nation. In Genesis 26, Isaac said that Rebekah was his sister. Though not true in his case, such exclamations would have been retained in the collective memory of the people.

The scholar Karl Budde noted that in ancient Egyptian love songs, the words “my sister” and “my brother” were used among lovers. This “Song the songs” has already relied on foreign motifs. As such, Solomon is being poetic towards her by saying this. To then explain the relationship further, he again says, *khalah*, completer.

He elevates the term of endearment, sister, a beloved part of his family, to the thought of her being the completer of the family, his bride. With that, he calls out again...

9 (con’t) You have ravished my heart

libavtini – “Unhearted me!” It is the second and last time the word is used in this form. Being in the perfect aspect, and repeating it in this manner, he is indicating that he is utterly demolished by her. She has ravished and stolen away his heart, as he says...

9 (con’t) With one *look* of your eyes,

Again, he leaves the words simple, omitting some for effect: *b’akhad meenayikh* – “In one from your eyes.” All it takes is a glance from her eyes or a flit of them to the left or right, and he becomes completely unhearted. He is so utterly smitten by her that his knees probably buckle and his temples pound. The poor guy. And he continues...

9 (con’t) With one link of your necklace.

The Hebrew is puzzling because of the use of the plural noun. Rather: *b’akhad anaq mitsav’ronayikh* – “In one necklace from your napes.” The use of the plural seemingly makes no sense. It is the word *tsavar*, the nape of the neck.

Because of the unusual plural form, some take this as meaning something suspended from the neck. That is how the Greek translation renders it, "...with one chain from your neck." From there, translations follow that rendering in some form or another. But that could easily be expressed another way.

Those translations that say neck never render them properly in the plural. But the words are so specific that they call for us to consider them and resolve what is being conveyed.

It appears that he is referring to is the softly flowing cervical muscles on her neck as she moves her head. The plural, napes, then accentuates the beauty of each as they form the whole. He has already described her eyes and her neck earlier. These words now complement what he said earlier –

1 Your eyes – doves,

4 According to Tower David your nape,
Built to parapets.
Thousand the shield hang upon it,
All targets the mighties.

9 In one from your eyes,
In one necklace from your napes.

One movement like a dove, and one necklace hanging upon her parapeted tower, drives him absolutely bonkers. And so, he continues...

With what will you come before the Lord?
What will you present for the sin of your soul?
What will bring you the great reward?
On what thing will you, your sins roll?

Shall you accomplish a great and noble deed?
Claiming it is worthy of His praise?
Shall giving up a wicked life or one of greed…
Bring you honor, blessing, and eternal days?

Rather, come to your God by faith in His grace
Come to Him with hands empty of any pride
By grace through faith alone will you see His smiling face
And through that alone will you in heaven reside

II. Your Loves (verses 10 & 11)

[10] How fair is your love,
My sister, *my* spouse!

Rather: *mah yaphu dodayikh akhoti khalah* – "How beautified your loves, my sister – completer." In Chapter 1, she twice spoke of her beloved's loves, meaning his doting affections. In this verse, he twice returns that thought to her.

However, he uses the perfect aspect, beautified. And further, rather than her doting affections, he appears to be equating her loves to her physical attributes that he just spoke about. Hence, the word beautified.

Her attributes are complete in the perfection of their beauty. There is nothing he would change to make her more beautiful. Instead, they stand as a testament to the intrinsic perfection they bear.

Following the Greek, some translations says, "breasts" rather than "loves." The words are similar, *dod* and *dad*. Therefore, the Latin, Aramaic, and several English translations go with this. This is certainly not right. First, he has already described her breasts in verse 4:5 using the word *shad*, a completely different word.

If he was describing them again, one would assume he would again use that word. Second, it was already seen in Chapter 1 that she was using parallelism in the use of this word in the plural. It would make sense that he is doing the same as well.

1:2 Kiss me from kisses his mouth –
For good your loves from wine.

4:9,10 - In one from your eyes,
In one necklace from your napes.
[10] How beautified your loves, my sister – completer.

That thought then continues with a thought that carefully mirrors her words to him from Chapter 1...

[10 (con't)] How much better than wine is your love,

mah tovu dodayikh miyayin – "How bettered your loves from wine." The meaning is that her attributes are better than wine. The word "from" in this clause is being used in a comparative sense: "Wine is good, but your loves are better."

As with the previous clause, the verb is in the perfect aspect. Her attributes exceeded the bar set forth by wine. He would rather drink in the beautiful qualities of her physical attributes with his eyes than drink in the stimulating attributes of wine with his lips. What she offers is way better.

His next words continue to mirror in content what she said after she noted his loves –

1:2 Kiss me from kisses his mouth –
For good your loves from wine.
3 To aroma – your oils good,
Oil pouring – your name.

She notes his aroma based on the cologne he uses. He next notes hers here based on the perfume she uses...

10 (con't) And the scent of your perfumes
Than all spices!

v'reakh s'manayikh mikal b'samim – "And aroma your oils from all fragrances." She has anointed herself with oils that exceed (from all, meaning greater than) all other fragrances. Her smell, then, is otherwise incomparable. It is simply the best. Having noted that, Solomon continues to speak affectionate words to his beloved completer...

11 Your lips, O *my* spouse,
Drip as the honeycomb;

Rather: *nopheth titoph'nah siphthothayikh kalah* – "A dripping drops your lips, completer." The word *nopheth* comes from *nuph*, to quiver. That leads to the sense of shaking to pieces and thus to drip. It is usually associated with honey, and so, most translations add that in, assuming that is what it is talking about. But it simply means a dripping.

The next verb, *nataph*, signifies to ooze, and thus to distill into drops. To get the somewhat alliterative sounds provided by the Hebrew, saying, "A dripping drops" fits well. The meaning here is not a literal dripping as if she is drooling on herself.

Rather, Solomon is speaking of her words, how what she says is perfectly pleasant and sweetly soothing to him. The exact same words, *nopheth titoph'nah*, are used of the speech concerning the wayward woman in Proverbs 5 –

> "A dripping drops lips wayward,
> And smooth from oil her mouth." Proverbs 5:3

The meaning is that the words of an adulterous woman flow across her lips like a soft oozing while the words of her mouth are smoother than oil. In the case of his completer, her words likewise ooze forth smoothly. He next explains what that means, saying...

11 (con't) Honey and milk *are* under your tongue;

devash v'khalav takhath l'shonekh – "Honey and milk under your tongue." This is what produces the dripping. It is as if her lips are moistened with honey and milk as she speaks. The words are to be taken metaphorically.

Honey is sweet. Therefore her words are filled with sweetness as she speaks. It is reflective of the words of the psalm –

> "How sweet are Your words to my taste,
> *Sweeter* than honey to my mouth!" Psalm 119:103

Milk is used to express that which sustains, nourishes, and refreshes with its richness, such as –

> "Whereas you have been forsaken and hated,
> So that no one went through *you,*
> I will make you an eternal excellence,
> A joy of many generations.
> **16** You shall drink the milk of the Gentiles,
> And milk the breast of kings;
> You shall know that I, the LORD, *am* your Savior
> And your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob." Isaiah 60:15, 16

As such, he is saying that her words do just this for him. The richness of what she says sustains, nourishes, and refreshes him as she speaks. It is as if sweetness, life, and vibrancy are found in her speech. Understanding this, his words next say...

11 (fin) And the fragrance of your garments
***Is* like the fragrance of Lebanon.**

v'reakh salmothayikh k'reakh l'vanon –

"And fragrance your garments,
According to fragrance Lebanon."

The Coverdale Bible of 1535, along with the Catholic versions that follow from the Latin Vulgate, convert Lebanon to frankincense. But this is unnecessary.

Lebanon is famous for its cedars, an especially aromatic tree. Like the juniper, they are both in the plant order of *pinales*. Walking through a copse or forest of them is marvelous.

But probably more to the point is that Solomon built and paneled a house in Jerusalem from Lebanese cedars –

> "He also built the House of the Forest of Lebanon; its length *was* one hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits, with four rows of cedar pillars, and cedar beams on the pillars. **3** And *it was* paneled with cedar above the beams that *were* on forty-five pillars, fifteen *to* a row. **4** *There were* windows *with beveled frames in* three rows, and window *was* opposite window *in* three tiers. **5** And all the doorways and doorposts *had* rectangular frames; and window *was* opposite window *in* three tiers." 1 Kings 7:2-5

Smelling the aromatic cedar every day would be a constant reminder of Lebanon. It would be something that became soothing and comforting each time he entered.

Likewise, smelling her would similarly remind him of how good she smelled each time she was near. Equating her to Lebanon makes complete sense when understanding Solomon's surroundings.

As this is surely the fragrance he is referring to, even if it is not mentioned specifically, understanding the symbolism is worth the effort to consider –

The cedar, *erez*, ultimately comes from a word signifying firm or strong. The cedars of Lebanon are referred to many times in Scripture. They denote strength and firmness.

When equated to a person or a nation, the cedar refers to one who is great and mighty. In Ezekiel 17, Zedekiah, king of Judah, is equated to a sprig taken from a cedar of Lebanon. Assyria is equated to a cedar in Lebanon in Ezekiel 31.

With that, the verses of the passage are complete for today. However, we can find hints of God's love for the redeemed in this passage as well.

Verse 7 noted his beloved's completely beautiful nature (all beautiful) and that she was without spot. As before, the same general terminology is used when referring to the church. Ephesians 5 said –

> "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, **26** that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, **27** that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish."
>
> -Ephesians 5:25-27

The physical beauty of Solomon's beloved is perfectly reflected in Paul's description of the church. But more than how she is portrayed is how that came about, Christ "gave Himself for her." That refers to His death on the cross.

Thus, we once again are given an insight into why this book, the "Song the songs," is read by the Jews every year at the Passover. They have not made the connection that God is exactingly showing between the redeemed and Solomon's lover.

However, these patterns can never be derived from Scripture unless they are studied as a whole, something Israel is not yet willing to do.

Verse 8 brought in Lebanon. Either it or frankincense has been brought into the narrative multiple times in the book. Both are derived from the same root, and both point to the process of purification through works, emblematic of Jesus' work on the cross. It is He who suffered for His people. It is His works that provide purification for them.

Verse 8 also introduced the word *kalah*, which I translate as completer. It refers to that which brings the family to a state of completion, or perfection. We need to be careful when we put on our typology thinking caps.

God is fully sufficient, and He needs nothing. Jesus is God. But Jesus is also human. Having a wife for a man is something that brings a state of completion to him and, thus, to the family.

There is something about the Lord presenting the church as a bride to Himself that brings about its own state of completeness. If it were not so, there would be no reason for Him to die on the cross and then to prepare the church as a bride for Himself.

Hence, we can find something useful and appropriate in the wording Solomon uses here. Saying, “With me from Lebanon, completer,” is telling us that the Lord is acquiring His redeemed from His work, and they (represented by her) provide a completion to His works. Repeating the thought accentuates the fact that it is by His work alone that it is accomplished, “With me from Lebanon – come!”

Immediately after that, the words say, “Turn from top Amana.” The imperative is to come to him by Faith (Amana). There is no other way to do so. Can’t you just see the words of the text verse clearly in this?

Next Senir, Glittering Breastplate of Ice, and Hermon, Sacred, point to purification and being set apart. The name Senir is given because of the white-capped nature of Hermon, thus purification. Hermon, being sacred, speaks of heaven, meaning that which is granted to the redeemed because of their faith. To Ephesians 2 again –

> “But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, **5** even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), **6** and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus.” Ephesians 2:4-6

The words concerning the habitations of lions and the mountains of leopards give the sense of being saved from dwellings of those who will harm believers and from among the many nations of the earth.

Calling the beloved a sister along with a completer speaks of intrinsic nature. Jesus isn’t an angel as the JW’s maintain. He is fully human. Therefore, the church in nature is a “sister” type relationship, just as when the whole family, mother included, identified Rebekah as a sister.

The next verses referred to the enthralling beauty of the bride. Without trying to find a type or analogy in each one, it is sufficient to say that because Christ has prepared a bride for Himself, He is absolutely enthralled with who she is. Paul speaks of the various parts of the body, each having its own set purpose.

Likewise, the make-up of the redeemed does as well. There is no part He will not rejoice over because they are His from Himself. Solomon could proclaim, “How bettered your loves from wine.” So, too, the Lord proclaims this over His redeemed.

Psalm 104:15 says wine “makes glad the heart of man.” But to the Lord, the attributes of His bride far exceed that. Noting the “dripping the drops” of the beloved’s lips and that honey and milk were under her tongue, signifies that the proclamation of the Lord’s people is sweet, sustaining, nourishing, and refreshing in their richness –

> “For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. **11** For the Scripture says, ‘Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.’ **12** For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. **13** For ‘whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.’” Romans 10:10-13

As for the final words of the verses, which refer to the fragrance of her garments being according to the fragrance Lebanon, it means that those who are saved by the Lord bear the fragrance of His works. That is seen in both testaments, but Revelation 3 is sufficient to see this –

> “He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.” Revelation 3:5

To overcome is explained by John as accepting the message of God in Christ –

> “For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. **5** Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” 1 John 5:4, 5

The Father/Son relationship, speaking of accepting the deity of Jesus Christ through faith, is what allows one to overcome.

This is the typology and meaning of what is presented in the passage today. A love story between God and the redeemed of the world is being presented. It is all possible because of, and it is all centered on, the work of Jesus Christ.

The redeemed of all ages are brought near to God in the same way, through faith. Some were looking forward to His coming, others look back on it, but all are saved through

what God has done through Him. Salvation is of the Lord. Thank God for Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Closing Verse: *"But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness,* ***6*** *just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works:*
7 *'Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven,*
And whose sins are covered;
8 *Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin.'" Romans 4:5-8*

Next Week: Song of Songs 4:12-16 *There is no need for her to be shov-ed, he just asks...* (Come My Beloved) (11th Song of Songs sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a cgood plan and purpose for you. He alone is the perfect example of love – untarnished, unblemished, and completely pure and holy. He offers this love to you. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Song of Songs 4:7-11 (CG)

7 You all beautiful my querida,
And blemish not in you.
8 With me from Lebanon, completer,
With me from Lebanon – come!
Turn from top Amana,
From top Senir and Hermon,
From habitations lions,
From mountains leopards.
9 Unhearted me! My sister – completer,
Unhearted me!
In one from your eyes,
In one necklace from your napes.
10 How beautified your loves, my sister – completer,
How bettered your loves from wine,
And aroma your oils from all fragrances.
11 A dripping drops your lips, completer.
Honey and milk under your tongue.
And fragrance your garments,
According to fragrance Lebanon.

Song of Songs 4:7-11 (NKJV)

7 You *are* all fair, my love,
And *there is* no spot in you.
8 Come with me from Lebanon, *my* spouse,
With me from Lebanon.
Look from the top of Amana,
From the top of Senir and Hermon,
From the lions' dens,
From the mountains of the leopards.
9 You have ravished my heart,
My sister, *my* spouse;
You have ravished my heart
With one *look* of your eyes,
With one link of your necklace.
10 How fair is your love,
My sister, *my* spouse!
How much better than wine is your love,
And the scent of your perfumes
Than all spices!
11 Your lips, O *my* spouse,
Drip as the honeycomb;
Honey and milk *are* under your tongue;
And the fragrance of your garments
Is like the fragrance of Lebanon.

SONG OF SONGS 4:12-16
(COME MY BELOVED)

President Trump took an oath to uphold the U.S. Constitution, and he was duly sworn in as the 47th President of the United States.

This fact is now sealed in the records of the United States permanently. In the verses of this sermon, Solomon says that his beloved is a "fountain sealed." A seal is something applied externally, but it carries internal truths.

Daniel was sealed in the lion's den. This was an external sealing that conveyed the truth that what was inside was not to be released without the appropriate authority.

Jeremiah had a purchase deed for land he obtained from his uncle. He had it sealed according to the law and custom. Inside, it contained the details of the property and sale. The seal was to remain until the time that proof was needed concerning his ownership of the land.

Likewise, God provides a seal to people when they appropriately respond to the gospel. For example, Paul says the following in our text verse...

Text Verse: *"Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God,* ***22*** *who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee."*

-2 Corinthians 1:21, 22

The seal provided by God is a way of saying, "This one is mine. Nothing can change that." Fortunately, God is incapable of making a mistake. As He knows the future, it logically follows that God's sealing is eternal, meaning salvation is eternal.

If this were not so, then it would mean that He made a mistake because He sealed someone with a guarantee but then changed His mind. If He knew the future, then changing His mind would mean His sealing was in error.

People who don't understand this either have not thought the process through, or they don't understand the nature of God. If someone acknowledges that God knows the future but then says a person can lose his salvation, it demonstrates contradictory thoughts.

In the case of the woman in the Song of Songs, Solomon says that she is a "fountain sealed." Consider this as we go through the verses and think on what the Lord is telling us.

Eternal truths are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and… May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Frankincense, Myrrh, and Aloes (verses 12-14)

12 A garden enclosed

Rather: *gan naul* – "Garden locked." Scholars generally agree upon the meaning of the words, but translators are not always scholars. Saying "enclosed" doesn't get the full sense of what is being said.

The word is *naul*, to lock, bolt, fasten up etc. It can even mean to sandal because the foot is locked up when a sandal is fastened around it. As such, it is more than enclosed which doesn't always convey the sense of locked or secure.

A garden can be enclosed but not locked up. People may be able to walk in through an opening where a path is. In this case, it is a garden that may have access points, but those access points are not readily accessible to all.

The thought of a garden takes the reader back to Eden's idyllic perfection. When someone plants a garden, the intent is often to have it as a place of produce and abundance of some sort.

However, quite often, a garden extends beyond food for eating. There are butterfly gardens, rock gardens, flower gardens, hanging gardens, spice gardens, moss gardens, etc.

Each, depending on the type, is normally designed as much for aesthetic beauty, even if some are particularly designed with the intent of obtaining delicious tasting vegetables and fruits. For example, some are specifically planned for their aromatic smells.

Whatever the garden's purpose, it is a place where one can go, find rest, solitude, a mentally calming environment, a place for personal productivity, and so forth. Gardens are intended to reflect their personal nature.

The garden is made by a person with a particular design that satisfies his ideas concerning structure, layout, order, harmony, etc. In this case, Solomon is speaking of a particular type of locked garden. His words are used in a metaphorical sense...

12 (con't) ***Is*** **my sister,** ***my*** **spouse,**

akhothi khalah – "My sister – completer." Solomon is saying that his beloved is her own garden with her own unique attributes which are locked up, meaning unshared with others. As such, he is saying she is a virgin. Nobody has violated her garden, nor do they have access to it.

As before, he provides two designations of her. She is his sister, demonstrating a similarity in intrinsic nature. It is not that she is literally a sister, but a sister in humanity, in culture, etc. Calling her *khalah*, completer, elevates that thought.

Despite being a sister in nature, she is also the one who perfects him and brings him to a state of fullness that didn't exist without her. He said she is a locked garden, meaning she is chaste and undefiled. Next, to emphasize that point, he continues with...

12 (con't) A spring shut up,

The words are needlessly debated: *gal naul* – "*A* bubbling locked." Using the same word, *naul*, locked, as in the first clause, the NKJV changes the translation from enclosed to shut up. This type of switcheroo unnecessarily confuses the precise wording that Solomon is presenting.

However, the debate is not about that. Rather, it is about the word *gal*, translated by me as bubbling. Some think the word *gal* is in error. It is a word used thirty-four times, but never in this sense.

It comes from *galal*, to roll. As such, it is something heaped up. In Genesis 31, it is used six times when referring to a heap of piled stones that stood as a witness between Laban and Jacob. Quite a few times, it refers to the billows or waves on the sea. They are heaped up as they roll along –

> "For You cast me into the deep,
> Into the heart of the seas,
> And the floods surrounded me;
> All Your billows and Your waves [*gal*] passed over me." Jonah 2:3

Because it is not used elsewhere in the manner it is here in "Song the songs," some scholars claim it should again read *gan*, garden. The two Hebrew words somewhat resemble each other –

גַּן
גַּל

However, it is unlikely a scribe would make such an error, especially going from the simpler *nun* to the more complex rendering with a *lamed*. But more, it overlooks the obvious parallelism between the final two clauses.

Rather, Solomon is using this word to form an alliteration between the first and third clauses while forming parallelism between the third and fourth clauses.

As for the word itself, because it signifies to roll as in heaped up, the idea is that of a spring that bubbles. Saying spring is more literal, but it doesn't fully explain the word, which gives the sense of not just coming forth, but doing so in a bubbling manner.

This use of the word is like what was seen in Judges 1, where a similar word, *gulah*, was used to describe the same thing –

> "So she said to him, 'Give me a blessing; since you have given me land in the South, give me also springs [*gulah*] of water.' And Caleb gave her the upper springs [*gulah*] and the lower springs [*gulah*]." Judges 1:15

Solomon has taken the shortened form, *gal*, which is derived from the same word *galal* as is *gulah*, and he has formed a play on words between garden, *gan*, and a bubbling spring, *gal*. Understanding this, he next forms parallelism with the words...

12 (con't) A fountain sealed.

mayan khathum – "Fountain sealed." He essentially says the same thing as the previous clause but uses different words for effect. The word *khathum*, however, means more than just to lock. It carries the sense of being sealed, at times as with a signet or some other official marker –

> "'Men will buy fields for money, sign deeds and seal [*khathum*] *them,* and take witnesses, in the land of Benjamin, in the places around Jerusalem, in the cities of Judah, in the cities of the mountains, in the cities of the lowland, and in the cities

of the South; for I will cause their captives to return,' says the LORD."

-Jeremiah 32:44

Looking at all the clauses together, one can see how Solomon carefully formed his words –

Garden [*gan*] locked,
My sister – completer.
*Bubbling [*gal*] locked,
*Fountain sealed.

The symbolism is that of his beloved being chaste and secreted away just for him. The thought is similarly expressed by Solomon in Proverbs while speaking of a woman by using the same type of metaphor –

"Drink water from your own cistern,
And running water from your own well.
16 Should your fountains be dispersed abroad,
Streams of water in the streets?
17 Let them be only your own,
And not for strangers with you.
18 Let your fountain be blessed,
And rejoice with the wife of your youth.
19 *As a* loving deer and a graceful doe,
Let her breasts satisfy you at all times;
And always be enraptured with her love.
20 For why should you, my son, be enraptured by an immoral woman,
And be embraced in the arms of a seductress?" Proverbs 5:15-20

Keil gives a suitable explanation for Solomon's words –

"To a locked garden and spring no one has access but the rightful owner, and a sealed fountain is shut against all impurity. Thus she is closed against the world, and inaccessible to all that would disturb her pure heart, or desecrate her pure person." Keil

Continuing with the garden symbolism, Solomon says...

13 Your plants *are* an orchard

The structure of almost all translations follows the same pattern as the NKVJ. But they do not provide the breaks necessary to see what is being said: *shelakhayikh pardes* – "Your shoots – paradise." Solomon continues with the parallelism. His beloved was equated to a garden previously, now a paradise.

The word *shelakh* is translated elsewhere as a sword, missile, etc. It is derived from the verb *shalakh*, to send away, stretch out, and so forth. That which metaphorically shoots out of her is likened to a paradise.

This is a word, *pardes*, seen for the last of only three times in Scripture. It signifies a park. Thus, by extension, an orchard or forest. It is derived from the Persian word *pairidaeza*, paradise, which is how the Greek translates it. Solomon uses the word in Ecclesiastes –

> "I made my works great, I built myself houses, and planted myself vineyards. **5** I made myself gardens and orchards [*pardes*], and I planted all *kinds* of fruit trees in them. **6** I made myself water pools from which to water the growing trees of the grove." Ecclesiastes 2:4-6

This paradise is next described by him, saying...

13 (con't) of pomegranates
With pleasant fruits,

The translation is terrible. First, including the word "of" would mean that the shoots spoken of previously are what describe the paradise, as in "a paradise of pomegranates." But the structure that follows is ruined by such a translation.

Rather, everything that follows "paradise" is what describes it. Also, the word fruit is a collective singular word, and rather than an adjective, it is a plural noun: *rimonim im peri m'gadiym* – "Pomegranates with fruit – preciousnesses."

Seeing the way I translate the two clauses will enlighten you –

"Your shoots – paradise:
Pomegranates with fruit – preciousnesses.
Hennas with nards."

There are two categories that follow the word paradise. This clause concerning pomegranates is the first. The *rimon*, pomegranate, is derived from *ramam*, to be high or exalted. It symbolizes harvest-ready fruit and means Mature Mind or Harvest Ready.

The shoots are then defined by "with fruit – preciousnesses." It is why the second noun is plural. The pomegranate has one type of fruit, even if it has many of them. Each of the fruit is precious. As there are many of them, they are preciousnesses.

Any other translation makes no sense. Solomon continues with...

13 (con't) Fragrant henna with spikenard,

Both words are plural: *k'pharim im n'radim* – "Hennas with nards." What is happening here is not as translations make it seem. The word "nards" is not a second plant. It describes the aromatic properties of the first plants, collectively called hennas. These will then be explained in the next verse. Here is how it all reads –

Hennas with nards:
14 Nard and saffron,
Cane and cinnamon.

But why is he saying this? It is because in Israel, they had the fragrances, but they didn't have the plants themselves. John Lange rightly says –

"...the cyprus flower or alhenna was the only one of these plants, which was also cultivated in Palestine. The nard grass, grown only in India, is therefore simply added here for the sake of the delightfully fragrant unguent obtained from it, as in the following verse incense, calamus, cinnamon, and probably also saffron are exotic plants known to the Hebrews only from their aromatic products. The description accordingly loses itself here again in rapturous exaggerations and improbabilities in natural history, which however at the same time bear witness to an extensive knowledge of nature." Lange

This "extensive knowledge of nature" is a great description seen in the Bible concerning Solomon –

> "He spoke three thousand proverbs, and his songs were one thousand and five. **33** Also he spoke of trees, from the cedar tree of Lebanon even to the hyssop that springs out of the wall; he spoke also of animals, of birds, of creeping things,

and of fish. [34] And men of all nations, from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom, came to hear the wisdom of Solomon." 1 Kings 4:32-34

As seen in Chapter 1, the *kopher*, translated as henna, means a cover. In this case, it refers to henna, which is used to form a covering over the skin.

The word nards refers to the spikenard, already seen in Chapter 1, where typologically it is described and points to Christ. It was poured all over Him before His crucifixion. Being plural, it is being used as a single descriptor of each of the following scents...

[14] Spikenard and saffron,

nered v'kharkom – "Nard and saffron." We know that the word nards is referring to all of the subsequent fragrances because the word nard is now repeated in the singular. Solomon has essentially done something like this –

"Creosotes with jasmines: Jasmine and saffron, calamus and cinnamon..."

He has taken one plant that is not particularly aromatic and assigned to it many wonderful smells without any specificity. Next, he defines those smells beginning with the first wonderful smell. He then expands on that with more fragrances. As Lange rightly said, they are "rapturous exaggerations."

The nard was just explained. Saffron, *karkom*, is found only here. It is derived from the Arabic *kurkum*, the *crocus sativus*. Keil says it is, "the genuine Indian safran, the dried flower-eyes of which yield the safran used as a colour, as an aromatic, and also as medicine."

Strong's lexicon says, "Its cultivation and trade were significant in regions such as Persia and India, and it was a symbol of beauty and love in various cultures." Next, it says...

[14 (con't)] Calamus and cinnamon,

qaneh v'qinamon – "Cane and cinnamon." The first of these is *qaneh*, cane, implying sweet cane. It is elsewhere translated as a reed. It is derived from *qanah*, to erect. However, that by extension signifies to acquire, procure, purchase, etc. It was first used as an aromatic in Exodus 30:23 when it was included as a part of the holy anointing oil.

The next, *qinamon*, was also first seen in Exodus 30:23. It is from an unused root meaning "to erect." Thus, it is applied to cinnamon bark, which is found in upright rolls. Solomon next says...

14 (con't) With all trees

Like before, the NKJV and others seem to make the break in the rong place by saying "trees of frankincense." Rather, Solomon is still describing the plural nards. From there, he will describe the trees: *im kal atsei* – "With all trees." After this, he will continue with his list –

"With all trees –
Frankincense, myrrh, and aloes."

14 (con't) of frankincense,
Myrrh and aloes,

Instead: *l'vonah mor vaahaloth* – "Frankincense, myrrh, and aloes." As has been seen several times, frankincense comes from *lavan*, white. That is derived from *lavan*, to be or make white or to purify. It also signifies to make bricks because bricks whiten when they are dried.

Myrrh, *mor*, is from *marar*, bitter as has been seen.

The *ahalim*, aloes, refers to the lignum or wood aloes. It is a tree eight to ten feet tall that has a sweet smell and provides shade. It is also the source for aromatic resins and incense. It is used when speaking of a fragrance of the Lord in the 45th Psalm –

> "All Your garments *are scented* with myrrh and aloes *and* cassia,
> Out of the ivory palaces, by which they have made You glad." Psalm 45:8

Next, Solomon says...

14 (con't) With all the chief spices—

Rather, the two final nouns are plural: *im kal rashe b'samim* – "With all chiefs – fragrances." The reason for this structure is that it forms a type of parallelism, repeating what was just said –

With all trees (*im kal atse*) –
Frankincense, myrrh, and aloes,
With all chiefs (*im kal rashe*) – fragrances.

These are the chief trees, and the word fragrances sums up the naming of the trees. What I have proposed for verses 13 and 14 is like the likely explanation of what is being said. In addition to that, the translations are certainly correct, in contrast to all other available translations.

However, the structure of the translation may have been misidentified by me. It does not match any others that I have seen. Despite this, I feel it is proper and I present it to you with calm but courageous confidence.

Next, the words turn again to the waters. Most scholars attribute them to Solomon speaking of his beloved. There are no gender markers to indicate it either way. It makes little sense for it to be Solomon speaking of his beloved when properly considered.

Rather, the words are assuredly the woman speaking about Solomon...

Into My death, you also can die with Me
Into new life, you can be born
When you trust the gospel story
In garments of righteousness, you I will adorn

The fragrance of your faith is pleasing to Me
Because it reflects what I have done
By faith, you have trusted Me completely
From that moment, new life has begun

How I rejoice over you!
My precious bride, My beautiful wife
My words are faithful and true
To you I have granted eternal life

II. Gushings From Lebanon (verses 15 & 16)

15 A fountain of gardens,

mayan ganim – "Fountain gardens." The words go back to verse 12 and reveal a contrast –

[12] "A bubbling locked,
Fountain sealed."

[15] "Fountain gardens,
Well waters – living,
And gushings from Lebanon."

Verse 12 spoke of the moral state of Solomon's beloved. She is chaste, pure, and morally contained. The words of verse 15 refer to the spiritual state of Solomon. He is the provider who outwardly flows forth, providing abundance and life to Israel as its king.

Being a "fountain gardens," means that his waters flow to refresh more than a single garden. Rather, he flows to all of the gardens of the Lord's people. Next...

[15 (con't)] **A well of living waters,**

b'er mayim khayiym – "Well waters – living." The idea of living waters is that of continuously flowing waters. They remain constant, fresh, and unimpeded. Thus, they continually provide life for those seeking it. Next, she says...

[15 (con't)] **And streams from Lebanon.**

v'nozlim min l'vanon – "And gushings from Lebanon." The word *nazal* comes from a primitive root signifying to drip or shed by trickling. In this case, it is plural and gives the sense of gushing waters or many streams.

Coming from Lebanon means the waters are from the snow melt. Thus, they are cool, refreshing, abundant, and descending from a higher point.

As with frankincense, Lebanon comes from *lavan*, white. As already noted, that is derived from *lavan*, to be or make white or to purify. It also signifies to make bricks because bricks whiten when they are dried.

With that stated, she now calls out with vibrant, exclamatory words...

[16] **Awake, O north *wind,***

The verb is imperative: *uri tsaphon* – "Awake, north!" It is speaking of a stirring from the north. Though the word wind is not included, it is implied. The land heats and the winds arise as a result. From there, they move across the land. Next...

16 (con't) And come, O south!

Again, the verb is imperative: *uvoi teman* – "And go, south!" The word *bo* can mean either to come or to go. In this case, it doesn't seem likely that she is asking for both the north and south wind to come at the same time. This is especially true when the south wind can be very hot in Israel.

Thus, I have translated it as go. The meaning of the word go can be used as in "Go away," or "Go, do your thing." Therefore, nothing is lost in the translation. As a side note, the construct, *uvoi*, is used only four times. The other three uses indicate to go. Therefore, it is a perfectly plausible pronouncement.

16 (con't) Blow upon my garden,

The imperative verbs continue: *haphikhi gani* – "Puff my garden." The winds rising in the north and going to the south makes sense considering the word *puakh*, to puff. It is as if the wind is breathing across the land.

But her words ask for them to puff across her garden, meaning herself. The bride of Solomon is calling on the winds to blow over her, and she asks for this...

16 (con't) *That* its spices may flow out.

yiz'lu b'samav – "Gushes its fragrances." It is the same word just used to describe the gushing of the waters from Lebanon. She asks the wind to pick up the spices noted above that describe her and carry them to her beloved. From there, she says...

16 (con't) Let my beloved come to his garden

yavo dodi l'gano – "Come, my beloved, to his garden." She acknowledges that her garden is his garden. She has completely yielded to him, inviting him to come to her...

16 (fin) And eat its pleasant fruits.

The word fruit is again singular, as in verse 13: *v'yokhal peri m'gadav* – "And eat fruit – his preciousnesses." The word garden is masculine, so she could be speaking of the fruit as being of the garden in general, "its preciousnesses."

But with a singular noun, fruit, it seems she is talking about him, saying, "his preciousnesses." Gardens normally have more than one fruit. But he focused on only one when describing her, the pomegranate. She is repeating that back to him, "Come to your garden and eat your fruit, your preciousnesses."

With Chapter 4 complete, there is still typology to consider. The words continue the typology of Christ from the previous sermon, where he called her "completer" four times.

The beloved provides a sense of completion to him as any bride does. The verses described what she was like in order to become this completer.

Next, he begins to describe what she is like, starting with "Garden locked. My sister – completer." As noted, she is her own garden with her own unique attributes, but they are locked up, meaning unshared with others.

This means she is a chaste virgin. Nobody has violated her garden, nor do they have access to it. It is reflective of Paul's words in 2 Corinthians –

> "Oh, that you would bear with me in a little folly—and indeed you do bear with me. **2** For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ." 2 Corinthians 11:1, 2

The imagery of her being "Bubbling locked, Fountain sealed," means that she is His alone, she is reserved solely for Him, and only He has access to her. That is perfectly seen in Paul's writings, such as in our text verse. Also –

> "In Him you also *trusted,* after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, **14** who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory." Ephesians 1:13, 14

Speaking of her shoots, meaning the redeemed within the garden, as "shoots – paradise" explains the state of the redeemed. They form a paradise, being people who are mature-minded, symbolized by the pomegranate, concerning Christ. For example, Paul says –

> “However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. **7** But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden *wisdom* which God ordained before the ages for our glory.” 1 Corinthians 2:6, 7

Next, the description “hennas with nards” looks to their state in Christ. Henna is from *kophar*, a covering. As noted in Chapter 1, the word is used to signify a ransom. The plural speaks of each individual as one who is ransomed by the Lord.

Likewise, the nard was poured all over Christ in preparation for His burial. As such, those who are redeemed are symbolically covered in the nard of Christ’s death. Christ’s death was a type of baptism. Believers are then baptized into His death and bear the fragrance of it –

> “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? **2** Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? **3** Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? **4** Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” Romans 6:1-4

The subsequent naming of each spice carries symbolism. First, the nard. Next, the saffron was noted as being a symbol of beauty and love. The *qaneh*, cane, is the source of the word canon, which we use to indicate the authority of Scripture, as in the canon of Scripture.

Thus, this spice is used to indicate the word of God. It is reflective of Christ, the word of God, who both embodies and reveals it. His word is that which is used as the standard measure for the acquisition and purchase of God’s people.

The *qinnamon*, cinnamon, is found four times in the Bible. Two point to Christ, two point to harlotry.

The word comes from an unused root meaning to erect. Thus, there is a house being erected by the Lord for His people, and there is a false one which is being erected by the false religious system of the world for those who pursue her harlotry. One will stand forever; the other will be forever destroyed.

Each of these spices points to a truth concerning the redeemed in relation to Christ. After those, it said –

“With all trees –
Frankincense, myrrh, and aloes.”

These spices have each been described already. Frankincense symbolizes purification, but it also speaks of works. The prominent idea of myrrh speaks of bitterness and symbolizes love. More especially, however, love in intimate union, but not necessarily sexual in nature.

Finally, the aloes were noted as one of the fragrances of the Lord in Psalm 45. These each then refer to the Lord’s work, the bitterness of it, and His fragrance before God. Saying they are “all chiefs – fragrances” is a way of saying that what Christ has done is the epitome of what identifies His people.

After the words about the woman were complete, she then described Him. He is the “Fountain, gardens,” whether those of faith in the past (apart from the law), the redeemed under the law, or the redeemed after His completion of it.

He is the “Well waters – living.” As Jesus Himself said –

> “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, **14** but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.” John 4:13, 14

These descriptions exactly define Jesus as He has revealed Himself. But she also says he is “gushings from Lebanon.” Because of the etymological similarity, the meaning of Lebanon is the same as frankincense, which speaks of Christ’s work.

The water from His works provides for His people, just as John 7 said. It is He who fulfilled God’s will, suffered for His people, and provides purification and life for them.

The last verse called on the wind. The north, *tsaphon*, signifies concealed. The south, *teman*, signifies the right hand. It is a call from the redeemed to have their own fragrances go forth openly (from the concealed) and in strength (symbolized by the right hand) for the Lord to come among them, “And eat fruit – His preciousnesses.”

It is a call for the Lord to be pleased with the fruit of those who are mature-minded, meaning having the mind of Christ by the act of receiving Him through faith.

We again see in these verses the reasons why this “Song the songs” is read each year at the Passover. As it anticipated the cross of Christ, the Passover Lamb, it is a call to share in the greatest love story ever written.

The book speaks of the union of Christ with His bride, the completer. As noted in the previous sermon, there is something about the Lord presenting the church as a bride to Himself that brings about its own state of completeness.

Otherwise, there would be no reason for Him to die on the cross and then to prepare the church as a bride for Himself. Whatever it is that He sees in His redeemed, His word has given a great number of typological anticipations of His union with it.

For example, Genesis 24 was all about this process when Abraham sent his servant to acquire a bride for Isaac. This book now is showing us that there is a fullness that can only be experienced when a man has a wife.

Transferring that thought to God in Christ, it shows us the true value He sees in His redeemed. He was willing to go through the years of redemptive history leading to Jesus, and then have Jesus go through immeasurable trials and suffering for this process to be completed.

Whatever value He sees in uniting with His redeemed, the fact is that He sees it. We are the beneficiaries of everything that lies ahead, and that state is procured by a simple act of faith in what He has done. Let us not insert ourselves into that part of the equation.

Let us trust in what He has done. In doing so, we will receive the full benefit of what He has promised to His people.

Closing Verse: *“On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. **38** He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’ **39** But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” John 7:37-39*

Next Week: Song of Songs 5:1-8 Pretty great stuff, fer sher... (My Hands Dripped Myrrh) (12th Song of Songs sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. He alone is the perfect example of love – untarnished, unblemished, and completely

pure and holy. He offers this love to you. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Song of Songs 4:12-16 (CG)

12 Garden locked,
My sister – completer.
A bubbling locked,
Fountain sealed.
13 Your shoots – paradise:
Pomegranates with fruit – preciousnesses.
Hennas with nards:
14 Nard and saffron,
Cane and cinnamon,
With all trees –
Frankincense, myrrh, and aloes,
With all chiefs – fragrances.
15 Fountain gardens,
Well waters – living,
And gushings from Lebanon.
16 Awake, north!
And go, south!
Puff my garden,
Gushes its fragrances.
Come, my beloved, to his garden,
And eat fruit – his preciousnesses.

Song of Songs 4:12-16 (NKJV)

12 A garden enclosed
Is my sister, *my* spouse,
A spring shut up,
A fountain sealed.
13 Your plants *are* an orchard of pomegranates
With pleasant fruits,
Fragrant henna 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, O south!
Blow upon my garden,
That its spices may flow out.
Let my beloved come to his garden
And eat its pleasant fruits.

SONG OF SONGS 5:1-8
(MY HANDS DRIPPED MYRRH)

In the Bible, the heart is mentioned over eight hundred times, and yet, it never refers to the literal, physical pump that pulses the blood through the body. Rather, it is used figuratively in Scripture.

P. Hughes defines it as "'the affective center of our being' and the capacity of moral preference." G. Archer says it is the "desire-producer that makes us tick." In essence, it is our seat of moral reasoning.

For example, Genesis 6:5 is the first mention of the heart. There it says of man that "every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." The last use of the heart in the Old Testament says that the Lord, "will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers."

In the New Testament, the first use happens to be the first verse I ever learned, because it was on a magnet on our refrigerator. Matthew 5:8 says, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

The New Testament's last use, referring to the Great Harlot of the end times, says "...for she says in her heart, 'I sit as a queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow'" (Revelation 18:7).

Text Verse: *"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.* ***20*** *Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me." Revelation 3:19, 20*

The understood meaning of the words of Jesus is based on 1) what the purpose of knocking is, 2) what a door signifies, and 3) what result Jesus is attempting to obtain. Jesus is not standing at a literal door and knocking with his knuckles in an appeal for someone to open it and allow Him to come strolling in. Rather, the words are being used metaphorically.

The knocking is an appeal to the intellect of a person. He explained the problem that was found in the Laodicean church. He told them of their condition and warned them of the consequences of what would happen if they didn't change. The appeal is expressed in the words "be zealous and repent."

Understanding this, and based on what we reviewed, we know that the heart is consistently used as a metaphor to identify the seat of reason, intellect, and the inner person. Paul says in Romans 10 –

> "But what does it say? 'The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart' (that is, the word of faith which we preach): **9** that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. **10** For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Romans 10:8-10

Paul is using the heart, as the Bible does consistently, as the seat of reason and intellect. The seat of reason and intellect is where one acts zealously to repent. Therefore, the door that is being knocked on is to be taken metaphorically for the heart. It doesn't need to say that. Rather, it is implied from even a minimal understanding of how the heart is presented in Scripture.

Understanding this will help us understand the symbolism presented in the passage today, and it is what is seen in the verses in Revelation. Don't expect Jesus to come knocking on the door of a church and calling out for the people inside to repent. That ain't gonna happen.

Rather, Jesus is knocking on the hearts of the people in the church, imploring them to reconsider their ways and return to Him. It's something many who fall under the umbrella of what is known as "the church" need to pay heed to today.

Unfortunately, many churches don't even refer to the Bible, but if they do, Revelation is the last place they would consider referring to. It's sad, because without that, they don't even know he is knocking.

Such interesting things as properly applying metaphor are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and… May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. My Dove, My Perfect (verses 1-3)

The words of this first verse are stated by Solomon, responding to the words of his beloved that closed out Chapter 4 –

The beloved:
Fountain gardens,

Well waters – living,
And gushings from Lebanon.
16 Awake, north!
And go, south!
Puff my garden,
Gushes its fragrances.
Come, my beloved, to his garden,
And eat fruit – his preciousnesses.

Solomon:
Came to my garden, my sister – completer.
Plucked my myrrh with my fragrance.
Eaten my forest with my honey.
Drank my wine with my milk.

Eat friends!
Drink and intoxicate, lovers!

Understanding this structure, let's evaluate the words individually with that in mind...

1 I have come to my garden, my sister, *my* spouse;

bathi l'gani akhothi khalah – "Came to my garden, my sister – completer." In the previous chapter, she had said, "Come, my beloved, to his garden." She offered herself to him. He came to her as she implored, enjoyed what she provided, and is now recounting his experience.

As seen in Chapter 4, he called her his sister three times. This identifies her nature. She is a member of the same people, nation, etc.

Also, five times in Chapter 4, he called her his *kalah*, his completer. He uses that term for the sixth and last time in the book here. She is his completer, and she has made him complete. With that understood, he explains his time with her...

1 (con't) I have gathered my myrrh with my spice;

Rather, he states more strongly: *arithi mori im b'sami* – "Plucked my myrrh with my fragrance." His beloved's fragrances were seen in Chapter 4. He only mentions myrrh by name here, maybe as a catchall for the whole list.

As for its meaning, *mor*, myrrh, signifies bitterness, but it symbolizes love. More especially, however, love in intimate union, but not necessarily sexual in nature.

As for the action of plucking, the word *arah*, to pluck, is found only here and in Psalm 80–

> "Why have You broken down her hedges,
> So that all who pass by the way pluck [*arah*] her *fruit?*
> **13** The boar out of the woods uproots it,
> And the wild beast of the field devours it." Psalm 80:12, 13

He is describing his union with his beloved almost forcefully, as if he plucked the fragrances right off of her. As it is in the garden, it is as if he took the fragrant flowers and broke them off in a passion. The reason for the hungrily-stated words seems rightly reflected by Keil –

"The road by which Solomon reached this full and entire possession was not short, and especially for his longing it was a lengthened one. He now triumphs in the final enjoyment which his ardent desire had found." Keil

He had longed for the union but had to wait for it to come about. When the time came, he could no longer restrain himself. Next...

1 (con't) I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey;

akhalti yari im divshi – "Eaten my forest with my honey." The word *ya'ar* means to thicken with verdure, as a forest, and this is how it is elsewhere translated. However, it doesn't seem to make sense to say he ate his forest.

Because of this, the thought by scholars is that the honeycomb must be what is referred to as if the comb is hived in trees. That seems to stretch the intent. Rather, verse 4:11 said, "Honey and milk under your tongue." Verse 4:13 noted the shoots of the garden, which included the pomegranates.

He is going back to those verses and equating her loving assets to a forest. Its fruit, which the forest stands as representative, is what he has hungrily eaten along with the honey. That would mean kissing her and receiving the transfer of honey through the kisses.

As for *devash*, honey, it is equated to the word of God several times in Scripture. He is describing their union as a trip through her garden, (meaning her) because she was a "garden locked" in verse 4:12. He has unlocked her for himself and is describing the experience. Next...

1 (con't) I have drunk my wine with my milk.

shathithi yeni im khalavi – "Drank my wine with my milk." The word *yayin*, wine, comes from an unused root meaning to effervesce. Thus it is fermented wine, an intoxicant. He is essentially saying he is love drunk.

The word *khalav*, milk, comes from *khelev*, fat. It is used to describe the richest or choicest part. As such, he is love drunk over partaking of her assets. The experience was that memorable to him.

The two, wine and milk, are found together again in Isaiah 55 –

> "Ho! Everyone who thirsts,
> Come to the waters;
> And you who have no money,
> Come, buy and eat.
> Yes, come, buy wine and milk
> Without money and without price." Isaiah 55:1

After speaking of his memorable moment, he next addresses his hearers...

1 (con't) Eat, O friends!
Drink, yes, drink deeply,
O beloved ones!

The verbs are imperative and plural: *ikhlu reim shethu v'shikhru dodim* –

"Eat friends!
Drink and intoxicate, lovers!"

Solomon is so overwhelmed with the experience that he wants everybody to feel the way he does. He essentially shouts out to them (Don't miss the opportunity!) to experience what he has just gone through. He is telling them to make a meal and a banqueting feast out of their own lovers.

The verb *shakhar* signifies to become tipsy through satiating oneself via stimulating drink. He wants his hearers, called friends and lovers, to experience love so strongly and deeply that they become as intoxicated as if they each drank their own bottle of Old Rip Van Winkle.

The words now close the third major part of the song. The previous parts ended at 2:7 and 3:5. From here, a new direction takes place.

[2] I sleep, but my heart is awake;

ani y'shenah v'libi er – "I asleep, and my heart awaking." The words are like the words of 3:1-4. There, she was dreaming of going out to find her beloved. Here, she appears to describe dreaming once again and is recounting the dream's contents.

She is lying down and asleep, but her heart starts stirring. The verb is a participle, awaking. She is describing the stirring of her heart because of something. It is calling her to also wake up...

[2 (con't)] *It is* the voice of my beloved!

qol dodi – "Voice my beloved!" This is what has stirred her from her slumber. She hears his voice as he calls to her...

[2 (con't)] He knocks, *saying,*

Rather, it is an abrupt stand-alone thought, stated with a participle: *Dopheq* – "Knocking." It is what you would expect from a poetically expressed dream. The word calls for the mind to join in the moment, "Do you hear it? Knocking..."

The act of knocking is an appeal to the heart, just as are his coming words. That is why she said her heart was awaking. In the Bible, the heart is used metaphorically when referring to the inner person, the mind, the intellect, the will, etc. He is making an appeal to her heart, her seat of reason, speaking while knocking.

Next, the hurriedness of her beloved is expressed. She hasn't responded and yet he calls out, certainly while still knocking...

[2 (con't)] "Open for me, my sister, my love,
My dove, my perfect one;

pithkhi li akhothi rayathi yonathi thamathi –

"Open to me, my sister, my querida,
My dove, my perfect."

His excitedly expressed words are as if he is in pain at not seeing her. He can't wait to be with her, and so he practically bribes her to open up with his alluring words. To make his request even more urgent, he next says...

**2 (con't) For my head is covered with dew,
My locks with the drops of the night."**

sheroshi nimla tal q'vutsothay r'sisey lay'lah –

"That my head filled – dew,
My locks – drops, night."

His words attempt to convince her to open up and let him in. The alluring words are mixed with words of distress accompanied by knocking. They form a hopefully irresistible appeal to her heart to mercifully let him in to dry off and see his querida.

As for his locks, the word is found only here and in verse 11, *qevutstsoth*, coming from *quts*, to spend the harvest season, but that is from a primitive root signifying to clip off. It is this root that defines them as locks. He is speaking in parallelism. His head is filled with dew, and his locks are soaked in the night drops.

These drops are also another new and rare word, *rasiys*, coming from *rasas*, to moisten. That, in turn, comes from another primitive root that signifies to comminute (crush, grind, mill, pound, pulverize, triturate, etc.). It is as if the moisture in the sky has broken down into small particles of dew. These have completely covered his head.

He might get a sniffle! Let him in! But she, certainly disappointing him, says...

**3 I have taken off my robe;
How can I put it on *again?***

pashat'ti eth kutan'ti eikhakhah elbashenah –

"Stripped my robe.
How don it?"

In this dream, she is thinking about her life before becoming a princess. She has one robe that she has removed before getting into bed. The meaning is, then, that she is in bed. To don her robe would only lead to another problem...

3 (con't) I have washed my feet;
How can I defile them?

rakhats'ti eth raglay eikhkhah atan'phem –

"Washed my feet.
How soil them?"

She uses the word found only this one time in the Bible, *tanaph*, to soil. To get to her robe, she would have to get out of bed. But before going to bed, she would have lifted her feet and washed them to keep the bed from being dirtied. She probably had one pair of sandals that she kept by the door for walking around outside. But inside, she didn't have a second pair for walking around.

This is what necessitated washing her feet. The floor was probably nothing more than stamped dirt. Getting up would defile her feet, demanding her to redo the whole process before going to bed again.

The excuses are weak, but she is following the advice that she has, and will again, express to the daughters of Jerusalem about not rushing love.

In a curiosity of the Hebrew, the word feet is a feminine noun, but the word translated as "soil them" is masculine. It would be like she was saying of her feet, "I have washed my girls, how can I soil my boys?" Despite her protestations, he is determined to obtain his goal. Therefore, he will act further to convince her...

Seek the Lord while He may be found
Respond to the call that He makes
When you hear that knocking sound
Be sure to respond, whatever it takes

When it means setting aside your pride
That is what you must do
If you want to be on the Lord's side
Then do what He expects of you.

He is knocking on the door of your heart
Asking you to begin a new way
Put away the old and make a new start
Don't delay the decision another day.

II. My Soul Went Out (verses 4-8)

[4] My beloved put his hand
By the latch *of the door,*

dodi shalakh yado min ha'khor – "My beloved sent his hand from the hole." It is debated what the meaning of the hole is. It would not be a hole to unlatch the door, as that would defeat the purpose of latching it. It may have been something like our mail slot, where someone could drop something off or pass something through without the need to open the door.

Regardless, the intent of sending his hand from the hole seems to be urging her further. Not only has he knocked, wooed, and sought for sympathy, but he put his hand through this hole, either making a grasping motion, as in, "Come here, I need you," or a waving motion, as in, "Come on, come on, come on," imploring her to respond.

The poor guy is like a buck in rut, beside himself with love and yearning to be with her. But she also admits that of herself...

[4 (con't)] And my heart yearned for him.

Rather: *u-meai hamu alav* – "And my innards clamored upon him." The word *meeh* signifies the bowels, intestines, etc. It is plural here. Translating it as heart blows the symbolism. Likewise, the word *hamah* signifies to make a loud sound like our English word hum.

She is saying that she feels sorry for him because of his many, fervent appeals. It may go further, though, to the point that she is also churning inside for him, but she has more restraint than he does. At least for a moment or two.

However, she finally acquiesces to his appeals, not being able to bear the thought of him out there while she is inside. And so, she dirties her feet and (well, maybe) puts on her robe...

[5] I arose to open for my beloved,

qamti ani liphtoakh l'dodi – "Arose, I, to open to my beloved." Breaking down from the strain, she arises, gets her feet dirty, and heads to the door. She has decided to let him in...

5 (con't) And my hands dripped *with* myrrh,

v'yadai nat'phu mor – "And my hands dripped myrrh." She gets to the door and finds that her hands have myrrh all over them. It appears that when he put his hand through, he not only beckoned to her, but he also took a vial of myrrh and shook it all around through the hole, maybe attempting to lure her to come.

It may even be why she came to the door. The smell became irresistible. To accentuate and explain the matter, she next says...

5 (con't) My fingers with liquid myrrh,

Rather: *v'etsb'othay mor over* – "And my fingers myrrh passing over." The verb *avar* means to cross over or pass over. Here, it is a participle, passing over. It doesn't mean liquid, flowing, choice, sweet smelling, or any of the innumerable attempts to explain what is being said.

It means that the myrrh was on the other side of the door, and then passed over to her side. The use of the participle tells us that it was his and was passing over to become hers, an anointing from her beloved. When he did this, it dripped...

5 (con't) On the handles of the lock.

Rather: *al kapoth ha'man'ul* – "Upon palms the bolt." Like door bolts today, this one would have flat protrusions, looking like palms, that you would grab and pull to unlock the door. His hand came in through the hole which was above the bolt. He knew this and shook out the myrrh all over it.

Even if she didn't get up to open the door right away, eventually she would, and her hands would be anointed with the myrrh. The use of the word palms to describe the handles is a nice touch to assist in forming parallelism in all three clauses. The word myrrh, though not stated, is implied in the third clause –

And my <u>hands</u> dripped myrrh.
And my <u>fingers</u> myrrh crossing over.
(From myrrh) Upon <u>palms</u> the bolt.

Having grabbed the palms and unfastened the bolt...

[6] I opened for my beloved,
But my beloved had turned away *and* was gone.

pathakhthi ani l'dodi v'dodi khamaq avar –

"Opened, I, to my beloved,
And my beloved wrapped – passed over."

As is typical in a dream, in opening the door for him, her heart sank. Thus, she uses words appropriate to the situation. First, the word *khamaq*, is rare, being found only here and in Jeremiah 31:22.

It comes from a primitive root meaning to wrap. As such, it means to be gone from sight, just as when something is wrapped, it is no longer in sight. Thus, an understandable paraphrase might be "My beloved was gone from sight."

That is supplemented with the word *avar*, passed over. His hands had passed over from the other side of the door to anoint her lock. Now he has passed over from her presence.

The moment when the two were close enough to touch had passed, and he was no longer there to join her. As such, she calls to mind what prompted her to get up and go to the door...

[6 (con't)] My heart leaped up when he spoke.

Rather: *naphshi yats'ah v'dab'ro* – "My soul went out in his speaking." The meaning is that his words cut her soul from her. First, it was as if she went through the hole in her door to be with him. When she could no longer stand it, she was then compelled to actually go to the door and be with him. However, she now returns to the reality of the situation in her dream...

[6 (con't)] I sought him, but I could not find him;

biqashtihu v'lo m'tsatihu – "Sought him, and no found him." The Hebrew is almost identical to the corresponding clause in verse 3:2, while the English translation is identical. In her dream world, she has failed in her endeavor.

She looked, but he elusively remained out of her sight. It is a common situation in such dreams or dreamlike states. In this case, her efforts are intensified by new words...

6 (con't) I called him, but he gave me no answer.

q'rativ v'lo anani – "Called him, and no answered me." I have a dog a lot like this. Pi Shnai is a little son of a gun at times. He will take off for the hills when you least expect it. And so out we go, calling. He doesn't respond. I can sympathize with this lady. It is frustrating to seek and to not find. With her seeking and calling, she wound up running into a bit of trouble...

7 The watchmen who went about the city found me.

She uses verbs to explain to those she encountered: *m'tsauni ha'shom'rim ha'shov'vim bair* – "Found me, the guardings, the 'compassings in the city.'" The words are letter for letter identical to the corresponding words of 3:3.

While going throughout the city, those who guard it, regularly compassing it while looking for miscreants, found her. She had done hered and come up with nothing. However, unlike the dream in Chapter 3 where she inquired of them without incident, this time, there is trouble...

7 (con't) They struck me, they wounded me;

hikuni p'tsauni – "Struck me. Wounded me." It doesn't say why they did this to her. Maybe they just got sick of being repetitively stuck in her dreams... probably not. They may have thought she was out doing evil as a woman alone might. No matter what, they treated her shamefully and with contempt. That is highlighted in the next words...

7 (con't) The keepers of the walls
Took my veil away from me.

The NKJV reverses the clauses, confusing the tempo and balance of her words: *nas'u eth r'didi mealay shom'rei ha'kohm'oth* – "Lifted my shawl from upon me, keepers the walls." This is the first of two uses of the word *radid*. The other will be in Isaiah 3:23. It is derived from *radad*, to tread in pieces. As such, it is something that spreads out. It is most likely a shawl that can be spread out to cover the head when needed. The dew of the night is probably why she had it with her.

Due to the violence of the previous clause, it appears likely that they just grabbed it and tore it right off of her. That may have been her chance to escape, as often happens in dreams. Now, she has something to share with the women...

[8] I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem,

hishbati etkhem b'noth y'rushalim – "Adjured you, daughters Jerusalem." The words are identical to the corresponding clauses in 2:7 and 3:5. However, the adjuration this time is a bit different than the previous two times. She is calling upon them to avow that...

[8 (con't)] If you find my beloved,
That you tell him

Rather, it appears she is asking a question and then giving the answer: *im timts'u eth dodi mah tagidu lo* –

"If find my beloved,
What declare to him?"

The word *mah*, what, is an interrogative. Her adjuration is two-fold. The first part is if they find him, they are to do something. She then pauses and ponders how she should direct them, asking what she should say and, thus, in turn, what they should say. That is the second half of the adjuration. They are to tell him...

[8 (fin)] I *am* lovesick!

shekholath ahavah ani – "That rubbing love, I." It is the same word, *khalah*, to be rubbed or worn, that she used in verse 2:5 –

> "Prop me in the pressed-cakes,
> Spread me in the apples,
> For rubbing love – I."

The use of the participle signifies her state: she is being worn down by the love she feels. She has ongoing lovesickness that tears at her. She wants nothing more than for him to return so that she can have what she previously refused.

It appears that this verse transitions from the dream to reality. Whether this is a part of the dream, or whether it is expressed to the daughters after telling them the dream is

hard to know. Either way, the verses ahead are similar to others that have already been seen as she describes her beloved to the daughters.

As for the contents of the verses today, verse 1 closed out the previous thought. Its words refer to the consummation of the love between them. All of the things he previously described, and which he was so attracted to, were offered to him. He accepted, and the union was realized.

This is how it is with the Lord and His church. The things that He sees of value in us are the things we have offered to Him. At some point, there will be a uniting of the two, the Lord and His completer.

As was seen in previous sermons, the times when others are spoken to in the plural may have a dual meaning. There is the single body represented by the many redeemed. As such, the citation of Isaiah 55:1 would make sense. It is an invitation to come and participate freely in what the Lord offers. Solomon implored his friends to eat, drink, and intoxicate in the love of God found in Christ.

After that, the words returned to Solomon's beloved as she described her dream about his coming. The words are similar enough to Chapter 3 to tell us that a lesson concerning our relationship with the Lord is being spoken of.

It is certain this is a dream because she knows it is her beloved and yet she rejects him. She is relaying what it would be like if she actually rejected his advances.

The woman is sleeping but her heart is awakening at the voice of the Lord. There He is, knocking. This is to be taken with the same symbolism as Revelation 3:20. He is "knocking on her heart," her intellect and seat of reasoning.

He implores her to open, speaks terms of endearment, and gives more reasons why she should let Him in. He has gone out of his way to be with her, and yet, she hesitates and gives weak excuses for why she is inconvenienced to respond.

The gender discord in verse 4 (where the feet are referred to in the feminine and then the masculine) can be explained by the fact that feet in Hebrew are feminine, but in Greek they are masculine. Peter at first refused to allow the Lord to wash his feet.

However, when he heard he had no part with Him if he didn't, he yielded to the Lord, allowing Him to do so. It is the Lord who sanctifies His people. The woman has indicated

in her dream that she has washed her feet, so she doesn't desire to come to the door and let Him in.

After that, He put his hand through the hole and put myrrh on the bolt. As noted, the prominent idea of myrrh speaks of bitterness but symbolizes love. More especially, however, love in intimate union, but not necessarily sexual in nature.

The Lord continues to coax her, and she finally goes to open the door. There comes a time, however, when the Lord will depart. He had gone away, she sought Him, but she did not find him. But the city guards found her, struck her, wounded her, and removed her shawl from her.

She understands the consequences of rejecting His advances. This forms a warning to those who have received the advances of the Lord. Maybe they heard the gospel on the radio, were invited to a church, or were handed a tract.

There is a smugness in humans. We believe we can do it on our own. We always want to add ourselves into the equation when it comes to being right with God. However, people will find out when it is too late that the Lord can no longer be found.

For her, this is only a dream, just as in Chapter 3. But it conveys truths concerning the "Song the songs." When the Lord calls, we are under obligation to respond. Like the dream in Chapter 3, both accounts speak of free will. Let us use that will and respond to this call.

This is the greatest of all love songs because it speaks of the mutual love found between God and His people, made possible through the giving of His Son. The fact that people are given the choice to respond to the call makes this true love, not something forced apart from their will.

This is what God is looking for in His people: faith. God has extended Himself for us. Let us be faithful to accept His call.

Closing Verse: *"Seek the LORD while He may be found,*
Call upon Him while He is near." Isaiah 55:6

Next Week: Song of Songs 5:9-16 *Love cannot be forced or shoved, but to it, we must attend...* (This My Beloved, This My Friend) (13th Song of Songs sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. He alone is the perfect example of love – untarnished, unblemished, and completely pure and holy. He offers this love to you. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Song of Songs 5:1-8 (CG)

1 Came to my garden, my sister – completer.
Plucked my myrrh with my fragrance.
Eaten my forest with my honey.
Drank my wine with my milk.
Eat friends!
Drink and intoxicate, lovers!
2 I asleep, and my heart awaking,
Voice my beloved!
Knocking –
"Open to me, my sister, my querida,
My dove, my perfect –
That my head filled – dew,
My locks – drops, night."
3 Stripped my robe.
How don it?
Washed my feet.
How soil them?
4 My beloved sent his hand from the hole,
And my innards clamored upon him.
5 Arose, I, to open to my beloved,
And my hands dripped myrrh.
And my fingers myrrh crossing over,
Upon palms the bolt.
6 Opened, I, to my beloved,
And my beloved wrapped – passed over.
My soul went out in his speaking.
Sought him, and no found him.
Called him, and no answered me.
7 Found me, the guardings, the 'compassings in the city.'
Struck me. Wounded me.
Lifted my shawl from upon me, keepers the walls.
8 Adjured you, daughters Jerusalem,
If find my beloved,

What declare to him?
That rubbing love, I.

Song of Songs 5:1-8 (NKJV)

1 I have come to 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, yes, drink deeply,
O beloved ones!
2 I sleep, but my heart is awake;
It is the voice of my beloved!
He knocks, *saying,*
"Open for me, my sister, my love,
My dove, my perfect one;
For my head is covered with dew,
My locks with the drops of the night."
3 I have taken off my robe;
How can I put it on *again?*
I have washed my feet;
How can I defile them?
4 My beloved put his hand
By the latch *of the door,*
And my heart yearned for him.
5 I arose to open for my beloved,
And my hands dripped *with* myrrh,
My fingers with liquid myrrh,
On the handles of the lock.
6 I opened for my beloved,
But my beloved had turned away *and* was gone.
My heart leaped up when he spoke.
I sought him, but I could not find him;
I called him, but he gave me no answer.
7 The watchmen who went about the city found me.
They struck me, they wounded me;
The keepers of the walls
Took my veil away from me.

8 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
If you find my beloved,
That you tell him I *am* lovesick!

SONG OF SONGS 5:9-16
(THIS MY BELOVED, THIS MY FRIEND)

We have seen in "Song the songs" that Solomon is a type of the Lord and his beloved is a type of the redeemed. It isn't necessary to define this relationship only in terms of the church, as some have done.

Nor is the book an allegory that refers to Israel and the Lord alone. Rather, the same Lord who covenanted with the church previously covenanted with Israel. Further, His word promises that they, as a nation, will be brought into the New Covenant.

The book expresses a state of love that exists between the Lord and His redeemed, and between His redeemed and Him. But where does our love for Jesus come from? People might say, "I love Jesus because of what He has done for me."

Well, that's great, but where does knowing what He has done come from? You say, "From the cross. My love for Jesus is because of the cross. That is what He did for me. He died on the cross." But that still doesn't answer the question.

I mean, did any of us walk down the road and see Jesus hanging on a cross? No. And even if we saw someone hanging on a cross, we wouldn't say, "That guy saved me so that I can go to heaven."

Rather, our knowledge of Jesus comes from the word that tells us about Jesus.

Text Verse: *"For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe." 1 Thessalonians 2:13*

We read or heard the word, and we believed. We haven't seen Jesus. Apart from the Bible, we would not know Jesus ever existed. And for all we know, someone could have made up the Bible and told us it was the truth, meaning we have believed in a lie.

And yet, without the proof, without sight, we believe. Something in us has told us that the proposition is sound, that it can be trusted, and so we believed it. That is faith.

The Bible says there will be a rapture for believers someday. Believing in that, too, is faith. There are Christians who believe in Jesus and have trusted Him to get them to heaven, and yet they have zero faith in the doctrine concerning the rapture.

So faith is not only based on what the Bible says, but on its interpretation as well. Various cults and sects say they believe in Jesus while holding to the Bible, but at the same time, they don't believe that Jesus is God incarnate.

How do we know they are rong and we are write? The odds are that we are trusting in what we were told. But people say a lot of things. Be sure to listen and assimilate and then go the extra step to verify.

However, there is a point, even with a total and right understanding of Scripture, that we still must have faith. The woman in the passage today is asked why she feels the way she does about her beloved.

If someone asks why you believe in Jesus, it is proper that you are prepared to explain why you believe what you believe. In doing so, you very well may stir up in them the same saving faith that you possess.

Such great lessons as this are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and… May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. The Beautiful in the Women (verse 9)

Verses 2-8 conveyed the details of the woman's dream. She was allured by her beloved, but she rejected his advances, after which she changed her mind and went out in search of him in the city. The verses ended with –

"Adjured you, daughters Jerusalem,
If find my beloved,
What declare to him?
That rubbing love, I."

Next, we begin with the response from the daughters of Jerusalem...

9 What *is* your beloved
More than *another* beloved,

mah dodekh midod – "What your beloved from beloved?" The word from is used as a comparator. Despite being singular in the second use of beloved, it isn't merely asking "more than another" as the NKJV renders it. Instead, it implies the all-encompassing "any other," as in, "What makes your beloved more beloved than any other beloved?"

It is a collective call from the daughters of Jerusalem, each with her own thoughts about a beloved. But they sense that this woman feels her beloved is more desirable than any other. And yet, that actually makes sense to them because she is...

9 (con't) O fairest among women?

hayaphah banashim – "The beautiful in the women?" The daughters acknowledge that her beauty is the epitome of feminine beauty, reflected in the words "in the women." The word "in" is used as a response to their own question "from."

She is the embodiment of beauty, and she is being rubbed with love for her beloved. Therefore, there must be something about him that makes him more than any other beloved. And so, they again ask...

9 (con't) What *is* your beloved
More than *another* beloved,
That you so charge us?

mah dodekh midod shekakhah hishbatanu –

"What your beloved from beloved,
That thus adjured us?"

The words of the earlier clause and this one probably shouldn't be taken as if they are unaware of the answer. They understand it to be true. It is a self-evident fact that he is greater than any other beloved. However, they are providing her with the chance to express it out loud.

She is the height of beauty. He has selected her because of this. He is already the epitome of what a beloved exemplifies. The daughters of Jerusalem ask her to explain his state of "moreness" to them.

She has adjured them that if they find him, they are to tell him that she is being rubbed with love, worn down from her passion for him. They are like a bunch of girls in the

college dorm saying, “Oooh, he is SO dreamy. Tell us all about him!” And so, she responds...

My Beloved is above all the others
He is the epitome of what one could ever expect
If you will allow me my druthers
I will explain the things in Him I detect

He is glorious in all ways
He is majestic above all the rest
He is beautiful for endless days
Of all those better and better, He is the best

Never will I remove my eyes from looking unto Him
Forever I will wait in hope, Him to see
Though life passes by and the days grow dim
I will keep my eyes fixed on His majesty

II. His Entirety – Delightnesses (verses 10-16)

10 My beloved *is* white and ruddy,

The translation makes no sense. Rather: *dodi tsakh v’adom* – “My beloved dazzling and red.” To say “white and ruddy” is to confuse the single thought with two dissimilar thoughts. White is not red.

Here we are provided a new word, *tsakh*. It will be found only four times. It is derived from *tsakhah*, to be dazzling white, a word found only in Lamentations 4:7. However, the dazzling white should not be understood as simply white-white. Instead, it is the brilliance that radiates against or out of the white. The sense can be seen in the transfiguration –

> “Now it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings, that He took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray. **29** As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe *became* white *and* glistening.”
> -Luke 9:28, 29

The white (*leukos*) is accompanied by the word *exastraptó*, to flash like lightning. It is derived from *ek*, out, and *astraptó*, to shine like lightning. It is an intensification of light

coming forth from the light. This is undoubtedly the sense of the Hebrew word *tsakh* being used here. One of the other uses of it is in Jeremiah 4 –

> "At that time it will be said
> To this people and to Jerusalem,
> 'A dry [*tsakh*] wind of the desolate heights *blows* in the wilderness
> Toward the daughter of My people—
> Not to fan or to cleanse—" Jeremiah 4:11

The word here is variously translated as dry, hot, burning, searing, scorching, etc. But it is the effect on the surrounding air that is being referred to. Hence, it is a wind that dazzles, like a heat haze which causes a mirage.

Therefore, the description she provides is of one who is *adom*, red, in his humanity, but his color flashes forth in brilliance, dazzling the eyes of his beloved. As such, he is...

10 (con't) Chief among ten thousand.

Rather: *dagul mer'vavah* – "Bannered from a myriad." The words are given to accentuate the previous clause. The word *dagal* means to raise a flag. As such, it figuratively is used as "to be conspicuous." It is derived from a primitive root meaning to flaunt. One can think of his appearance as encompassing him, setting him apart from all others. Thus, he is bannered.

The next word *mer'vavah* signifies from (*m*) abundance (*revavah*). Being a singular indeterminate noun, it is thus a myriad. As such, she is saying that he stands out (is bannered) like a flag among all others surrounding him.

With this general but poignant description of him, she will next identify and describe ten aspects of him that are exceptional: his head, locks, eyes, cheeks, lips, hands, body, legs, countenance, and mouth...

11 His head *is like* the finest gold;

Rosho – "His head." I believe each of these descriptions should have a pause after the main subject. From there, the subject is then defined through the use of metaphor. The reason for this is that she gives the subject and then stops to think about it before giving more descriptors. You can almost hear her sigh as she says it... "His head! O, his head! Ahhhhh."

As for the description of his head, my translation is bucking against all others: *kethem paz* – "Ore – refinement." All translations say "gold" with the exception of the GNT, which says "bronzed." The GNT realized that gold isn't correct, but the word is a noun, not an adjective.

The word *kethem* comes from *katham*, to carve or engrave. Hence, it is something carved out. Ore, regardless of its content, is carved out. It could be gold, platinum, etc. The next word *phaz* comes from *pazaz*, to refine. Thus, it is refined ore. But as a noun, it signifies "refinement."

She is referring to the absolute purity, not the color or type. If copper is brought out, it must be refined, but when it is, it is lustrous in its purified state. The meaning is that his head is ore in a state of perfect refinement, having no impurity at all. Next...

11 (con't) His locks *are* wavy,

q'vutsothav – "His locks." This is the second and final use of *qevutstsoth*, locks, in Scripture. The first was in verse 5:2. They are described by another noun...

tal'talim – copiousnesses." The noun is found only here in Scripture. It is derived from either *tel*, a mound or a heap, or *talal*, to pile up. It speaks of the copious nature of his locks. Being plural, the word is copiousnesses.

It is as if she is saying, "He has heaps and heaps of hair." The thought is like that of Solomon's brother, Absalom –

> "Now in all Israel there was no one who was praised as much as Absalom for his good looks. From the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him. **26** And when he cut the hair of his head—at the end of every year he cut *it* because it was heavy on him—when he cut it, he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels according to the king's standard."
>
> -2 Samuel 14:25, 26

It appears the sons of David, even if from different mothers, were endowed with piles of rich hair. As for Solomon's, she continues...

11 (con't) *And* black as a raven.

shekhoroth kaorev – "Black, according to the raven." Ravens are not only pitch black but they are shiny as well. She is noting the immensely luxuriant state of his hair. Next, she moves her thoughts lower on his head...

[12] His eyes *are* like doves
By the rivers of waters,

Rather, the structure of the words again demands a pause after the main subject: *enav* – "His eyes..." There will be three thoughts to explain them. The first is...

k'yownim al aphiqey mayim – "According to doves upon puddles waters." In verses 1:15 and 4:1, Solomon equated his beloved's eyes to doves, "Your eyes – doves." Here, however, she notes that his eyes are like doves, but specifically they are upon puddles of waters. In these descriptions, we find that she is actually referring to his irises.

As for the puddles, the word is a noun *aphiq*. Again, my translation bucks against all others, but I feel confident in it. Although more often than not, *aphiq* is translated as a stream or river, that is not what it signifies. Instead, it speaks of what holds those things. It is literally "a containing." As such, it is a tube, channel, duct, ravine, pool, puddle, etc.

The meaning is that his irises are being compared to doves as they flit about in puddles. This is what doves do. They don't go to deep rivers or pools. Rather, they find shallow puddles and flit about.

She is saying that his eyes are dwelling in glistening moisture. As the sun catches them, they reveal their varied colors, bands, and patterns, just as doves do when the sun alights upon them.

The individual feathers, in varied shapes, bands, and colors, suddenly take on life and vivacity when closely inspected. In light, when looked at from different angles, they become iridescent. The words demonstrate that she has not only looked carefully at his eyes, but that she has done so close up, inspecting and analyzing every detail.

Next, she continues to describe the irises, saying they are...

[12 (con't)] Washed with milk,

Rather, the participle helps explain the matter: *rokhatsoth behalav* – "Washing in the milk." Because doves are the nearest antecedent, one would think she is continuing the dove metaphor. Hence, many translations incorrectly translate the verb.

In doing this, a mixed metaphor results. It would mean the doves are by puddles of water, having been washed in milk, something that makes no sense at all.

Rather, this is going back to further describe his eyes, but specifically his irises, which are incidentally like doves encompassed by the white of the eye. They are in a sea of white as if they are floating in milk, being washed by it.

With that stated, she turns to the third descriptor of them...

12 (con't) ***And*** **fitly set.**

Rather: *yosh'voth al mileth* – "Sitting upon fulness." Here, the word *mileth* is used. It is found only here in the Bible, coming from *male*, to fill or be full. Of it, Strong's says, "a plump socket." However, it is doubtful she is thinking of Marty Feldman eyes, unless bulging eyes were all the rage at the time .

Rather, his eyes are full and round with the irises perfectly fitted in them like gems in a beautiful convex setting.

It is amazing how a simple change in the structure of the translation more perfectly fits the intent of what she is conveying. She is utterly smitten with his eyes. Each descriptor reveals her overwhelmed, gasping delight in them. Next, she again proceeds lower...

13 His cheeks *are* like a bed of spices,

l'khayav – "His cheeks." Only after stating that, certainly with a loss of breath, she notes they are...

kaarugath habosem – "According to parterre the fragrance." It is another new word, *arugah*. It is derived from the verb *arag*, to long for or pant after. It signifies something piled up or, figuratively, raised by mental aspiration.

As it is something where spices are grown, the word parterre, is probably what is being referred to. It is an ornamental garden with paths running between the beds. This means the two cheeks are being represented by one bed.

Therefore, she is probably speaking of them as one because of his beard, which he certainly had, that unites them into one. Thus, the biblical model for a man having a beard is faithfully upheld. Hooray for beards!

His cheeks are raised up, but they are also scented with cologne. This is because his beard is where it would be predominantly applied. And again...

13 (con't) Banks of scented herbs.

migd'loth merqakhim – "Towers perfumes." Here is another word found only once in Scripture, *merqakh*. It is derived from *raqakh*, to perfume. Thus, it speaks of perfume. Being plural, it is perfumes.

The use of the plural, towers, identifies the individual cheeks as towering above the beard, which unites them.

Using the words beds and towers as well as fragrance and perfumes, she is speaking superlatively about him. His cheeks are high, long, and pleasingly scented. You can almost see her eyes rolling back in her head as she speaks. But she gathers herself together and continues, going down the face yet further...

13 (con't) His lips *are* lilies,

Siphthothav – "His lips." Pretty much every translation other than the LSV places "lilies" with "lips," then they describe them further.

However, if this follows the same pattern as before, she first notes the lips, followed by a description of them. But even the LSV then adds in words to make it three things in one –

> "His lips—lilies, dripping [and] flowing [with] myrrh." LSV

However, that would ruin what appears to be the intent based on the plural assigned to the verb. Therefore...

shoshanim not'photh – "Lilies – drippings." The word drippings belongs to "lilies." Both are plural. There are two lips, each a lily. She then describes the action. His lips are highlighted by the drippings. Only then is the myrrh brought in to describe the drippings through parallelism. They are...

13 (con't) Dripping liquid myrrh.

mor over – "Myrrh – overflowing." The drippings are myrrh to her, scented tastes of his mouth. Every drop of saliva over his lips is like a festival of delight to her. It is overflowing myrrh.

Next, she moves down from his head to...

[14] His hands *are* rods of gold

yadav – "His hands." It seems like an obvious move. The hands go up and down. Placing them after his head flows naturally based on the context, meaning what will be described after the hands.

However, she notably omits the neck, which he specifically described twice concerning her. The reason for this is that his neck would be hidden behind his beard. As for his hands, she says they are...

g'lile zahav – "Rods – gold." It is a rare word *galil*, coming from *galal*, to roll. In this case, it is plural. This is the last of four uses. Twice in 1 Kings, it is used to describe the pivot on which a door rotates. The other use is in Esther 1 –

> "*There were* white and blue linen *curtains* fastened with cords of fine linen and purple on silver rods [*galil*] and marble pillars; *and the* couches *were* of gold and silver on a *mosaic* pavement of alabaster, turquoise, and white and black marble."
>
> -Esther 1:6

This seems to be the best word to describe his hands, meaning he has five golden rods on each. Each is perfectly shaped and tanned to a golden hue. They are also...

[14 (con't)] Set with beryl.

Rather: *m'mulaim batar'shish* – "Being filled in the beryl." Beryl comes in a variety of colors. Some think this is speaking of a lighter beryl that represents his fingernails. However, what seems more likely is that he is wearing rings on his fingers adorned with beryl stones.

Either way, she has noted his hands as being exceptional. She next goes to...

[14 (con't)] His body *is* carved ivory

meav – "His abs." The word is *meeh*, coming from an unused root meaning to be soft. As such, it is variously translated as bowels, stomach, abdomen, womb, etc. As this is the outside of the soft area, one would think it refers to the abdominal area as a whole.

However, it is plural. As such, it appears Solomon was pretty fit and had some evident abs 😯. Next, it says...

esheth shen – "Fabric – ivory." The noun *esheth* is from *ashath*, a word signifying to be sleek. Therefore, it is the sleek skin that covers the abdomen, figuratively called a fabric. Of it, she notes that it is *shen*, a word signifying a tooth or ivory.

As she already described the hands as gold, she is noting the creaminess of the skin that covers his abs, being an ivory white to olive. Solomon's natural skin color is clearly evident from the description. He was not red, yellow, or black, but ivory.

She also says his abs are...

14 (con't) Inlaid *with* sapphires.

m'ulepheth sapirim – "Wrapped – sapphires." The verb *alaph* signifies to wrap or cover as with a veil. Saying "inlaid" is an incorrect presupposition. That would be taking the metaphor, ivory, and suddenly making it actually what they are talking about. Rather, it means wrapped. For example, it says in Genesis 38 –

> "And it was told Tamar, saying, 'Look, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep.' **14** So she took off her widow's garments, covered *herself* with a veil and wrapped [*alaph*] herself, and sat in an open place which *was* on the way to Timnah; for she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given to him as a wife." Genesis 38:13, 14

The verb form expresses a passive action, as in "being wrapped." The meaning is that she has seen his belly in its natural state, but when he is clothed, it is wrapped in sapphires, probably meaning an expensive belt either studded with sapphires or, more likely, whose colors resemble sapphires.

Next, she continues downward, noting...

15 His legs *are* pillars of marble

Shoqav – "His legs." The word *shoq*, leg, comes from *shuq*, to run after or overflow. Thus, it speaks of the leg flowing out from the body. She is obviously impressed with his legs because she says they are...

amude shesh – "Pillars marble." The word signifies a column or a pillar used for support. The word *shesh* means white linen. Thus, by analogy, it refers to the whiteness of marble, as also noted in Esther. Again, the natural color of his skin is at the darkest ivory, but it would lean to the whiter side of the range of ivory.

With that description provided, she next says...

15 (con't) Set on bases of fine gold.

Rather: *m'yusadim al adne phaz* – "Set upon foundations refinement." As in verse 5:11, the word *phaz*, refinement, is used. Whether gold or silver, or some other ore that is brought out and refined, the result is foundations, meaning his feet, that are perfectly precious and pure.

Having noted that, she next turns to an overall description of him as she finishes off her almost breathless comments about her beloved...

15 (con't) His countenance *is* like Lebanon,

mar'ehu – "His appearance." The word *raah* signifies a view. It can be active, such as seeing the sight of someone. It can also be static, such as the view of someone, as in the countenance or appearance.

Based on the next words, it means more than just his countenance, as if she is only looking at his face. Rather, she is summing up the entirety of how she views him, completely pleased with every nuance and detail. Therefore, she says his appearance is...

kal'vanon – "according to the Lebanon." It may be she is referring to Mt. Hermon as the stately, or kingly mountain, representing the whole of the mountain range of Lebanon.

Or it may be that she is speaking of the kingly trees of Lebanon, something that will be repeated in the next clause. Or she may be referring to the kingly House of Lebanon, which took Solomon thirteen years to build.

I think kingly trees is correct based on the parallelism formed in the next clause. Any of these could be on her mind, and each of them would provide a picture of towering awe, stability, and majesty. Next, she continues with a similar metaphor, saying...

15 (con't) Excellent as the cedars.

bakhur kaarazim – "Excellent according to the cedars." There is no doubt about the metaphor here. The kingly cedar, used to describe great kings in prophetic literature, is how she describes his appearance. He is awesome to the sight and majestic to behold, planted and firm in his stature.

With that stated, she returns to the desire of her heart as noted in Chapter 1...

16 His mouth *is* most sweet,

khiko mam'taqim – "His palate – sweetnesses." The word *khek* refers to the palate, where taste is the key sense involved. It was the same word she used in verse 2:3 –

> "According to apple in trees the forest,
> Thus my beloved between the sons,
> In his shade delighted and sat,
> And his fruit sweet to my palate [*khek*]."

As such, it variously means taste, speech, etc. But each is brought back to the sense of the palate. In 2:3, it was *her* palate she referred to. In this case, she is experiencing *his* palate.

As before, that could mean she is referring to the sweetness of his words, the delight of his speech, or the actual taste of his mouth as she yearned for him in Chapter 1, where a different word is used –

> "Kiss me from kisses his mouth –
> For good your loves from wine." Song of Songs 1:2

It could also be inclusive of all of these and more due to the plural, sweetnesses. The entirety of the doting affections that proceed from his palate. Whatever she is referring to, she finds them a tasteful treat to her own senses.

As for the word itself, *mam'thaqqim*, it is a noun signifying something sweet, coming from *mathoq*, a verb meaning to be sweet. The word is found only here and in Nehemiah 8:10. Next, she gives an all-encompassing thought concerning him...

16 (con't) Yes, he *is* altogether lovely.

v'khulo makhamadim – "And his entirety – delightnesses." The verb from which it is derived signifies desirable or to delight in, but it is also translated as covet, as in the tenth commandment. She is utterly smitten with him and everything about him.

She has stated these things in response to their question –

> "What your beloved from beloved,
> The beautiful in the women?
> What your beloved from beloved,
> That thus adjured us?" Song of Songs 5:9

They asked for it, and they got just what they asked for.

She loaded on the metaphor,
Using superlatives galore,
And if they needed more,
She could have added it, for shor!

But her words were perfectly expressed, and she feels she has sufficiently convinced them that he is the greatest of all beloveds. And so, she begins her final summary, saying...

16 (con't) This *is* my beloved,

zeh dodi – "This – my beloved." She is proudly beaming as she speaks the words. The brevity says as much as adding ten more interjections could.

They had asked, *mah*, what. She has responded in kind, *zeh*, this. With that, she responds with words accentuating and elevating the matter...

16 (con't) And this *is* my friend,

v'zeh rei – "And this – my friend." He is her beloved, but that doesn't always equate to a reciprocal feeling. However, true friendship almost always extends both ways. The

meaning, then, is, “We are more than just lovers, we are friends.” On the surface, it seems contradictory until it is thought through.

Finally, she completes her words with a note that everything she said was for their benefit, based on their inquiry...

16 (fin) O daughters of Jerusalem!

b’noth y’rushalim – “Daughters Jerusalem.” Her case has been made, and their question has been answered. Now they must determine if what she has expressed allows her the bragging rights for being worn down by her love for him.

Whatever they feel about the matter, she is convinced beyond a shadow of a doubt that he is the beloved of all beloveds.

The importance of what is being conveyed rests in the absolute devotion and enthralled state she has expressed toward him.

It reflects the state of those of the redeemed who truly understand the magnificence of the Lord and what He has done for His people. Each of the metaphors found in the passage carries this overall message.

Each may bear typological hints of the Lord, but the overall message is sufficient to get the point of what the book is conveying.

I have seen people telling others about Jesus who are literally overwhelmed by their awe and love for Him. They cannot contain themselves as they attempt to explain why they are so in love with Him. And yet, not one person who feels this way has actually seen Him.

Rather, they have only heard about Him from the pages of the Bible or from the mouth of someone who passed on their knowledge of Scripture.

It is the only way we can know about Jesus. And yet, hearing what He did, without any proof beyond the Bible itself, takes the believer into a rapturous state of delight about what He has done for us. And this is just how it was for the saints of old who, without seeing the Lord, understood His divine hand was upon them. And so, they exalted Him –

> “When the LORD brought back the captivity of Zion,
> We were like those who dream.

[2] Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
And our tongue with singing.
Then they said among the nations,
'The LORD has done great things for them.'
[3] The LORD has done great things for us,
And we are glad." Psalm 126:1-3

The exiles who came back, written about in this psalm, trusted that what happened was not arbitrary, a result of their own ability, or some type of karma that brought them the fortunes of receiving a just due in return for the disasters that came upon them.

Rather, they knew – because of the words of the prophets – that it was the hand of the Lord that punished them, directed them, and eventually restored them. At the same time, because Israel is the people of the Lord, other nations joined this state of understanding as well.

Such things take faith. Try it! Ask yourself if you are saved. When you respond in the affirmative, it isn't because you are sitting in heaven eating the most delightful durian fruit that ever existed.

Rather, you are still here in this corruptible body, occasionally getting sick, frustrated, disheartened, and so forth. For most, durian has to be imported, meaning frozen before it is amazing in taste. All this will be behind us someday.

And yet, you have faith that it is true. That had to come from somewhere. How do you know you haven't been duped or deceived? Mormons think they are going to run their own little universe, becoming gods just like Jesus, who supposedly became a god.

Some believe that they will go to purgatory when they die. Only after paying off their sins in purgatory, they then get to be in heaven forever. Jehovah's Witnesses think they have to work their way there in accordance with the doctrine of the Watchtower.

What is it that you believe has saved you and promised you heaven? Your level of trust in the promises of the word of God and in the things it claims reveals how much faith you possess in those things. If your understanding of the word is correct, you believe that one thing alone has brought it about – grace through faith in the completed work of Christ.

Hold fast to that. If that is what you believe, you are, according to the word of God, on the right track to eternal glory.

Closing Verse: *"Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." 1 John 3:2*

Next Week: Song of Songs 6:1-7 *I'm a gonner, can't you see...* (Turn Your Eyes From Me) (14th Song of Songs sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. He alone is the perfect example of love – untarnished, unblemished, and completely pure and holy. He offers this love to you. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Song of Songs 5:9-16 (CG)

9 What your beloved from beloved,
The beautiful in the women?
What your beloved from beloved,
That thus adjured us?
10 My beloved dazzling and red,
Bannered from a myriad.
11 His head –
Ore – refinement.
His locks –
Copiousnesses,
Black, according to the raven.
12 His eyes –
According to doves upon puddles waters.
Washing in the milk.
Sitting upon fulness.
13 His cheeks –
According to parterre the fragrance.
Towers – perfumes.
His lips –
Lilies – drippings,
Myrrh – overflowing.
14 His hands –
Rods – gold,
Being filled in the beryl.
His abs –
Fabric – ivory,

Wrapped – sapphires.
15 His legs – pillars marble,
Set upon foundations refinement.
His appearance according to the Lebanon,
Excellent according to the cedars.
16 His palate – sweetnesses,
And his entirety – delightnesses.
This – my beloved,
And this – my friend,
Daughters Jerusalem.

Song of Songs 5:9-16 (NKJV)

9 What *is* your beloved
More than *another* beloved,
O fairest among women?
What *is* your beloved
More than *another* beloved,
That you so charge us?
10 My beloved *is* white and ruddy,
Chief among ten thousand.
11 His head *is like* the finest gold;
His locks *are* wavy,
And black as a raven.
12 His eyes *are* like doves
By the rivers of waters,
Washed with milk,
And fitly set.
13 His cheeks *are* like a bed of spices,
Banks of scented herbs.
His lips *are* lilies,
Dripping liquid myrrh.
14 His hands *are* rods of gold
Set with beryl.
His body *is* carved ivory
Inlaid *with* sapphires.
15 His legs *are* pillars of marble
Set on bases of fine gold.
His countenance *is* like Lebanon,

Excellent as the cedars.
16 His mouth *is* most sweet,
Yes, he *is* altogether lovely.
This *is* my beloved,
And this *is* my friend,
O daughters of Jerusalem!

SONG OF SONGS 6:1-7
(TURN YOUR EYES FROM ME)

The day before typing this sermon was Super Bowl Sunday. As a result, there were many disappointed people in the nation. A lot of time, effort, and money went into the game. People had their hopes up, and many of them were left crushed like a pomegranate under the foot of an African elephant.

Others reveled in the victory. Though we think that the memory of the Super Bowl will go on and on, the truth is that it won't be long until it is forgotten. The people in Greece had their Olympiads. The Romans had their gladiator wars. These were men hailed as heroes and champions, but now they are all forgotten.

Time marches on, and the things people find important change. However, the things that God thinks are important are never forgotten by Him. He remembers all things, and He brings them up in Scripture from time to time to remind His people that He has not forgotten.

Text Verse: *"A fire devours before them,*
And behind them a flame burns;
The land is like the Garden of Eden before them,
And behind them a desolate wilderness;
Surely nothing shall escape them." Joel 2:3

Joel was likely written sometime between 835 and 796 BC, during the reign of King Joash. That was thousands of years after Adam and Eve were cast out of Eden. Joel is prophetically pointing to circumstances beyond his day, though.

We know this because Peter cites Joel 2 in Acts 2. And what he says clearly anticipates the time after the church age during the tribulation period. So God looks back on Eden but compares it to something thousands of years in the future. This means He is looking back on Eden from the future, telling Joel things about what will happen to the land based on His ability to span all of history.

Obviously, Eden was memorable to the Lord and our relationship with Him, so He brings it up from time to time in later years to remind us.

We know from Scripture that the Lord promised man, just after the fall and before he was cast out of Eden, that he would be restored to God someday. This would be because of the promised Messiah. If God looks back on Eden, it is because He is also looking forward to what Eden implied, meaning perfect fellowship with man once again.

If not, what would be the point of looking back on Eden? It would be like eternally rubbing salt into an ever-festering wound. Rather than that, God is anticipating a state of eternal healing through the work of His promised Messiah.

When all of the supposed great deeds of men, such as sports figures, war heroes, reigning kings, and so forth, are long forgotten, the great deeds of the Lord will still be remembered, even forever.

The pinnacle of the work of the Lord is found in His cross, burial, and resurrection. This is certain because all of Scripture points to that defining act.

This is a great and marvelous truth to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and… May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Seeking Him with You (verses 1-3)

Understanding the coming words is dependent on remembering what happened in the previous chapter. The woman was in her room when her beloved came for her. She didn't want to get up from her bed and dirty her feet, but her desire for him overtook everything else. By the time she went to the door, he was gone.

From there, she went around the city looking for him. After a struggle with the watchmen, she charged the daughters of Jerusalem –

Adjured you, daughters Jerusalem,
If find my beloved,
What declare to him?
That rubbing love, I.

In response, the daughters asked what made him so special that would cause her to so adjure them. From there, she went through her carefully detailed description of him, noting every perfection.

Having given this description, they obviously want to see him and find out if he is as perfect as she has described. Therefore, they offer their assistance in finding him. If he is this amazing, they just have to feast their eyes on him as well. And so, the narrative continues...

[1] Where has your beloved gone,
O fairest among women?

anah halakh dodekh hayaphah banashim –

"Where walked your beloved,
The fairest in the women?"

The words are asking for a general guess from her. In 5:6, she had said –

"Sought him, and no found him.
Called him, and no answered me."

Then in verse 5:8, she said –

> "Adjured you, daughters Jerusalem,
> If find my beloved,
> What declare to him?
> That rubbing love, I."

She had no idea where he was, but they pressed her on where he had gone anyway. Therefore, it appears they are saying, "Think! Where is it that he has most likely gone?" This is because they next say...

[1 (con't)] Where has your beloved turned aside,
That we may seek him with you?

anah panah dodekh unvaqshenu imakh –

"Where turned your beloved,
And seeking him with you."

Because of these words, they must be thinking of something like, "What part of the city is he likely to have gone? Give us a clue, and we will go looking for him with you." If she knew specifically where he had gone, she would just go there herself. But because they

have offered to search with her, they know she can only give a best guess without specificity.

The thought is expressed quite well in the account of the time when Elijah was taken to heaven.

> Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire *appeared* with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.
> **12** And Elisha saw *it,* and he cried out, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen!" So he saw him no more. And he took hold of his own clothes and tore them into two pieces. **13** He also took up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and went back and stood by the bank of the Jordan. **14** Then he took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, and said, "Where *is* the LORD God of Elijah?" And when he also had struck the water, it was divided this way and that; and Elisha crossed over.
> **15** Now when the sons of the prophets who *were* from Jericho saw him, they said, "The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha." And they came to meet him, and bowed to the ground before him. **16** Then they said to him, "Look now, there are fifty strong men with your servants. Please let them go and search for your master, lest perhaps the Spirit of the LORD has taken him up and cast him upon some mountain or into some valley."
> And he said, "You shall not send anyone."
> **17** But when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, "Send *them!*" Therefore they sent fifty men, and they searched for three days but did not find him. **18** And when they came back to him, for he had stayed in Jericho, he said to them, "Did I not say to you, 'Do not go'?" 2 Kings 2:11-18

Like these prophets looking for Elijah, the daughters of Jerusalem want to go with this woman to find her exquisitely described beloved. The woman, however, gives an answer that is intended, like Elisha advising the prophets, to deter them from going out to find him...

2 My beloved has gone to his garden,

Rather: *dodi yarad l'gano* – "My beloved descended to his garden." Why the NKJV diverged from the Hebrew is baffling. The word *yarad* means to descend or go down. In Ecclesiastes 2, Solomon says –

> "I made my works great, I built myself houses, and planted myself vineyards. **5** I made myself gardens and orchards, and I planted all *kinds* of fruit trees in them. **6** I made myself water pools from which to water the growing trees of the grove."
>
> -Ecclesiastes 2:4-6

The woman feels confident that Solomon has descended to his garden. As this is the case, the daughters couldn't go there seeking him. The gardens would be private, and their entry would be forbidden without being invited.

Next, she describes the garden, using several terms that she had previously used to describe him. As such, it would mean that she had either already been there and seen the gardens as an invitee, using what she saw to make a comparison to him, or she was describing the garden, noting that its perfection must surely be like his perfect beauty.

Either way, she says he has gone...

2 (con't) To the beds of spices,

laarugoth habosem – "To parterres the fragrance." In verse 5:13, she had said of her beloved –

"His cheeks –
According to parterre the fragrance.
Towers – perfumes."

It seems likely that she had actually been to his gardens. She saw them in the past and had likened his cheeks to what she had seen. The exquisite nature of the gardens was remembered by her, and when asked about him, she took the awe-inspiring scene she had beheld and later applied it to him.

Next, she tells the reason why he had descended to his gardens...

2 (con't) To feed *his flock* in the gardens,

liroth baganim – "To pasture in the gardens." It seems unlikely that Solomon would have his flocks feed right in his beautifully manicured gardens unless they were specifically designed to allow for this, with open courtyards big enough to hold a flock.

As such, it speaks of a roomy expanse forming a marvelously broad and verdant place. The fact that Solomon is pasturing the flocks means that he was personally involved with them, something that might be thought unbecoming of a king.

And yet, it actually reveals a caring, contemplative, and contented soul who enjoyed the same lifestyle as his father, David, prior to becoming king.

The thought is later expressed concerning the Lord in Isaiah 40 –

> "Behold, the Lord GOD shall come with a strong *hand,*
> And His arm shall rule for Him;
> Behold, His reward *is* with Him,
> And His work before Him.
> **11** He will feed [*ra'ah*] His flock like a shepherd [*ra'ah*];
> He will gather the lambs with His arm,
> And carry *them* in His bosom,
> *And* gently lead those who are with young." Isaiah 40:10, 11

And again, the same terminology is used to describe the care of Jesus for His saints in Revelation, where the word *poimainó* is used, which corresponds to the Hebrew word *ra'ah* –

> "Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. **16** They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; **17** for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd [*poimainó*] them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes." Revelation 7:15-17

With that thought expressed, she continues with...

2 (con't) And to gather lilies.

v'lilqot shoshanim – "And to gather lilies." In verse 5:13, she had continued her thoughts with –

"His lips –
Lilies – drippings,
Myrrh – overflowing."

As before, it is likely she described him based on what she had seen while in his gardens. The lilies were probably covered with the morning dew, dripping what they couldn't absorb. Later, when asked about him, she described his lips according to what she had seen.

The lilies must be referring to wild lilies in an expansive field within the garden because of what she will say about him in the next verse. Therefore, saying he has gone to gather lilies probably means that his flock is there eating them.

The word is somewhat expressed this way in Judges 1 –

> "And Adoni-Bezek said, 'Seventy kings with their thumbs and big toes cut off used to gather *scraps* under my table; as I have done, so God has repaid me.'"
>
> -Judges 1:7

Adoni-Bezek's enemies gathered their food from under his table. Likewise, the flock's feeding is equated to gathering lilies. The clauses are being set in parallel –

* To pasture in the gardens,
* And to gather lilies.

This thought is correct and will align her words with what will be said in the next verse...

[3] I *am* my beloved's,
And my beloved *is* mine.

ani l'dodi v'dodi li – "I to my beloved, and my beloved to me." It appears she is set on quashing their attempts at finding him so they can have a chance at him. But she sees through their pretense of helping her.

In other words, "You don't need to go looking for him. I am the one that he has decided upon, and he is the one for me. So, there is no need for you to try to be his girl." Having said that, she next says of him...

[3 (con't)] He feeds *his flock* among the lilies.

Using a verb in the noun position, she repeats the thought from Chapter 2: *ha'roeh bashoshanim* – "The 'pasturing in the lilies.'" This is what confirms that Solomon himself is not out personally gathering lilies. Rather, his flock is feeding among the lilies while he tends to them.

As for the *shoshan* (also *shushan* and *shoshanah*) lily, it signifies great beauty and splendor. It is identical to the name Shushan, the citadel named in the book of Esther. It is derived from *sus*, to exult or rejoice. It is only mentioned twice in the New Testament, both in the same context in Matthew and Luke –

> "And about apparel, why *are* you disquieted? Fathom the lilies *of* the field, how it grows. Not it labors, nor it spins. **29** And I say *to* you that neither Solomon in all his glory, he *was* arrayed like one *of* these." Matthew 6:28, 29 (CG)

It is notable that the one time Jesus speaks of lilies, He does it in connection with Solomon's garments, which don't compare to these flowers of the field. Saying that they neither toil nor spin means that they are solely the product of what God has done in bringing them forth and sustaining them.

This leads to the thought of what Jesus said in Matthew 11, where He uses the same word, *kopiaó*, to indicate the labors of the people –

> "You come to Me, all those laboring [*kopiaó*] and having been encumbered, and I, I will give rest *to* you. **29** Lift My yoke upon you, and you learn from Me, for benignant I am, and lowly *of* heart, and you will find rest – your souls. **30** For My yoke – easy, and My encumbrance – it is light." Matthew 11:28-30 (CG)

The thoughts are all interconnected. Solomon is typical of the Lord. Feeding his flocks in the lilies equates to them eating the beautiful and majestic labors of God, not surviving on their own labors. Jesus then equates His yoke, meaning His labors, with what provides rest.

The love of God in Christ keeps being brought out, time and again, in this "Song the songs" concerning the love between Solomon and his beloved and the various descriptions that are brought forth in their words to and about one another.

As for the verse itself, it is a repeat of the words from Chapter 2, but the first clause contains a verbal modification change-up switcheroo that is to be noted and considered–

> "My beloved to me, and I to him –
> The 'pasturing in the lilies.'" Song of Songs 2:16

> "I to my beloved, and my beloved to me,
> The 'pasturing in the lilies.'" Song of Songs 6:3

The change is purposeful. By restating but transposing the thoughts in the first clause, she is excluding any others from participating in her beloved. The fact that they are in this relationship and that it is a mutually shared devotion excludes others from participating or interfering.

With that, verse 4 will return to the words of Solomon as he speaks to his beloved, confirming that they are devoted to one another.

Let me tell you again how beautiful you are
Let my words be the rejoicing of your heart
You are on my mind, whether you are near or far
But it is so difficult when we are apart

Someday we will be together forever
Until then, let me tell you how beautiful you are
Nothing can this bond between us sever
You are on my mind, whether you are near or far

Perfect love, wonderful and divine
Is what I have for you, even when apart
I am yours, and you are mine
May my words be the rejoicing of your heart

II. Lovely – According to Jerusalem (verses 4-7)

The following words are those of Solomon speaking about his beloved. Two main possibilities come to mind. The first is that he is considering her beauty and expressing it while they are still separated.

The second is that, without providing any details of how the separation was ended, the song suddenly finds itself conveying the words of Solomon in high praises of his beloved to her once again.

If the former, he is speaking about her like she did of him in Chapter 5, remembering his splendor and speaking about it. This cannot be dismissed because he will change his wording in verse 8, and in verse 9, he refers to her in the third person. Therefore, he may be speaking to her without her actually being there.

If the latter, they got back together, and he is conveying to her again how enraptured he is with her. When he gets to verses 8-10, he changes the way he speaks about her for effect.

A third possibility is that he actually speaks to her only in verses 4-7, and then he is referring to her while speaking to another or thinking out loud in verses 8-10. No matter which, he begins his words with...

4 O my love, you *are as* beautiful as Tirzah,

yaphah at rayati k'thir'tsah –

"Beautiful you, my querida,
According to Tirzah."

The location, Tirzah, is mentioned but not described in Scripture apart from this verse. It was one of the cities conquered, as noted in Joshua 12:24. Later, it became a royal residence of the northern tribes of Israel under Abijah, the king.

Despite not being described elsewhere, this verse alone is sufficient to let us know that it was a marvelously beautiful location. The name means Delight or Pleasantness. Thus, the name itself is its own descriptor, possibly given to it when it was built.

Next, Solomon speaks more compliments in parallel...

4 (con't) Lovely as Jerusalem,

navah kirushalim – "Lovely – according to Jerusalem."

Jerusalem has several meanings, but Foundation of Peace sufficiently represents the intent. The beauty of Jerusalem as recorded in Scripture is unparalleled. In Psalm 48, it says –

> "Great *is* the LORD, and greatly to be praised
> In the city of our God,
> *In* His holy mountain.
> **2** Beautiful in elevation,
> The joy of the whole earth,
> *Is* Mount Zion *on* the sides of the north,
> The city of the great King.

3 God *is* in her palaces;
He is known as her refuge." Psalm 48:1-3

Likewise, in Lamentations, it says –

"All who pass by clap *their* hands at you;
They hiss and shake their heads
At the daughter of Jerusalem:
'*Is* this the city that is called
"The perfection of beauty,
The joy of the whole earth"'?" Lamentations 2:15

Such descriptions of Jerusalem tell us that Tirzah must have likewise been an amazingly beautiful place. Today it is known as Tel el-Far'ah, which is located in the West Bank, a bit northeast of Nablus.

Having named these cities, identifying her beauty with them, he next says...

4 (con't) Awesome as *an army* with banners!

Rather: *ayumah kanidgaloth* – "Threatening – according to the bannered." The word *ayom*, terrible or dreadful, is introduced here. It is from an unused root meaning to frighten. It will be used again in verse 10 and one more time in Habakkuk 1:7 –

"For indeed I am raising up the Chaldeans,
A bitter and hasty nation
Which marches through the breadth of the earth,
To possess dwelling places *that are* not theirs.
7 They are terrible [*ayom*] and dreadful;
Their judgment and their dignity proceed from themselves." Habakkuk 1:6, 7

The final word *dagal* was used in verse 5:10 when speaking of Solomon in a superlative way by saying he is "Bannered from a myriad." In other words, he stood out among a myriad of people. Here, the form of the verb signifies that she is being bannered. The thought of an army as inserted by the NKJV is probably correct.

He is describing her as a foe, threatening and fully bannered, ready for battle. In other words, it appears he is saying something akin to our modern thought, "I don't stand a chance against you." Therefore...

[5] Turn your eyes away from me,

hasevi enayikh mineg'di – "Turn your eyes from me." The reason for these words is based on what he just said. She is like a threatening bannered host against him. When she looks at him, he is overwhelmed. The idea is, "You can kill with just one look from your eyes."

He is utterly defeated by her presence, and he has no power against her gaze. That is next explicitly expressed, saying...

[5 (con't)] For they have overcome me.

shehem hirhivuni – "Which they importuned me." The word *rahav* is used. It is derived from a primitive root signifying to urge severely. In Proverbs 6, it is used in this way –

> "My son, if you have become surety for your neighbor,
> Have given a pledge for a stranger,
> [2]*If* you have been snared with the words of your mouth,
> Have been caught with the words of your mouth,
> [3]Do this then, my son, and deliver yourself;
> Since you have come into the hand of your neighbor,
> Go, humble yourself, and importune [*rahav*] your neighbor."
>
> -Proverbs 6:1-3 (NASB 1995)

The meaning here is surely the same. He cannot stand against the longing of her eyes as they urge him for the desires of her heart.

Considering that these words are reflective of the Lord dealing with His redeemed, the meaning becomes clear. Because they are redeemed, they are His. It would be contrary for the Lord to deny Himself.

Therefore, speaking in human terms, it is as if there is an inability in the Lord to turn away from the urgings of His people. That is reflected in the parable of the persistent widow in Luke 18. Her urgings lead to his concluding thought concerning her –

> "...now, will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them?" Luke 18:7 (NASB 1995)

Because he cannot resist her urgings, Solomon asks her to turn away. Next, he repeats words he has already conveyed to her in Chapter 4...

5 (con't) Your hair *is* like a flock of goats

sa'rekh k'eder ha'izim – "Your hair according to flock the goats." The words are letter for letter identical to the corresponding clause in verse 4:1. The sense here is that as he looks at her hair, it is the color of goats, but more, it flows like a flock of goats walking in clusters, some here, some there, rolling along.

As explained before, hair, *sear*, is used in Scripture to signify the existence of an awareness, particularly an awareness of sin. The *ez*, goat is used as an offering for sin, such as –

> "And to the children of Israel you shall speak, saying, 'Take a kid of the goats [*s'iyir izim*] as a sin offering, and a calf and a lamb, *both* of the first year, without blemish, as a burnt offering.'" Leviticus 9:3
>
> "And he shall take from the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats [*s'iyir izim*] as a sin offering, and one ram as a burnt offering." Leviticus 16:5

The words, *sear*, hair, and *sa'iyr*, kid, are etymologically connected. For example, *sear* is used in Genesis 25:25 when describing Esau as being born hairy, while *sa'iyr* is used in Genesis 27:11 to describe his hairy state.

We are being reminded of the intricate connections to other parts of Scripture as Solomon describes his beloved. Of her hair being like goats, he next says...

5 (con't) Going down from Gilead.

shegalshu min ha'gilad – "Which cascaded from the Gilead." This is the second and last use of *galash*, to cascade. The first was in verse 4:1. It gives the sense of rolling, heaping up, or piling up.

As before, Solomon is thinking of a shepherd leading his flocks down a sloping area, in this case, the Gilead. They would be clumped together in various areas, appearing to be moving and rolling down the hills. Solomon isn't speaking of them as they are cascading, but as they have cascaded – a moment in time.

In his mind, he sees goats on the side of the mountain and compares them to her hair at that moment. It could even be that they stopped on the side of the mountain and reclined, thus "heaped up" as curled locks would appear. Either way, the picture is beautiful to consider.

The thought is the same as the corresponding clause in verse 4:1, with the exception of the last words –

"...from Mount Gilead."
"...from the Gilead."

Gilead means Perpetual Fountain. When used in typology, the two thoughts would bear a similar but different meaning. Mount Gilead refers to people sealed with the Spirit, whereas the Gilead refers to the Holy Spirit.

Both clauses of this verse taken together convey the thought that her hair anticipates the awareness of the atonement for sin provided by the Lord for His redeemed.

Next, he continues with repetition from a previous verse...

6 Your teeth *are* like a flock of sheep

shinayikh k'eder har'khelim – "Your teeth according to flock the ewes." The words are identical to the corresponding clause in verse 4:2, with the exception of the word translated as "the ewes." In 4:2, it said, "the shorn."

The change tells us that this is not merely a copy-and-paste job but that deliberate care has been taken to ensure the text has been minutely maintained. The word translated as ewes is *rakhel*. It comes from a root signifying to journey.

It was used twice in Genesis 32, and it is used once when referring to Jesus as the sheep led to slaughter in Isaiah 53:7. It is identical to the name Rachel, from which she certainly derived her name, she being like her father's little ewe.

6 (con't) Which have come up from the washing;

shealu min ha'rakhtsah – "Which ascended from the washing." This clause and the next are letter-for-letter identical to the corresponding clauses of verse 4:2.

These ewes were just washed, accentuating their whiteness. The word *rakhtsah*, signifying a bathing place, was first seen in verse 4:2, and this is its last use in Scripture. Her teeth are pearly white and...

6 (con't) Every one bears twins,

shekulam math'imoth – "Which they all twinned." As seen in verse 4:2, the verb *taam* means to make double or to twin. The meaning is that each tooth in her mouth bears its corresponding tooth.

Just like sheep coming up two by two from the washing pool, those teeth on the top row have their mate on the bottom row. When she closes her mouth while still showing her teeth, the joining of the top and bottom rows makes twins. Therefore...

6 (con't) And none *is* barren among them.

v'shakulah ein bahem – "And bereaved, none, in them." As in verse 4:2, it is worth noting the interesting play on words which is not noticeable in translations –

shekulam math'imoth / v'shakulah ein bahem

Which they all [*shekulam*] twinned,
And bereaved [*v'shakulah*], none, in them

Solomon is enjoying word play while focusing his attention on her beautiful white teeth. This time, Solomon skips over a portion of his words from verse 4:3 and goes to the last thought of it, repeating it letter for letter with the corresponding clause there...

7 Like a piece of pomegranate
***Are* your temples behind your veil.**

k'phelakh ha'rimon raqathekh mibaad l'tsamathekh –

"According to slice the pomegranate,
Your countenance from behind to your veil."

Notice the difference between 4:3 and here –

> "According to thread, the crimson, your lips,
> And your wilderness – beautiful,
> According to slice the pomegranate,
> Your countenance from behind to your veil." 4:3
>
> "According to slice the pomegranate,
> Your countenance from behind to your veil." 6:7

It is another indication that this too wasn't just an ancient copy-and-paste job. This time, Solomon focuses solely on her lovely countenance.

Also, notice how the NKJV was inconsistent in its translation –

> "Your temples behind your veil
> *Are* like a piece of pomegranate." 4:3
>
> "Like a piece of pomegranate
> *Are* your temples behind your veil." 6:7

The error here lies with the KJV, which first confused the translation. The NKJV followed along by simply copying without considering their work.

As for the words of the verse, the word translated as countenance is *raqah*, meaning thinness. Most translations incorrectly say the plural, temples. Some say cheek or cheeks. One translation says forehead. However, if he is seeing behind her sheer veil, he is seeing the forehead, temples, cheeks, etc.

Slicing a pomegranate in half leaves a circle with a Y shape where there is red in the Y and on both sides of it. Thus, the best solution is the singular word countenance. It then covers the areas of thinness on her face collectively.

This completes the verses in today's passage. But we are still left with things to ponder. One of them is to question why Tirzah and Jerusalem are singled out for comparison to the woman. Jerusalem seems easy enough to understand as it is highlighted elsewhere, but Tirzah is not. And yet, Solomon made the statement.

Jerusalem continues to be mentioned all the way through Scripture, even until Revelation 21. There it says –

> "Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. **2** Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. **3** And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God. **4** And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." Revelation 21:1-4

After this, verses 21:9-27 go into great detail describing the city and its beauty. The New Jerusalem is where the Lord will dwell with man in perfect harmony and unity forever.

But in this passage, Tirzah was mentioned first. The names Eden and Tirzah, though not etymologically connected, carry the same meaning. As noted above, Tirzah means Delight or Pleasantness. And that is the exact two words the NOBSE Study Bible also uses to identify Eden. Others call it Delight, Place of Delight, etc.

Although the Bible usually uses the same word to form typology to ensure a tight connection is made, this is not always the case. To have said Eden would have made no sense because Solomon had not actually seen it. But the Lord had. Likewise, Solomon had seen Tirzah.

Thus, the comparison, as at other times in typology where different words are used to reveal the same thought, is suitable to make the point understandable.

Like the New Jerusalem, where man will live in harmony with God, this was the intent and state of God and man in Eden. Solomon equates his beloved to Tirzah (Delight/Pleasantness) and Jerusalem (Foundation of Peace).

Together they form a picture of that marvelous place, which was lost through our rebellion; a garden of Delight, and then of what is gained through Christ's perfect righteousness. There is the establishment and permanency found in the Foundation of Peace.

The Lord remembers Eden as He considers his time with Adam. He sees that again in His redeemed, as He anticipates the future with them as well. Thus, the comparison by Solomon of his beloved to Tirzah and Jerusalem takes on its full marvel for us to consider.

These and the other words and concepts found in the passage, as in the rest of the book, are telling us a story of the love of the King of the Universe for His redeemed. And this reconciliation has been made possible through the giving of His Son.

When Jesus looks at His redeemed, He is looking back on what was, and He is looking forward to what will be. In God's eyes, it is already a done deal. When a person believes the gospel, God seals him or her with the Holy Spirit.

Consider the change in verse 6 about the sheep being ewes when originally in 4:2, they were shorn. The first thing to be determined is the significance of teeth. They are used

in Scripture in a multitude of ways – power, rage, being prepared as weapons or tools, military power, judgment, suffering, famine, even suffering for the father's sins. They are also equated to eating, beauty, and fear.

As such, the significance of the tooth is the state of a person. Being likened to the *rakhel*, the ewe lamb, means that to God, we share in the state of what Christ endured for us. As He was led as a lamb to the slaughter for the atonement of our sins, we bear the state of His atoning sacrifice.

Therefore, equating the state of the redeemed to being shorn (4:2) and also to an ewe (6:6) likewise forms a picture. Our sin nature is cut away, and our atonement is realized, both because of the crucifixion of Christ.

Such patterns and pictures tell us why this "Song the songs" is read each year at the Passover. It is the greatest of all songs because it is telling us of the greatest act ever in human history. It tells us of the cross of Jesus Christ when the God/Man gave up His life to pay for the sins of the world.

For those who are willing to accept the payment and receive the offer, there is restoration: complete, without charge, and for eternity. If you have never accepted the gift of God found in the giving of His Son for you, may today be the day.

All He asks is for you to believe. Everything else has been accomplished. Praise God for the cross of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Closing Verse: *"But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." Galatians 6:14*

Next Week: Song of Songs 6:8-13 *I yeanr, I yearn for that lady – she is dy-no-mite!...* (Return, Return – the Shulamite) (15th Song of Songs sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. He alone is the perfect example of love – untarnished, unblemished, and completely pure and holy. He offers this love to you. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Song of Songs 6:1-7 (CG)

1 Where walked your beloved,
The fairest in the women?

Where turned your beloved,
And seeking him with you.
2 My beloved descended to his garden,
To parterres the fragrance,
To pasture in the gardens,
And to gather lilies.
3 I to my beloved,
And my beloved to me,
The 'pasturing in the lilies.'
4 Beautiful you, my querida,
According to Tirzah,
Lovely – according to Jerusalem,
Threatening – according to bannered.
5 Turn your eyes from me,
Which they importuned me.
Your hair according to flock the goats,
Which cascaded from the Gilead.
6 Your teeth according to flock the ewes,
Which ascended from the washing.
Which they all twinned,
And bereaved, none, in them.
7 "According to slice the pomegranate,
Your countenance from behind to your veil."

Song of Songs 6:1-7 (NKJV)

1 Where has your beloved gone,
O fairest among women?
Where has your beloved turned aside,
That we may seek him with you?
2 My beloved has gone to his garden,
To the beds of spices,
To feed *his flock* in the gardens,
And to gather lilies.
3 I *am* my beloved's,
And my beloved *is* mine.
He feeds *his flock* among the lilies.
4 O my love, you *are as* beautiful as Tirzah,
Lovely as Jerusalem,

Awesome as *an army* with banners!
[5] Turn your eyes away from me,
For they have overcome me.
Your hair *is* like a flock of goats
Going down from Gilead.
[6] Your teeth *are* like a flock of sheep
Which have come up from the washing;
Every one bears twins,
And none *is* barren among them.
[7] Like a piece of pomegranate
Are your temples behind your veil.

SONG OF SONGS 6:8-13
(RETURN, RETURN – THE SHULAMITE)

Having answered questions about the Bible for many years, one thing is evident: people will see what they want to see in a passage. Quite often, it is about their anticipated departure via the rapture.

People insert the rapture into innumerable passages that have nothing to do with it. But this is what we do. Frequently, we take our thoughts and ideas and insert them into the text because that excites us and reassures us that the doctrine must be true.

In this case, it is true. The New Testament explains the rapture quite clearly. Reading the words of Paul concerning the rapture, it is so clearly presented that to not accept it means it had to have been taught out of someone.

Someone who picks up the Bible and reads the passages about it may not fully understand what Paul is saying, but they will conclude that what he describes is what is anticipated to happen.

There are Old Testament hints of the rapture which are convincing enough to give us surety that based on a proper understanding of the New Testament, they are valid.

In the passage today, I see a parallel to the rapture. However, I would ask you not to make a brain squiggle based on what I present. The style of literature is poetic, so this could be me doing what I have seen others do.

What I present is an observation, not an instruction intended to convince you. When I teach that way, it is because I am convinced the matter is correct. Keep that in mind, and don't feel that I am trying to convince you of anything, please!

Text Verse: *"...that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish."*

-Ephesians 5:27

Keil makes a statement about verse 6:8 that is correct. It is something I have demonstrated in typology many times in the past. You will see this when I cite him. Something or someone can anticipate Christ, but which is portrayed as negative in a given passage.

For example, in Joshua 8, the king of Ai was captured and hanged on a tree. That pointed to Jesus' cross. In Joshua 10, the five kings of the Amorites were hanged on five trees. They each pointed to the work of Christ as well. And yet, these were enemies of Israel. Keil says –

"The fact is, that by a violation of the law of God (Deuteronomy 17:17), Solomon brings a cloud over the typical representation, which is not at all to be thought of in connection with the Antitype. Solomon, as Jul Sturm rightly remarks, is not to be considered by himself, but only in his relation to Shulamith. In Christ, on the contrary, is no imperfection; sin remains in the congregation. In the Song, the bride is purer than the bridegroom; but in the fulfilling of the Song this relation is reversed: the bridegroom is purer than the bride." Keil

This is a good point about this "Song the songs." The woman, the beloved of Solomon, is put in the highest light of perfection. Solomon, as seen in his life in the books of Kings and Chronicles, was not the greatest example of a godly king.

But God can still use him to give us hints of Christ, just as He did with the kings in Canaan. From there, we learn that it is Christ who makes us the height of perfection. Despite this, none of us is actually the height of perfection. But because of Jesus, everything changes.

That is why we can have the hope of the rapture, or for the saints of old, the resurrection. God will bring to Himself all who have looked to the Messiah in faith. The heavenly Jerusalem awaits. What a day it will be when we arrive.

It's all to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and… May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. My Dove, My Perfect (verses 8-9)

The chapter began with the woman being questioned about where her beloved had gone. This was based on her marvelous description of him from Chapter 5. The other women wanted to search for him with her, but probably with the intent of moving in on her territory. She explained where she thought he had gone and that she was the only one for him with the words, "I to my beloved and my beloved to me."

Solomon began to speak in 6:4, explaining to the woman how beautiful she was to him, repeating some of his thoughts from earlier in the book. Though the speaker is debated, whether it is Solomon or the woman, it is probable that it is still Solomon speaking.

If it is the woman, her coming words about the women would be like saying, "I am just one of so many." If it is Solomon, he is saying, "You are the number one out of so many." The way he expresses himself in verse 9 will tend to favor the latter. And so, his words continue with...

8 There are sixty queens

shishim hemah m'lakhoth – "Sixty they, queens." Solomon begins a list of the women who belong to him, designating them by category. The first category is defined by the word *malakh*, a queen. It is the feminine form of *melekh*, king.

As for the designation "queens," it is likely that these were the daughters of royalty given to him for the purposes of making alliances. For example –

> "Now Solomon made a treaty with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and married Pharaoh's daughter; then he brought her to the City of David until he had finished building his own house, and the house of the LORD, and the wall all around Jerusalem."
>
> -1 Kings 3:1

Being of royal blood, they were used for the purposes of security or the expansion of the kingdom. And so, they are identified as such queens. Solomon next refers to another category...

8 (con't) And eighty concubines,

ush'monim pilagshim – "And eighty concubines." The word is *pilegesh*. It is supposed by some to be a compound word coming from *palag*, to split or divide, and *nagash*, to draw near or approach.

As such, it signifies that a man divides his attention between his formal wives and his lesser wives. The formal wives would have certain rights that the lesser wives did not. In the case of Solomon or any other ruler with concubines, the king divided his attention between his royal wives and his concubines.

This type of arrangement was seen in the life of Abraham –

> "And Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac. [6] But Abraham gave gifts to the sons of the concubines which Abraham had; and while he was still living he sent them eastward, away from Isaac his son, to the country of the east." Genesis 25:5, 6

With other examples like this in Scripture, such as in the lives of Saul and David, the concubine is considered a wife, belonging to one man alone, even if she is not a main wife. Therefore, it is likely that the children of such a union would be categorized differently as well.

In describing the number of queens, Solomon is probably using a specific number to express a general. In other words, there may have been 57 or 62 queens, but he has rounded it to 60. This would maintain the poetic flow.

Sixty is the product of six and ten. Six is a number stamped with the thought of human labor. It is the number of man but especially fallen man. Of the number ten, Bullinger says –

"Completeness of order, marking the entire round of anything, is, therefore, the ever-present signification of the number ten. It implies that nothing is wanting; that the number and order are perfect; that the whole cycle is complete." EW Bullinger

Eighty is the product of eight and ten. Bullinger defines eight as being associated with resurrection and regeneration. One can think of the idea of "new beginnings" as a simple definition of it.

As for Solomon's harem, it also includes another category...

8 (con't) And virgins without number.

vaalamoth ein mispar – "And maidens without number." Using the word virgin to translate *almah* here may be wrong for at least a couple of reasons. First, the word, though usually associated with a young, marriable woman, of which a virgin is generally understood in such passages, doesn't mean virgin. Rather, it is the feminine of *elem*, a youth or young man.

Second, if they are a part of Solomon's harem, they are probably not virgins, unless they are new ones added to the harem for him. Once they had been with him, they would return to the harem, but not as a virgin. This is the thought of Esther 2 –

> "Each young woman's turn came to go in to King Ahasuerus after she had completed twelve months' preparation, according to the regulations for the women, for thus were the days of their preparation apportioned: six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with perfumes and preparations for beautifying women. **13** Thus *prepared, each* young woman went to the king, and she was given whatever she desired to take with her from the women's quarters to the king's palace. **14** In the evening she went, and in the morning she returned to the second house of the women, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king's eunuch who kept the concubines. She would not go in to the king again unless the king delighted in her and called for her by name." Esther 2:12-14

It could be that all the virgins of the harem became concubines once they had been with Solomon. However, it also could be that they were neither wives nor concubines, but instead, were subordinate to the other two categories. As this isn't certain, it is best to define them as maidens.

Regardless of this, the words here express a failing in Solomon in relation to the Law of Moses. First, it was expressly forbidden for a king to have such a large body of women available to him –

> "Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself." Deuteronomy 17:17

The Bible doesn't say at what point multiplying wives becomes a violation of the law. David had wives and concubines, and nothing negative is said about this. But nothing is said about him having his heart turned away from either the Lord or his responsibilities. On the other hand, it says this of Solomon –

> "But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, *and* Hittites— **2** from the nations of whom the LORD had said to the children of Israel, 'You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods.' Solomon clung to these in love. **3** And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart." 1 Kings 11:1-3

Solomon not only multiplied wives, but he did so by marrying women from nations that the law forbade. One can see that despite him being used as a type of Christ, this only extends to type and does not express his general character.

Because of the number of women noted here in “Song the songs,” and the number of them noted in 1 Kings 11, people claim there is an insurmountable contradiction between the two. However, this can be easily dispelled.

One possibility is that this could have been written at a much earlier stage in Solomon’s life. Acquiring 700 wives would take a long time. If he married one a month, it would take 58+ years.

Of all of the women mentioned here, meaning 60 wives + 80 concubines + innumerable maidens, he specifically turns his eyes, thoughts, and heart to just one...

[9] My dove, my perfect one,
Is the only one,

Rather: *akhath hi yonati thamathi* – “One, she, my dove, my perfect.” He has made a contrast to all the others through these words. If this woman is his “one ... dove,” then the others are not. If this one is described as “one ... perfect,” then the others are not.

By jumbling the order of Solomon’s words, many translations make it seem like he describes her and then explains her in relation to her mother, who is mentioned in the next clause.

Rather, he is speaking of her as the epitome of his delight, contrasting her with those in the previous verse. His words have placed her as the superlative above all others. She is...

[9 (con’t)] The only one of her mother,

akhath hi l’imah – “One, she, to her mother.” Though not certain, the words tend to the idea that she was the only daughter of her mother. Thus, all her other children are boys. Some, however, say that the girl mentioned in Chapter 8 is her younger sister.

There is no reason to assume this. Those verses could refer to her when she was younger, which is what the following verses seem to imply. However, even if she had sisters, the words here could still be used to express the finest of her daughters.

The former option seems the most fitting, meaning that she is the only daughter of her mother. As such, Solomon is calling out her uniqueness in that her mother got it right with her first and only daughter. With that stated, he next says...

9 (con't) **The favorite of the one who bore her.**

barah hi l'yoladtah – "Clear, she, to her bearing." The word *barah* is derived from *barar*, which can have a variety of significations. It comes from a primitive root signifying to clarify, as if brightening something.

Therefore, it can speak of cleansing, purifying, purging, choosing, etc. The word describing the mother's daughter is most likely not a comparison to others (favorite), but a description of her personal state (clear).

If the mother is describing her, she might say, "I only have one daughter, and she is my perfect little angel." Solomon recognizes this and ascribes this quality to her in relation to her mother, poetically called here "her bearing." Thus, she is the opposite of the one Solomon describes in the Proverbs –

> "Vexation to his father, son dullard,
> And bitterness to his bearing." Proverbs 17:25 (CG)

Said plainly, the dullard is bitterness to his mother. On the other hand, this woman is clear to her mother. In a similar reaction when seeing her, Solomon continues with...

9 (con't) **The daughters saw her**
And called her blessed,

rauha banoth vayash'ruha – "Saw her, daughters, and straighten her." The word *ashar* means to be or go straight. Thus, figuratively, it signifies to make happy, bless, and so forth. When one advances, especially in a straight, even way, it is a happy state.

That is the idea one gets when reading the words of Isaiah –

> "Every valley shall be exalted
> And every mountain and hill brought low;
> The crooked places shall be made straight
> And the rough places smooth." Isaiah 40:4

In leveling and straightening, it is a way of blessing the Lord for His coming. Therefore, rather than "calling her blessed" as the NKJV does, it would mean, "and they bless her." The figurative use of the word is seen in the next parallel clause...

9 (con't) The queens and the concubines,
And they praised her.

m'lakhoth u-pilagshim vayhal'luha – "Queens and concubines, and praise her." The first clause referred to the daughters of Jerusalem, the women in general. This refers to the selected and choice in Solomon's house. They see her and praise her. One can see the parallelism between the clauses when they are properly translated –

One, she, my dove, my perfect –

One, she, to her mother,
Clear, she, to her bearing.

Saw her, daughters, and straighten her,
Queens and concubines, and praise her.

Solomon next continues with his beautiful descriptors of his beloved...

Return! Return! We want to see you again!
We want to know what to do
Return! Return! Come back, and then...
We will be instructed by you

It can't be too late for us
There must still be hope
Return! Return! Don't put up a fuss
Unless you do, we just can't cope

Hurry back to us. We have learned our lesson
We will pay heed this time if you just come back
Return! Return! Don't keep us guessin'
On how we can get back on track

II. The Two Camps (verses 10-13)

10 Who is she who looks forth as the morning,

Though nobody translates it the way I do, the words use a verbal, a participle to describe the woman in a noun form: *mi zoth hanish'qaphah k'mo shakhar* – "Who this,

the 'looking according to the dawn?'" In other words, he is asking a question, but it is done in the form of an emphatic declaration concerning her appearance.

Most translations are completely wrong in how they present the words. The NIV, though a paraphrase, gives the closest sense, saying, "Who is this that appears like the dawn?" The word is the noun *shakhar*, coming from the verb *shakhar*, to dawn.

Thus it is the earliest, and to many, the most beautiful part of the day, just as the dawn begins to lighten the world. Solomon gazes upon her beauty and is enraptured by it. She is glowing. It is during this early period of the day that she is likened to being...

10 (con't) Fair as the moon,

yaphah kal'vanah – "Beautiful – according to the moon." At the dawning of the day, when the moon is visible, it is radiant, having a beauty about it that accentuates the lightening of the sky as it passes from total darkness until the moment of the sunrise.

In his words, he introduces a rarer word, *l'vanah*, to describe the moon instead of the word normally used. It is derived from *laven*, to be white, purify, or make bricks.

Saying "Fair as the moon" as the NKJV does misses the point. She has already been noted as being swarthy. Thus, her color is not the comparison, but the beauty of the moon in its whitened state. Likewise, some translations add the word "full" to "moon."

This is probably not correct either. The full moon sets around dawn. He is likely referring to a crescent moon which is in the area of the dawning of the sun where the sky first begins to lighten, long before the sunrise. He is as enraptured with her within her surroundings as he is with the moon at dawn.

Solomon next notes another metaphor in regard to her beauty, also found at dawn...

10 (con't) Clear as the sun,

barah kakhamah – "Clear – according to the sun." At the rising of the sun, it is bright but clear. Later in the day, its light is so overwhelming that you can't look at it. But when it is just rising, you can often look at it without anything to detract from its pure roundness and beauty.

This is the moment that Solomon equates to his beloved. When he does, he uses a rarer word, *khamah*, to describe the sun instead of the word normally used. It is derived from *kham*, hot. Thus, it refers to the heat of the sun more than its brilliance.

Having noted this aspect of her beauty, he uses another metaphor concerning this early time of day...

10 (con't) Awesome as *an army* with banners?

ayumah kanidgaloth – "Threatening – according to bannered." It is letter for letter the same as in the corresponding clause in verse 6:4. In this case, it is as if she is an army set up for battle at the dawning of the day.

They would seem threatening to any foe just waking and looking out at the masses of troops already standing in the early light, fully bannered and ready for battle. The prospect of a day of battle would be overwhelming.

This is how he presents her. It is as if he is saying, "My love, I am already defeated by you." Next, words from the woman start a new direction in the unfolding narrative...

11 I went down to the garden of nuts

Rather: *el ginath egoz yaradti* – "Unto garden nut descended." Very few translations are even close to being correct. Instead, along with other changes, they translate nut in the plural, nuts. Some, to get around this, will add in words and say something like, "nut trees."

The Coverdale Bible of 1535 gives an early rendering that has sadly been departed from, "I wente downe in to the nutt garden..."

It is a fact that not sticking with the singular is just nuts. 😉 Despite that, the word is *egoz*, and it is found only here. It is believed to be a word of Persian origin. Nuts are mentioned elsewhere, such as in Genesis 43:11, but only by their kind, the pistachio and the almond.

In this verse, there is nothing further to define what type of nut (or nuts) is being referred to. Instead, it is just a nut garden. This makes the clause rather peculiar. There is nothing to compare it to in the New Testament either. However, there is more to see in the area she has descended to...

11 (con't) To see the verdure of the valley,

The word is plural: *liroth b'ibe ha'nakhal* – "To see in greenesses the valley." Based on the next two clauses, we know she is referring to the springtime. As such, she is going down to see the many variations of green among the various types of bushes and trees.

Each one would come forth and add to the display of beauty that arises at this time of year. The word is *ev*. It signifies green. It is found only in Job 8:12 and here, but in Job, it is in the singular. Along with the various greennesses, she is going...

11 (con't) To see whether the vine had budded

liroth haphar'khah ha'gephen – "To see budded – the vine." The budding of the vine is a springtime event, when the daily temperatures are consistently about 55ºF. This is typically around March. Likewise...

11 (con't) *And* the pomegranates had bloomed.

henetsu ha'rimon – "Blossomed – the pomegranates." The pomegranates blossom in the late spring in Israel. Therefore, the time she is referring to is from March until May.

We have already seen how nuts it is to mistranslate nut because when you do, it is nuts. However, what is also nuts is that the word translated as blossomed here is the word... *nuts*. Something nutty is going on. But this *nuts* is pronounced *noots*, so it is a bit less nutty than being completely nuts. 😜

This word ultimately comes from a primitive root signifying to flash because of the brilliancy of the blossom. The pomegranate blossoms are a brilliant red that stand out markedly against the green leaves.

The woman continues with more curious words...

12 Before I was even aware,
My soul had made me
***As* the chariots of my noble people.**

The words are very obscure: *lo yadati naphshi samathni mark'voth ami nadiv* – "Not known, my soul set me chariots my people – willing." Depending on how you place the comma or commas to make a pause, it changes the intent.
What seems to be the case is that she didn't even realize that she had been so set. But then the word chariots has no connector such as the, as, according to, in, among, etc.

The word *sum*, to place or set, is translated as "make" at times, but that is not really the intent, such as –

> "And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, *then* your descendants also could be numbered."
> -Genesis 13:16

The Lord says, "And I set your seed according to the dust." It is a done deal. It is as if He had placed the future descendants in the statement.

The word chariot, being plural, along with the next verse asking her to return, seems to make it mean "I became like a chariot." As such, she sped away. The adjective *nadiv*, willing, comes from *nadav*, to be willing. It is a descriptor of "my people."

With all of this information presented, it seems to say, "I didn't know that my soul had made me like the chariots of my willing people." In other words, the chariots of willing warriors are set on their mission. They go directly into battle without hesitation.

She had taken off without even realizing it. Therefore, this explains the fact that she had descended into the nut garden. Without even thinking about it, she made herself like a chariot and took off. That explains why the next words are spoken...

[13] Return, return, O Shulamite;

The words are imperative: *shuvi shuvi hashulamith* – "Return! Return! – the Shulamite!" Here, she is given a pet name, "the Shulamite." The word is only found in this verse. It is derived from the verb *shalam*, the same word that Solomon's name is derived from.

It means to be safe. That can have a lot of meanings, such as making good on a vow, making amends, etc. As such, it gives the sense of peaceful, as in "all is good."

Because it is the same root as Solomon's name, some think that this is a play on his name and thus means, "the woman of Solomon," meaning his wife. That makes sense and would certainly be a reason for calling her this.

I connected her travel to the city of Shunem in Chapter 3 based on scholarly notes, but it seems dubious to me that it is connected to that location. Shumen is noted in Joshua 19:18, and it is the only name that is close in name to any biblical location. Therefore, some have made this conclusion, something I didn't consider while evaluating that passage.

Rather, the idea of calling her the Shulamite after Solomon, rather than a location, agrees with the thought of Isaiah 4 –

> "And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying,
> 'We will eat our own food and wear our own apparel;
> Only let us be called by your name,
> To take away our reproach.'" Isaiah 4:1

In other words, someone today may say about Hideko, "There goes that Garrett woman," if they knew she was my wife. This seems like a sound explanation for what is being conveyed rather than making a dubious connection between this woman called the Shulamite and a person from that city who might be called a Shunnamite.

Next, the same thought is repeated with the reason for it...

13 (con't) Return, return, that we may look upon you!

shuvi shuvi v'nekhezeh bakh – "Return! Return! And we shall gaze in you!" She is being asked to return because of her beauty. The word translated as gaze gives more than just the sense of looking at something. Instead, it includes mentally perceiving or contemplating.

She is so stunning that they want to feast their eyes on her. That this is men speaking is understood because the next words say...

13 (con't) What would you see in the Shulamite—

mah takhezu bashulamith – "What gaze in the Shulamite?" The verb gaze here is masculine, plural. It is said in response to the "that we may..." of the previous verse. She, or someone else, wants to know what it is that they want to see and gaze at. From there, they respond with...

13 (fin) As it were, the dance of the two camps?

kimkholath hamakhanayim – "According to dance the two camps!" Translations are all over the place, and some have nothing to do with the Hebrew. Many tie this clause in with the previous one, thus giving the sense of her explaining the question that she just asked. For example –

"Why should you gaze at the Shulammite,
As at the dance of the two companies?" NASB 1977

That does not appear to be what is going on. Rather, she or someone else asked, "What is it that you want to gaze at in the Shulamite?" This final clause provides a suitable response to that question, "We want to gaze at the Shulamite according to the dance of the two camps!"

What this means is not agreed upon either. Some, such as the NIV, transliterate the words and say Mahanaim, the name of a place in Israel that comes from Genesis 32 –

"So Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. **2** When Jacob saw them, he said, "This *is* God's camp." And he called the name of that place Mahanaim." Genesis 32:1, 2

The problem with that is that Mahanaim is mentioned 13 times in Scripture, but never with a definite article. Here, however, it says "the mahanaim." Thus, it needs to be translated rather than transliterated. Mahanaim comes from *makhaneh*, camp. The plural marker at the end (*im*) signifies double camp or two camps.

The words probably still refer to the place, but not because of its name. Rather, because of how it got its name. There was the camp of Jacob, and there was the camp of angels. As such, there were two camps.

Therefore, "according to dance the two camps" would probably signify an earthly/heavenly dance. That is speculation, but as nothing else is said about dances in relation to Mahanaim, it seems like a logical inference that can be made.

The only other thing I can think of comes from Exodus 15, where Moses and the children of Israel sang the Song of Moses. There, it says –

"Then Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took the timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. **21** And Miriam answered them:
'Sing to the LORD,
For He has triumphed gloriously!
The horse and its rider
He has thrown into the sea!'" Exodus 15:20, 21

Using this, however, would assume that the two camps are those of 1) Israel, and then 2) the women of Israel. However, the word meaning camp is not used there concerning the women of Israel. Therefore, this appears to be referring to the two camps of Genesis 32.

This completes the verses for today, and so now we can search out some clues about what is being said while trying not to shove meaning into the text. The first thing of note is the numbers provided regarding the queens and concubines, sixty and eighty.

It was noted that six is the number of man, especially fallen man, along with human labor. Eight is associated with new beginnings, in particular resurrection and regeneration.

These sum up the numbered court of Solomon's women, and they appear to point to those before the cross under law (associated with labor) and those after the cross in the church (associated with the resurrection and regeneration).

Being multiples of ten, they point to the fact that nothing is wanting, the number and order are perfect, and that the whole cycle is complete.

Together, they equal one hundred forty. That is the number of a double measure of spiritual perfection according to Bullinger. In other words, all of the redeemed.

If you add in the maidens without number, that makes a nice connection to those who come out of the great tribulation –

> "After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, **10** and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation *belongs* to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" ... So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. **15** Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. **16** They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; **17** for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of
>
> waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."
>
> -Revelation 7:9, 10 & 14-17

Out of them, one is singled out. Thus, she represents the cumulative desire of Solomon just as the redeemed of the Lord from all people are included as His bride (as seen in Revelation 21).

The descriptions of the woman in verses 9 & 10 could easily be equated to notable aspects of the redeemed without any finagling.

For example, the rare word translated as moon, *l'vanah*, is derived from the same words as Frankincense and Lebanon, both of which have been equated to the work of Christ that is imputed to believers. Thus, the redeemed are "Beautiful – according to the moon," or in type, "Beautiful – according to Christ's work imputed to them."

The words from the woman going to the garden are looking to the redemption of Christ. The vine budding occurs at the time of Christ's crucifixion. The pomegranate blooms at the time of His resurrection.

It is similar to what was described in different terms in Chapter 2, which identified these same two times of the year. Thus, it looks to the cross and that which stems from it in the giving of the Spirit.

The really complicated words of verse 12 (which took me about two hours to evaluate) almost give a hint of the rapture and/or resurrection, where the woman was, without knowing it, set as a willing chariot of her people.

This anticipates the free will choice believers have made to come to God through Christ. They have been redeemed. After that, they have been brought to Himself. There is no point in dwelling on that, but it would explain the reason for the very difficult terminology that is so abrupt and otherwise inexplicable.

It would also explain the words of those calling out for her to return. Those who understand they missed the boat in any dispensation would gladly call out to have another chance and to join in the dance of the two camps – the earthly in Christ and the heavenly with Christ.

As I said, I wouldn't want to shove these things into the text and be dogmatic, but the numbers, the timing of the events (being around the crucifixion and the time of Pentecost), etc., do lead to the thought that this is pointing to what God in Christ would do for those who have so faithfully trusted in Him.

Be it before the coming of the Messiah in anticipation of Him, or after His coming in our anticipation of being joined to Him, all the redeemed will someday be brought to the heavenly Jerusalem (as noted in the previous sermon) to be in the presence of God forever.

And again, the hints in this passage, like the others, point to why this "Song the songs" is read each year at the Passover by the people of Israel. Though its content is obscure, it is sufficient to clearly point to the work of Jesus.

The rest of the details concerning the woman are convincingly set forth as a description of the redeemed. Someday, Israel will understand what they have missed for so very long. God has set forth the epitome of all songs to show us His great love for those who will come to Him by faith.

You, through His word, are being implored to do so today. Trust His word by trusting in Jesus, the Subject of what God is conveying to us through Scripture.

Closing Verse: *"There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God,*
The holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High.
5 *God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved;*
God shall help her, just at the break of dawn." Psalm 46:4, 5

Next Week: Song of Songs 7:1-6 *They are not at all like a bum who panhandles...* (Your Steps in the Sandals) (16th Song of Songs Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. He alone is the perfect example of love – untarnished, unblemished, and completely pure and holy. He offers this love to you. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Song of Songs 6:8-13 (CG)

8 Sixty they, queens,
And eighty concubines,
And maidens without number.
9 One, she, my dove, my perfect,
One, she, to her mother,
Clear, she, to her bearing.
Saw her, daughters, and straighten her,
Queens and concubines, and praise her.

10 Who this, the ‘looking according to the dawn’ –
Beautiful – according to the moon,
Clear – according to the sun,
Threatening – according to bannered.
11 Unto garden nut descended,
To see in greenesses the valley,
To see budded – the vine,
Blossomed – the pomegranates.
12 Not known, my soul, set me chariots my people –
willing.
13 Return! Return! – the Shulamite!
Return! Return! And we shall gaze in you!
What gaze in the Shulamite?
According to dance the two camps!

Song of Songs 6:8-13 (NKJV)

8 There are sixty queens
And eighty concubines,
And virgins without number.
9 My dove, my perfect one,
Is the only one,
The only one of her mother,
The favorite of the one who bore her.
The daughters saw her
And called her blessed,
The queens and the concubines,
And they praised her.
10 Who is she who looks forth as the morning,
Fair as the moon,
Clear as the sun,
Awesome as *an army* with banners?
11 I went down to the garden of nuts
To see the verdure of the valley,
To see whether the vine had budded
And the pomegranates had bloomed.
12 Before I was even aware,
My soul had made me
As the chariots of my noble people.

13 Return, return, O Shulamite;
Return, return, that we may look upon you!
What would you see in the Shulamite—
As it were, the dance of the two camps?

SONG OF SONGS 7:1-6
(YOUR STEPS IN THE SANDALS)

As we start today, I want to give a trigger warning. Some of the words that are explained are very expressive concerning a woman and her body parts. If you don't want to hear them, up and out you go now!

For those watching the video, it will be even more expressive. I will have photos of a certain type of dancing woman that is intended to excite the senses. If you are watching with your wife, you should probably be careful how you view the photos I put up. If she has a rolling pin handy, be extra careful, or just don't watch.

When I was young, there was a building in downtown Sarasota built by John Ringling of Ringling Brothers Circus. It was the John Ringling Hotel, also known as El Vernona Hotel. The main floor was owned and occupied by an Indian, Mr. Sarna. He had a restaurant, the India House, done up all in white. It was essentially a scale model of the Taj Mahal.

I dated his daughter, Shivan, for a short while in Junior High. He was quite wealthy, having earned his fortune from importing brass bells from India. Thus, the place was really magnificently adorned and accentuated.

Dad took us all to his restaurant once and I saw my first belly dancer. I was... hot under the collar and quite embarrassed. I had never seen anything like that before. However, I got to put a dollar in her waistline and nearly swooned.

Text Verse: *"[13] Return! Return! – the Shulamite!*
Return! Return! And we shall gaze in you!

> What gaze in the Shulamite?
> According to dance the two camps!" Song of Songs 6:13

When we started the Song of Songs, there were hints of Christ, but they were not like they have become. The pictures of Him and His work have been developing more as we have progressed. That was unexpected to me, and the picture in today's passage came out beyond anything I could have imagined.

I think the reason the symbolism and typology have increasingly developed was intended to keep people from going off on every tangent imaginable and making stuff up

along the way. Starting out with only minimal types and hints, God was trying to get us to avoid that.

Unfortunately, that is exactly what has happened. Throughout the church age, everything imaginable has been assigned to explain the allegory of the book. Therefore, by the time the symbolism started to take real shape, it was too late for these people to step back and see what God is actually showing us.

It's too bad. The types and pictures are coming out now, as you will see in today's passage, in a remarkable way today. Another problem, which I will address in a couple of our verses, is that all translations of those verses are incorrect. That may be a bold statement, but you will see it is true.

When something is translated wrongly, the information obtained from it will be wrong. Let's get it right! Let's get into His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and… May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Your Womb – Heap Wheat (verses 1-3)

[1] How beautiful are your feet in sandals,

Rather: *mah yaphu ph'amayikh ban'alim* – "How beautified your steps in the sandals." This is not referring to her feet, but her steps as she moves in sandals. The previous verse said –

"What gaze in the Shulamite?
According to dance the two camps!"

If these words continue that thought, it is that her steps during the dance of the two camps are beautified. The verb being in the perfect aspect means that she danced the dance perfectly. A Mideastern dance is often barefoot. If sandals are worn, they would be thin and light, almost blending in with her skin.

As the verses continue, we will see that she is being described in a bottom to top evaluation, starting at her steps and ending with the hair of her head. In Chapter 4, she was given a top-downward description, beginning at her head and ending at her breasts. The next words are debated...

[1 (con't)] O prince's daughter!

bath nadiv – "Daughter willing." Translating this as "prince's daughter" seems to be erroneous. She was a worker in the vineyards, meaning she came from common folk. Some translations punt and simply say "daughter of Nadib," transliterating directly from the Hebrew.

A few translations say noble daughter or noble lady, which could describe her character. It is the same word found in verse 6:12, *nadiv*, a word signifying voluntary or willing. That can still have various applications, but it is preferable to stick with the root meaning rather than to go with how translations have generally portrayed her here.

Translating this way forms a response to the question just set forth –

"What gaze in the Shulamite?
According to dance the two camps!"

"How beautified your steps in the sandals.
Daughter willing."

There was the desire to be allowed to firmly and fixedly focus on the Shulamite while she danced according to the dance of the two camps. She willingly responded by beginning the dance.

Of course, this means that every other translation of the words and every commentary I read is wrong, but it provides an exacting response to what was asked. If this is correct, then the whole description of her in this passage is that of her as she dances.

Understanding the type of dance common in North Africa, the Middle East, and extending to places like India, it is exactly as one would expect.

The loose clothes that allow those watching to see much of her form, combined with the swaying movements of women in such dances (such as belly dancing), would elicit such a description as is seen here. Understanding this, it next says...

1 (con't) The curves of your thighs *are* like jewels,

Again, this doesn't appear to convey the sense. Instead: *khamuqe y'rekhayikh k'mo khalaim* – "Wrappings your thighs according to trinkets." The word *khamuq* is found only here. It is from *khamaq*, to wrap, that was seen in verse 5:6. Thus, it is a wrapping, meaning the loose-fitting garments a belly dancer would wear.

If she is dressed in the Mideastern style, she has such a flowing garment that allows her thighs to be seen from time to time, but on her garment would be bands of beautifully woven ropes or studded chains that hang down from her belly and maybe even along the hems of the wrappings.

At times, these chains would be covered in all kinds of medallions or trinkets that tinkled and sparkled as she danced.

The word *khali*, trinket, is found only here and in Proverbs 25:12 –

> "Ring gold and trinket ore,
> Causing to admonish wise upon ear hearing" (CG).

It is derived from *khalah*, to be rubbed or worn out, which was seen in verses 2:5 and 5:8. As such, what is being described is polished and glistening, as if rubbed smooth.

Thus, "according to trinkets" would mean that the things dangling off of her wrappings, or even the wrappings themselves, were like trinkets. One could argue that this is only speaking of the thighs because most of the descriptions are of actual body parts. However, in verse 5, there is another item noted that is not a body part. Either way, what is being referred to is...

1 (con't) The work of the hands of a skillful workman.

maaseh y'de aman – "Work hands – expert." The word *oman*, expert, is found only here. It is derived from *aman*, to build up or support. The words still don't definitively indicate whether it is a body part or something handmade. Despite this, I lean towards it being what is on her thighs, not her thighs themselves.

Continuing on, however, the words of Solomon move up a bit, and most of them certainly refer to her body parts...

2 Your navel *is* a rounded goblet;

All three words are rare but understandable: *shar'rekh agan ha'sahar* – "Your navel – basin, the rounded." The navel is generally associated with the belly button, though some extend it to the whole belly, which is what Solomon is doing here. The word is *shorer*. It is found only here and is connected to the word *shor*, umbilical cord, found in Ezekiel 16 –

> "*As for* your nativity, on the day you were born your navel cord was not cut, nor were you washed in water to cleanse *you;* you were not rubbed with salt nor wrapped in swaddling cloths." Ezekiel 16:4

Both words come from *sharar*, to be hostile. As such, it speaks of twisting (as if interlocking in strife). Solomon is taking her belly button, the focus of delight when watching a belly dancer, and equating it to the entire belly – ooh ahh...

The next word, *agan*, is a bowl or basin which is also seen in Exodus and Isaiah, both of which speak of bowls or cups. The third word, *sahar*, is also found only here. It refers to being round or having roundness.

The three words, taken together, are referring to the entire belly that is full and rounded, as is prized in a belly dancer.

Unlike the flat-is-fashion nonsense in the world today, a full, rounded belly was and remains the epitome for those who perform such dances in the Middle East, North Africa, India, etc. Solomon's words to her would be an amazing compliment. Today, however, the poor girl would rush in tears to the gym or Weight Watchers, maybe scarred for the rest of her life.

Despite that, Solomon continues with...

2 (con't) It lacks no blended beverage.

al yekhsar ha'mazeg – "Not lacks the mingled." The word *mezeg* is only used here as well. It comes from an unused root meaning to mingle. Saying liquor, mixed wine, blended beverage, etc., are all paraphrases. He is describing something mingled.

This will be set in parallel with another description to provide meaning, but for now, it is a beverage that would have been a nice light brown color. Again, from the description, we can know that the people of Israel had skin that went from white to golden brown, just as the surrounding Arabs do to this day.

Those who were out in the sun would have the exposed body parts further darken, similar to folks lined up like sardines out on Siesta Beach on any given day. Next, Solomon reveals how excited he is about her midriff by repeating his thoughts in parallelism...

2 (con't) Your waist *is* a heap of wheat

bitnekh aremath khitim – "Your womb – heap wheat." The words are plain on the surface. All one needs to do is look at a heap of wheat. It is light golden brown and as easy on the eyes as looking at the fur of a lion.

Solomon is looking at her rounded, golden-brown belly and is absolutely enraptured with it. But this is the point of this type of dance. It would be swaying, carefully paced, and a delight for any watching, whether male or female. Next, he says...

2 (con't) Set about with lilies.

sugah ba'shoshanim – "Hedged in the lilies." Another unique word is used, *sug*. It is derived from an identical word, *sug*, to turn back or retreat. Thus, it gives the sense of being hemmed or hedged in. In other words, her belly is surrounded by red in the clothes she has on.

I say red because in verse 5:13, his lips were equated to lilies. Thus, it would probably be the *anemone coronaria* mentioned in verse 2:1. It is a type of flower equated to the lily, which is seen in various colors, but the most prominent is red. Having said that, the color is only speculation based on verse 5:13.

Next, Solomon proceeds upwards again to repeat words from verse 4:5...

3 Your two breasts *are* like two fawns,

sh'ne shadayikh kishne opharim – "Two, your breasts, according to two fawns." The words are letter-for-letter identical to the corresponding clause in verse 4:5. Repeating this shows that he is truly enamored with her breasts.

As seen before, this is a fitting descriptor to use as a metaphor. The *opher* is a fawn, coming from *aphar*, dust. Thus, it speaks of the dusty color of them. Of them, he next says...

3 (con't) Twins of a gazelle.

taome ts'viyah – "Twins gazelle." This is the second and last use of the word *ts'viyah*, a female gazelle, in the Bible. The first was in the corresponding clause in verse 4:5.

As a reminder, the *ts'viy*, gazelle, comes from *tsavah*, to amass or swell, and thus signifies "prominent." That also leads to the idea of beauty or splendor, which is a

prominent trait. As such, the word is used to describe the gazelle because of its graceful beauty.

In this case, he equates this swelling splendor to both of her breasts. This is what he is thinking when gazing at her, and he is not ashamed to describe her in this manner.

These are the same two words used in verse 4:5, but they were not copied. Rather, there is a letter difference in them. The word *taome* has an additional letter, a *vav*, in verse 4:5 that has dropped out here –

תְּאוֹמֵי
תְּאַמֵּי

Such a change is completely indiscernible without putting the verses side by side for comparison because the pronunciation does not change. Without modern technology, the task would be much more laborious, so the change is excitingly noted for those who come to the Superior Word for their instruction.

Solomon also omits the final words of verse 4:5 –

> 4:5 – Two, your breasts, according to two fawns –
> Twins, gazelle,
> The "pasturing in the lilies."
>
> 7:3 – Two, your breasts, according to two fawns,
> Twins gazelle.

As for his enraptured descriptions, he has more to say as he moves up more on her lovely body...

How beautiful are your steps
Those made by your feet
Each footfall preps
You for another soul to meet

And as you go out to tell
Of the good news you carry
Be sure not to rest a spell
Rather rush! Don't you dare tarry

The word is what brings life
And it will not come without it
In a world of enmity and strife
Hurry your steps! Don't slow up a bit

II. King – Bound in the Tresses (verses 4-6)

4 Your neck *is* like an ivory tower,

tsavarekh k'migdal hashen – "Your nape according to tower the ivory." He has mentioned her neck several times already. In verse 4:4, he equated it to the Tower of David. Using the same tower imagery, he equates it here to ivory.

It is certain that the Tower of David would have been made out of the traditional limestone seen everywhere in Jerusalem. It is a light color, somewhat off-white. Looking at the Western Wall, which was built at the time of Solomon, will give you an idea of the ivory he is equating her neck to.

Solomon next moves up a tad...

4 (con't) Your eyes *like* the pools in Heshbon

Rather: *enayikh b'rekhoth b'khesbon* – "Your eyes – pools in Heshbon." Rather than simile, he uses metaphor. It is not that they are like pools in Heshbon, but that they are pools in Heshbon. The word *berekah*, pools, comes from the verb *barak*, to bless or to kneel. One often kneels when giving a blessing or being blessed.

As such, these would be large pools where animals kneel to drink. Heshbon is derived from *khashav*, to deem or consider. Thus, it means an explanation of things or intelligence. For some reason, the Latin Vulgate chose to call these fish-pools. Since then, Catholic versions and other older translations continued to give a faulty rendering.

Such a pool is typically used for one of two things: drinking or swimming. So he is either drinking in the beauty of her eyes, or he is swimming in them, completely consumed by them. These pools are next said to be...

4 (con't) By the gate of Bath Rabbim.

al shaar bath rabim – "Upon gate Bath Rabbim." The name comes from *bath*, daughter, and *rav*, many or great. Thus, it signifies Gate, Daughter of Multitudes or Gate, or

Daughter of Great Ones. Most scholars go with the former, assuming it is where multitudes went through. However, it could be a gate named or reserved for a king, his generals, nobility, etc. For example –

> "And the gatekeepers *were* Shallum, Akkub, Talmon, Ahiman, and their brethren. Shallum *was* the chief. **18** Until then *they had been* gatekeepers for the camps of the children of Levi at the King's Gate on the east." 1 Chronicles 9:17, 18

And yet, in Jeremiah 17:19, it notes the gate of the sons of the people. So it could also bear a more general meaning like this. Solomon next drops down an inch or two...

4 (con't) Your nose *is* like the tower of Lebanon

apekh k'migdal hal'vanon – "Your nose – according to tower, the Lebanon." Of this clause, Adam Clarke expresses what many must think –

"There was doubtless a propriety in this similitude also, which cannot now be discerned. If we are to understand the similitude as taken from the projecting form of the nose, even here I see nothing striking in the metaphor." Adam Clarke

Clarke is baffled how a big protruding schnozz could be something one would praise. However, though not seemingly a great compliment, a high nose is dreamy to some people and cultures. Hers must be pretty high and thin to be equated to a tower. Maybe she is an ancestor of Jimmy Durante.

As has been seen, Lebanon comes from *lavan*, to be white or make bricks. The idea behind this is works because bricks are the works of man's hands. That has been consistently seen since Genesis 11 and the Tower of Babel. Of her big honker, it next says...

4 (con't) Which looks toward Damascus.

tsopheh pene damaseq – "Inclining faces Damascus." The word *tsaphah* signifies to lean forward, as if peering into the distance. Thus, it is usually translated as watch or something similar. But saying inclined gets the idea across.

As for the name, Damascus, according to Abarim, as it is rendered here and to a Hebrew mind, it is derived from two words which would come together to mean Beginning of Salvation. Solomon next continues to the top of her head, beginning with...

5 Your head *crowns* you like *Mount* Carmel,

roshekh alayikh ka'karmel – "Your head upon you according to the Carmel." Carmel is the highest mountain in the northern area. It is situated close to the sea near Haifa. As such, it sits like a promontory when viewed from the sea or when looking toward the sea. Thus, the words are essentially saying, "Your head fits on your shoulders majestically."

The name means Plantation, Orchard, or Fruitful Field (Plentiful Place). Clarke calls it Vineyard of God because vineyard is *kerem*, which would be supplemented with the ending, *el*, meaning God. Next, Solomon seems to go 80s punk...

5 (con't) And the hair of your head *is* like purple;

Rather: *v'dalath roshekh ka'argaman* – "And dangling, your head, according to the purple." It is not "the hair of your head." Nobody is going punk here. Rather, it is danglings in her hair. She has ribbons or hairpins adorning her tresses that are purple in color. This is a common adornment for belly dancing women.

As for the color, argaman, purple, it is a mixture of blue and red. In meaning, it thus is a combination of what those two colors signify – the law for blue, and war, blood, and/or judgment for red. Hence, a royal color because these things pertain to the dominion of a king.

5 (con't) A king *is* held captive by *your* tresses.

Instead: *melekh asur bar'hatim* – "King – bound in the tresses." The words are not saying that he is captivated by what he is seeing, although that may be true. Rather, he is saying that a king is bound up in her tresses. It is the purple color, representing a king, that he speaks of.

This royal color, purple, is being used in an explanatory manner that can only be understood by the introduction of this second clause.

Next, the word *asar* is never used in the sense of being captivated. Thus, this would be an outlier, but it is convenient, and so most translations copy and paste the same thing or they make a suitable paraphrase of the thought.

Some translations almost get it right, like Young's and Smith's literal translations, but they insert the word "the" at the beginning. In doing so, it renders the clause "The king

is held captive by your tresses," as if Solomon is speaking of himself. Some completely blow it and remove any possibility of understanding what is being conveyed.

For example, the KJV, not having a clue what is being said, copies the thought of the Greek –

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

With five translational errors in one verse, no reader could ever understand what is being conveyed. In fact, to read the myriads of translations available online, of which there may be hundreds, you would either end so confused and frustrated that you might jump off the Skyway bridge, or you might just close your eyes, point to a translation, and say, "Well, this is as good as any."

The way to tell what is being said is to understand the literary device that is being used - parallelism. There are only so many styles that Solomon uses, but parallelism is the most prominent one. Evaluating the passage from that perspective is what provides the answer.

In what forms a remarkable and beautiful picture of Jesus, the words are set in reverse parallel to the previous clause –

"And *dangling, your head, +according to the purple."
"+King – bound in the *tresses.

The purple, symbolizing a king's royalty, and inclusive of all else that the color signifies, is dangling from her head, being bound up in the tresses of her hair.

With that explanation complete, Solomon continues with words of marvel at the beauty of his beloved...

6 How fair and how pleasant you are,

The words are verbs, not adjectives: *mah yaphith u-mah naam't* – "How beautified, and how sweetened!" The verb *yaphah* means to be beautiful. Being in the perfect aspect, she is beautified. The verb *naem* means to be pleasant. As it is also in the perfect aspect, a suitable translation is sweetened.

Solomon is making an adamant, emphatic proclamation. But about what? The answer is not...

6 (fin) O love, with your delights!

Rather, and correctly: *ahavah batanugim* – "Love – in the luxuries." The noun *ahavah* is never used to speak of an individual. Thus, it would also be an outlier to be used as such here. And more, it would require additions, like the word "your" added by the NKJV.

Instead, it is speaking of the state of love. From there, he explains what that state entails in order to explain the verbs of the first clause.

Understanding this, the noun *taanug* is used. It is derived from the verb *anog*, signifying things like softened, a state of delight or daintiness, etc. Thus, *taanug* speaks of luxury. Being plural, he is saying –

"How beautified, and how sweetened!
Love – in the luxuries."

He is thinking about everything he has seen in this unbelievably beautiful and graceful woman, along with the adornments she has on, as she danced the dance of the two camps for him. He is utterly smitten. She is beautified and sweetened. She is the state of love.

Solomon goes beyond her to the thing that she represents – love, the state of love. His love is being expressed in her shape, in her movement, in her big schnozzle, and in all that she is and does. It is also inclusive of the things she is wearing. The state of love is represented in her because of those things.

Who can't help but get excited about this? Without proper translations of the Hebrew to understand what is going on, one cannot understand the intent of the words. But when they are rightly translated, the intent of what the Lord is conveying can be properly understood.

It appears that even those who were well-schooled in Hebrew couldn't understand either. The Greek translation of these words goes back to about 250 BC. Seventy (or seventy-two) Hebrew scholars in Alexandria, Egypt, came together to translate the Septuagint. Their resolution –

"How beautiful art thou, and how sweet art thou, my love!"

This isn't even close to the Hebrew. Likewise, every scholarly comment I read was off. What a tragedy! But that is corrected through a proper translation.

Not by works are you saved!
At least, not by your own
If you have tirelessly slaved
A lack of prudence you have shown

If you want works that are saving
Then trust in the works of Christ
Stop your futile efforts! Stop your slaving
That is not how your soul can be priced

Trust in what God has done through Jesus
Trust in nothing else
It is His works alone that can save us
Put your arrogance right over there... on the shelf!

III. Jesus in the Details

With the verses for today complete, we can look through them and find hints of why this is "Song the songs," and why such a claim can be made.

The first thing to remember is what the dance itself signifies. The crowd asked what was to be gazed at in the Shulamite. The response was that she was to dance according to the two camps. As suggested, the dance depicts the earthly *in* Christ and the heavenly *with* Christ.

All of those who belong to Christ are included in the dance because all of the redeemed will someday be with the Lord. Yes, there will be a rapture, and the church will be united with Christ. But this state will eventually be inclusive of all redeemed.

The dance will continue until the last moment of the final earthly dispensation. The first thing we saw in these verses was the note about how beautiful her steps were in the sandals. The words speak of the movement of the feet, not the feet themselves.

However, that movement is accomplished by the feet. Therefore, it is the movement of the feet that brings the beauty –

> "How beautiful upon the mountains
> Are the feet of him who brings good news,
> Who proclaims peace,
> Who brings glad tidings of good *things,*
> Who proclaims salvation,
> Who says to Zion,
> 'Your God reigns!'" Isaiah 52:7

Paul cites this in Romans 10 and equates Isaiah's words directly to the preaching of the gospel. It is the movement of the feet that makes the feet beautiful –

> "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? **15** And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written:
> 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace,
> Who bring glad tidings of good things!" Romans 10:14, 15

The Greek reads, "As beauteouses, the feet, the 'evangelizing peace,' 'those evangelizing the 'good.'" These are the steps, the feet that are beautiful because they are moving beautifully. Solomon next said, "daughter, willing."

It speaks of a voluntary action. There is no such thing as forcing the gospel from either direction. There is the offer by God without coercion and the willing submission of those who preach and of those who receive.

The next words were, "Wrapping your thighs according to trinkets." The thigh has several connotations in Scripture, but it is euphemistically used when referring to the generative parts. The trinkets are adornments, but they derive their luster from being rubbed or worn down.

The root itself speaks of being sick or afflicted. It would thus reflect the afflicted state of those evangelized who are then brought through the generative process of rebirth through the good news of Jesus.

The navel is mentioned next. It is the place where the generation goes from conception to birth, as in "Your navel – basin, the rounded." It represents how Christ was conceived and born, and that is then equated to believers' rebirth in Christ. That is explained by the words "Not lacks the mingled."

The belly of the rebirth refers to the human united with the divine – Christ, the God man, of whom we will resemble, not in deity but in His divinity –

> "Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." 1 John 3:2

Next, it says, "Your womb – heap wheat." There is an outside and an inside. Solomon is describing the outside while God, the inside –

> "But Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. **24** Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. **25** He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. **26** If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him *My* Father will honor."
>
> -John 12:23-26

The seed in the womb represents the redeemed who are brought out by the Seed in the womb. The womb terminology is used to refer to Christ in His mother's womb and Christ in leaving the tomb in the "womb of the morning" at His resurrection (Psalm 110:3), the dawn of a new beginning.

The next thing about her womb is that it is "Hedged in the lilies." We have already seen that the lily signifies beauty and splendor. It is the beautiful and majestic labors of God in Christ that adorn both Jesus and His redeemed.

Next, the verses compare her two breasts to being like two fawns, twins of a gazelle. Breasts are where milk is produced and passed on to the infant. The two breasts symbolize where the nourishment God in Christ provides for growth is derived from.

Peter explicitly ties milk to reflecting the word in 1 Peter 2:2 when he says, "as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby."

Her breasts are the two testaments. They speak of providing understanding about man, symbolized by the *opher*, fawn, which comes from *aphar*, dust. It is that from which man is derived. They also speak about that which is prominent as in the graceful beauty of those who are redeemed, symbolized by the gazelle.

In other words, the word is for man while he is alive on this earth, while anticipating the heavenly state to come. But! As noted, the word *taome*, twins, changed in this chapter from chapter 4. The *vav*, the sixth letter of the Hebrew aleph-beth has dropped out –

תְּאוֹמֵי
תְּאֵמֵי

The change is purposeful and personal. It tells us of our already assured heavenly state, being in Christ and fully redeemed. In other words, eternal salvation is realized in Christ!

Next, it spoke of the nape of the neck being according to an ivory tower. The nape of the neck is derived from a word signifying to bind, as when one is bound in a yoke. That is explained by the meaning of ivory seen in its various uses as wealth, trade, and luxury, along with Jesus' description of the results of the coming completion of His work –

> "Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. **29** Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. **30** For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light." Matthew 11:28-30

The state of the redeemed is one of enjoying the wealth, trade, and luxury of God's eternal kingdom. The pools of Heshbon reflect what the words are based on: blessing, and an explanation or an intelligence. Abarim paraphrases the meaning of Heshbon in a way that beautifully expresses the intent, saying Library of Synthetic Wisdom.

It speaks of logic where truth is determined by recourse to experience. In other words, "when our faith is turned to sight." It is the assured state of believers in this life that is realized in the actualization of our faith in the coming life.

The Gate of Bath Rabbim is first explained by the meaning of a gate, the place where entrance and exit occur, and which is also the place of judgment in a city. A daughter speaks of nature. In the case of the redeemed, the *ecclesia*, the called-out (those who belong to God in any dispensation) is a feminine noun. Thus, it is what speaks of our being "the called out."

Finally, Rabbim speaks of either a multitude or what is great. Either way, each is a perfect reflection of God's redeemed as seen in various passages of the Bible.

The words, “Your nose [*aph*] – according to tower the Lebanon,” speak of works. In Genesis 3, Adam was cursed to toil for bread “in sweat your nose [*aph*],” referring to the dripping of sweat from his nose as he labored.

However, the redeemed of God in Christ have their nose up, not down, and it is according to the works of Christ, symbolized by the tower of Lebanon. Time and again in this book Lebanon, frankincense, and the moon, all derived from the same root, *laven*, point to Christ’s works on our behalf. The nose is “Inclining faces Damascus,” meaning the Beginning of Salvation. Salvation could not come until Christ completed His work. His work, therefore, is the beginning of salvation.

Each point keeps directing our attention to Christ and the effects of what He has done, as is realized in His people.

The next point was her head “according to the Carmel.” The head of the church is Christ. The Carmel is the Vineyard of God. A vineyard has consistently reflected the cultural side of humanity. In the case of the church, it reflects the culture of the church, the people of God with Christ as its head.

And more! Then came the words –

“And dangling, your head, according to the purple.
King bound in the tresses.”

The people of the church are referred to as being in a kingdom (Romans 14:17, etc.). A kingdom implies a king. Christ is the Head of the church and thus our King. The purple, royalty, bound in her tresses, reflects the King bound as the head of the church.

Only with a proper translation of the words could we see the meaning of these pictures. Finally, Solomon finished with the universally mistranslated words –

“How beautified, and how sweetened!
Love – in the luxuries.”

It refers to Christ, who is God – “...for God is the love” 1 John 4:8 (CG). Everything that we are is because of Christ. And everything about us is a luxury in Christ. Nothing could be more beautifully expressive of our relationship with Christ and His with us because of what God has done in and through Him.

With each passing set of verses, we are seeing more clearly why "Song the songs" is the greatest song of all. If you want to understand love as God sees it, look to the cross and believe what He has done in the giving of Jesus.

By believing in His finished work, reflected in the gospel message, you will become a part of the greatest love story ever expressed. It is the love of God for His Son, Jesus Christ. But God graciously includes us in that love through a simple act of faith.

God's grace, through our faith, is what you need to be saved and receive everything that He offers to His redeemed, and it is the only thing that will do. Man invents religion, but God has given us Christ. Faith in Him is the only true religious expression.

Look to the cross! Revel in the resurrection! Love God because He first loved you and sent Jesus to bring you back to Himself. Trust in this, and please, do it today. Amen.

Closing Verse: *"For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body." Ephesians 5:23*

Next Week: Song of Songs 7:7-13 *Such great stuff – like Loobies and Noldies...* (Newbies, Also Oldies) (17th Song of Songs Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. He alone is the perfect example of love – untarnished, unblemished, and completely pure and holy. He offers this love to you. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Song of Songs 7:1-6 (CG)

1 How beautified your steps in the sandals,
Daughter, willing.
Wrappings your thighs according to trinkets,
Work hands – expert.
2 Your navel – basin, the rounded,
Not lacks the mingled.
Your womb – heap wheat,
Hedged in the lilies.
3 Two, your breasts, according to two fawns,
Twins gazelle.
4 Your nape according to tower the ivory.
Your eyes – pools in Heshbon,

Upon gate Bath Rabbim.
Your nose – according to tower, the Lebanon,
Inclining faces Damascus.
5 Your head upon you according to the Carmel,
And dangling, your head, according to the purple.
King – bound in the tresses.
6 How beautified, and how sweetened!
Love – in the luxuries."

Song of Songs 7:1-6 (NKJV)

1 How beautiful are your feet in sandals,
O prince's daughter!
The curves of your thighs *are* like jewels,
The work of the hands of a skillful workman.
2 Your navel *is* a rounded goblet;
It lacks no blended beverage.
Your waist *is* a heap of wheat
Set about with lilies.
3 Your two breasts *are* like two fawns,
Twins of a gazelle.
4 Your neck *is* like an ivory tower,
Your eyes *like* the pools in Heshbon
By the gate of Bath Rabbim.
Your nose *is* like the tower of Lebanon
Which looks toward Damascus.
5 Your head *crowns* you like *Mount* Carmel,
And the hair of your head *is* like purple;
A king *is* held captive by *your* tresses.
6 How fair and how pleasant you are,
O love, with your delights!

SONG OF SONGS 7:7-13
(NEWBIES, ALSO OLDIES)

For many years, I took care of a second property on Siesta Key owned by a gentleman from Wisconsin. Eijner Lee was a great man who became a very good friend over those years. When he would travel to Sarasota, we always went out to dinner.

When he needed a new sewer line, we put it in together. When he wanted a drain line run from the center of the property to the lagoon out back, we did that together as well. These jobs were when he was in his late 80s and 90s, and yet he worked as hard as a 20-year-old.

For the most part, he kept his property clear, and I cut the grass, but he did have some palms that I kept trimmed as well. One time, he got itchin' to remove some of the palms, noting that they took away from the view towards the lagoon.

I told him I always felt the opposite about palms. They make the view. Wherever you go, if there are palms, they add to the ambiance and highlight nature in a unique way. There is nothing more tranquil and soul-soothing than a picture of a sunset on a beach with a palm hanging over the horizon.

When I said that, he thought, "Yeah, yeah, you're right about that. I never thought of it that way." So the palms stayed. It meant I had to keep trimming them every year, a nasty and tedious job for several reasons, but the ambiance of the view remained.

Text Verse: *"For You are my rock and my fortress;*
Therefore, for Your name's sake,
Lead me and guide me." Psalm 31:3

The use of simile and metaphor is found throughout the Bible. This is especially true with things that are found throughout the land of Israel, along with its climate, geography, etc. The rock is a common theme used with various applications in metaphor.

To understand what is being conveyed when such comparisons are made, one must personally see or have explained what is being described. For example, in verse 7 of today's passage, comparisons are made to the palm.

Unless one knows what a palm looks like, he will not have an idea what is being described. A person born and raised in Alaska 100 years ago who had never had a palm described to him could not make the mental association needed to understand the comparison.

Today, wherever we live, we can easily access such information through an internet search. The Bible can then come alive as we see the palm, read about its properties, and form the picture in our minds about what is being conveyed.

Whether a rock, a pool of water, a burning furnace, or a palm, understanding the simile or metaphor brings us to a more complete understanding of what God is telling us in the pages of His word.

Pay attention to these things, find out what the symbolism of each is, and then think about what is being said when it is mentioned. God is telling us things through them.

It's all to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and… May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. According to the Apples (verses 7-9a)

In the last sermon, we discovered the beauty of Jesus Christ and His relationship with His redeemed as reflected in the woman's dance of the two camps. Now, Solomon returns to great praises of his beloved, describing her with highly complimentary words...

7 This stature of yours is like a palm tree,

zoth qomathekh dam'thah l'tamar – "This, your height, likened to palm." This is a great compliment. The palm is an upright tree. Its designation comes from an unused root signifying to be erect. The palm only has its foliage protruding from inside the tree at its top. Because of this, it is a symbol of uprightness and righteousness.

The word *tamar*, palm, is one that has been used to name women in the Bible, and that practice continues to this day. When naming a child Tamar, it is like saying, "She is my little upright one." Solomon is thus saying, "This, your height, likened to righteousness." Next...

7 (con't) And your breasts *like* its clusters.

v'shadayikh l'ashkoloth – "And your breasts to clusters." The palm tree, when it produces seeds, sends them out of the top of the tree as well. However, because of their weight as the seeds grow, they will hang down below the fronds in large clumps.

Depending on the type of palm, as well as the state of maturity, they can go from black to purple to bright red to orange, or even a beautiful light brown like a mound of wheat. For a properly trimmed palm, the clusters beautifully match the description given by Solomon.

Because of the coming third clause of verse 8, many translations unfortunately add the words "of grapes" to this clause, rendering it completely incapable of understanding the symbolism –

> "This thy stature is like to a palm tree, and thy breasts to clusters *of grapes*." (KJV, et al).

Solomon is referring to the clusters of palm fruit, most likely the date, which are so commonly found in the Middle East. The scholar Samuel Oettli thinks these words are referring to their sweetness, not their form.

There is no reason to assume this, even though it is true. One who sees the form of a palm with its hanging clusters will understand exactly what Solomon is thinking. He, super excited about the clusters he is looking at, says...

[8] I said, "I will go up to the palm tree,

The verb is cohortative: *amarti eeleh b'tamar* – "I said, 'I shall ascend in palm.'" Solomon is taking charge of the situation. He sees the delight of his eyes, and he determines to ascend the palm.

In the previous verse, Solomon referred to "your height" and "your breasts." One would think he would then say, I shall ascend "in your palm." However, even if inferred, and even if it is explained in the next clauses, he leaves that out, simply saying, "in palm."

All translations – including the Greek – say, "the palm," except the CEV, which says, "that tree." Thus, all are wrong. Something is being conveyed to us, and it cannot be rightly discerned if the translation is faulty. As for this particular palm, meaning his beloved, he next says...

[8 (con't)] I will take hold of its branches."

Again, the verb is cohortative: *okhazah b'sansinav* – "I shall seize in its fronds." The word *sansin*, frond, is only found here in Scripture. It is derived from an unused root meaning to be pointed.

It is an apt description of a date frond. They are long, thin, and eventually come to a pointed end. Think of a long bird feather to get the sense. Thus, a palm's fronds. They come up and extend in all directions, somewhat like the feathers on an Indian's headdress.

Clarke incorrectly says of these words, "I will take hold on the boughs of this tree, and climb up by them, in order to gather the clusters of dates at the top."

Solomon is not referring to the clusters here. The clusters, as noted already, are not at the top. They hang below the fronds, comparable to where a woman's breasts are. Rather, a woman's hair, at the top of her head, would be like the fronds.

Thus, it appears that he is saying he is going to pull her close and grasp her by the head in love.

As a side note for the inexperienced, the fronds of the date palm have extremely sharp points close to the tree. This is a defense to keep animals and birds from coming in and ravaging the fruit. These points could probably go through two inches of steel. Ok, maybe not, but they are brutal.

And more, they have a toxic substance that causes inflammation and bone reactions whenever they prick you. If you get one in the knuckle or arm, the next day, it will feel like you were hit really hard with a hammer in that spot.

Solomon has to be careful as he seizes her fronds. ☺

Next, to confirm that he wasn't speaking of her breasts but her hair, he says...

8 (con't) Let now your breasts be like clusters of the vine,

Rather: *v'yihyu na shadayikh k'eshk'loth ha'gephen* – "And become, now, your breasts, according to clusters the vine." Solomon changes the metaphor from the clusters of the palm (appearance) to the clusters of the vine (full, round, soft, etc.).

He isn't asking her to "let" them be like vine clusters, but that they become like clusters when pressed against him.

In the Bible, the vine represents the basic expression of a thing. Jerusalem is equated to an outcast vine in Ezekiel 15. Therefore, it was only good to be burned. Judah was supposed to reveal God, but it was worthless and revealed nothing of value.

Jesus, however, says He is the true vine in John 15. Thus, He is the true expression of God. His branches, His people, come forth as an expression of Himself to bear fruit in that state in which they exist.

As for the interaction between Solomon and his beloved, he has his hands on her head, and he is squished up against her...

8 (con't) The fragrance of your breath like apples,

v'reakh apekh ka'tapukhim – "And fragrance your nostril according to the apples." There is a bit of word play here. The word *aph* signifies the nostril and thus the nose. It is derived from *anaph*, a word signifying to breathe hard or to be enraged.

When the mouth is closed, one breathes through the nose, which is more labored than breathing through the mouth. The connection to being angry is easy to understand. When you are angry, your jaws tighten, and your mouth is tightly clenched.

Thus, you breathe even harder as your pulse races and your mind rages. Despite that second meaning, Solomon is referring to the breath, not anger. And he is doing it with carefully chosen words.

The *tapuakh*, apple, comes from the verb *naphakh*, to blow, breathe, puff, etc. Both words, *aph* and *tapuakh*, are etymologically connected. Solomon is using the fragrance of the nose, meaning the breath that is in it, and is equating it to the fragrance (the exhalation) of the apple, which is derived from the thought of breath.

It is a bit difficult to get your mind around the incredible linguistic nuance that he is presenting in just a few words. The point, however, is easy to understand. He is holding his beloved's head (the fronds). He is squished up against her (the cluster of grapes), and he is smelling her breath as she exhales. Thus, they are face to face and obviously locked in a kiss, because...

9 And the roof of your mouth like the best wine.

v'khikekh k'yen ha'tov – "And your palate according to wine, the good." Their kisses are obviously more passionate than a quick peck on the lips as he tastes her palate

intimately. Wine symbolizes the merging of cultural expressions into a result. The thing that ought to happen can happen, symbolized by wine. As such, it represents our reasoning and that which can change our minds.

If the words are taken literally, which seems right, this is speaking of actually kissing in passion. However, the word palate is also used elsewhere to refer to speaking. A couple of examples –

> "For the lips of an immoral woman drip honey,
> And her mouth [*khek*] *is* smoother than oil." Proverbs 5:3

> "For my mouth [*khek*] will speak truth;
> Wickedness *is* an abomination to my lips." Proverbs 8:7

As both of these examples are from Solomon, it is not unreasonable to assume that even if they are speaking of intimate kisses, the thought can also be transferred to her words being like good wine. In fact, it seems the words purposefully ask us to consider both thoughts.

Next are rather difficult words which Charles Ellicott says are "untranslatable as it stands" ...

You are like a palm to Me
Upright and beautiful, perfect and pure
You are crowned with stunning beauty
You are My beloved, now eternally secure

I have set My affections on You
Because you have accepted what I have done
United as one forever, a promise faithful and true
Because You have accepted the work of the Son

The breath of life I have imparted to you
New life to you has come
United forever, a promise faithful and true
Because of your faith, this is the outcome

II. In the Villages (verses 9b-13)

9 (con't) *The wine* goes *down* smoothly for my beloved,

kholekh l'dodi l'mesharim – "Walking to my beloved to evenesses." The word *halak* signifies to walk, but that in turn can mean a lot of things, moving, be conversant, depart, and so many other applications.

The word *meshar*, evenness (but always in the plural), was used in verse 1:4 to signify something like "rightly," but it can signify many things, as long as the thought of being even is at the base of what is being said. In this case, the NKJV's "smoothly" conveys the correct idea.

The same words are found again in Proverbs 23 –

> "Not you shall see wine,
> For it makes itself red,
> For gives in the cup its eye,
> Walks itself in evennesses." Proverbs 23:31 (CG)

The meaning is that looking at the wine tantalizes, beckoning a person unto itself, alluring the eye, and then it moves smoothly. Thus, the words are rightly paraphrased to say that the saliva of their intermingled kisses moves smoothly.

As for the words of this verse, the problem that Ellicott and others have is that the word *l'dodi*, to my beloved, seems to make no sense. And so, it is suggested that it should read *l'dodai*, to my caresses. This is convenient because then you can simply change the word of God and make it say something that doesn't challenge you to figure out what is going on.

One issue is that the word *l'dodi*, to my beloved, is used five times in "Song the songs" and the other four uses are spoken by the woman. Likewise, there are nineteen uses of *dodi*, my beloved, and all are the woman speaking.

That is no problem. In the middle of the verse, the speaker has gone from the man to the woman. He said that her palate is like good wine. She immediately agrees and says it goes down smoothly for her beloved, nom nom.

Having taken that literally, it can also be used in the metaphorical sense mentioned, meaning that her words go down smoothly for her beloved. They are agreeable and mutually acceptable. With that, she continues...

9 (con't) Moving gently the lips of sleepers.

dovev shiphte y'shenim – "Gliding lips – sleepers." The word *davav*, to move slowly or glide, is found only here. Being a participle, it reads gliding.

Of these words, Lange prudishly, and incorrectly, says, "There is certainly no allusion to the *saliva oris* of two lovers united in a kiss, ... for such an image of refined sensuality is inconceivable in the mouth of the chaste Shulamith."

Rather, if this is speaking of intimacy between the two, this is exactly what is being conveyed. The depth of the love between the two involved everything a couple united in love shares.

The meaning of her words is that in tasting the intermingled wine of her palate with his, it causes the sleeping lips to speak. This is what wine does. It can take the twisted words of a stutterer and smooth them out. However, with a bit too much, it can also take the smooth words of the finest orator and cause them to slur. She next says...

[10] I *am* my beloved's,
And his desire *is* toward me.

ani l'dodi v'alay t'shuqato –

"I to my beloved,
And upon me his longing."

Here is another rare word, *t'shuqah*. It is derived from *shuq*, to run after or over, as in overflowing water. Thus, in the noun form, it speaks of a longing.

The other two uses should be cited to get an understanding of the word –

> "Unto the woman, said, 'Multiplying multiply your pain and your pregnancy. In pang beget sons. And unto your husband – your longing [*t'shuqah*]. And he rules in you'" Genesis 3:16 (CG).
>
> "Not, if cause to do good, elevated? And if not, cause to do good – to the entrance, sin crouching! And unto you – its longing [*t'shuqah*]. And you – rule in it." Genesis 4:7

The woman again declares that she is to him, meaning his. She also acknowledges that she is his longing, the complete opposite of what it says in Genesis 3:16. His eyes, heart, and passion are upon her.

The words are beautifully expressive concerning the love that is understood between the two of them. Having said that, she continues, saying...

[11] Come, my beloved,

The verb is imperative: *l'khah dodi* – "Walk-ward, my beloved." The words are rightly paraphrased by the NKJV. She is imploring him to come with her for a walk, the directional aspect (-ward) is next explained...

[11 (con't)] Let us go forth to the field;

In this clause and the next, the verbs are cohortative: *netse ha'sadeh* – "We shall go out – the field." She wants to wander with him in the countryside, surely enjoying the day and spending precious time together as they talk and share in the intimacies of their lives.

As for the field, in typology, it signifies the world. Jesus provides that analogy in His Parable of the Sower when He said, "The field is the world" in Matthew 13:38. Continuing on, she next says...

[11 (con't)] Let us lodge in the villages.

nalinah bak'pharim – "We shall lodge in the villages." Here is a word used for the second and last time, *kaphar*, village. It is derived from *kaphar*, to cover. It is used when speaking of atonement because an atonement is a covering of sin.

The word here and the word atonement as used in Exodus 29:36 and 30:16 are identical with the exception of the vowel points, which were added later –

הַכְּפֻרִים – "The atonements"
בַּכְּפָרִים – "In the villages"

The idea is that a village is a place of covering for protection from the elements, etc. All around them is open field, but in the village, there is sanctuary and rest. It is a place of harmony from the elements. Next, she tells what she wants to do while lodging in the villages...

[12] Let us get up early to the vineyards;

nash'kimah la'keramim – "We shall rise early to the vineyards." She wants to take him to the vineyards. At this time of year, which will be seen in the coming clauses, it would be an especially pleasing event.

As seen elsewhere, the vineyard represents the cultural side of humanity. There are various vineyards that represent various cultures. As for why she is excited about going to the vineyards...

12 (con't) Let us see if the vine has budded,

nireh im par'khah ha'gephen – "We shall see if budded the vine." As noted in verse 6:11, where the same word translated as budded is used, the budding of the vine is a springtime event, when the daily temperatures are consistently about 55°F. Thus, around March. Next, she says...

12 (con't) *Whether* the grape blossoms are open,

pitakh has'madar – "Opened the cluster." This is the third and last use of *s'madar*, cluster, in the Bible. All three instances have been in this book. As noted in 2:13, the grapevine puts out its arms with leaves and tendrils. As it continues, it puts out clusters that start with teeny weeny, eensy weensy flowers that pollinate.

These turn into teeny weeny, eensy weensy grapes. It is these clusters that continue to grow into the large, super delicious, and ultra yummy grapes that adorn the vine.

It is the time of the flowering of the grapes that is being referred to as their aroma wafts into the surrounding area. The flower clusters first emerge on the vine about mid-March, and they typically bloom in May.

Understanding this, in these two clauses, she is speaking of the time from March until May. That is echoed in the next words...

12 (con't) *And* the pomegranates are in bloom.

henetsu ha'rimonim – "And blossomed the pomegranates." As noted in verse 6:11, the pomegranates blossom in the late spring in Israel, around the May timeframe.

Also, as seen in Chapter 4, the *rimon*, pomegranate, is derived from *ramam*, to be high or exalted. It symbolizes harvest-ready fruit and means Mature Mind or Harvest Ready. Connecting the time of year and the events that occur during it, she next says...

12 (con't) There I will give you my love.

sham eten eth doday lakh – "There give my loves to you." The plural, loves, was used in Chapter 1 and referred to doting affections, such as kisses. This is what she says she will give to him as they encounter the beauty of the spring season and the patterns of life that come about during it.

Of these words, Oettli notes, first freedom, then love. It is at this time...

13 The mandrakes give off a fragrance,

ha'dudaim nat'nu reakh – "The mandrakes give fragrance." The *duday*, mandrake, is found only six times in the Bible. This is its last use, but the same word is also translated as a basket in Jeremiah 24. It is derived from *dud*, a pot used for boiling.

But that is from the same root as *dod*, love. In both cases, it means to boil. So what you have here is a plant that causes love to boil up. The other five uses provide the appropriate sense to explain the thought –

> "Now Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them to his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, 'Please give me *some* of your son's mandrakes.'
> **15** But she said to her, '*Is it* a small matter that you have taken away my husband? Would you take away my son's mandrakes also?'
> And Rachel said, 'Therefore he will lie with you tonight for your son's mandrakes.'
> **16** When Jacob came out of the field in the evening, Leah went out to meet him and said, 'You must come in to me, for I have surely hired you with my son's mandrakes." And he lay with her that night.'" Genesis 30:14-16

The thought expressed between these two clauses is that she will give her loves (her boilings up) at the time when the boilings up (the loves) give off their fragrance...

13 (con't) And at our gates *are* pleasant *fruits,*
All manner, new and old,

Rather: *v'al p'thakhenu kal m'gadim khadashim gam y'shanim* –

"And upon our entrances all preciousnesses –
Newbies, also oldies."

This could be referring to fruit, but it only says, “preciousnesses.” There is no indication it is literal fruit. The grapes are months from being ready. The pomegranates are just at blossoming. As such, this is not what she is talking about.

Rather, she referred to her loves and then the mandrakes. Therefore, she is speaking in parallel of all her loves (doting affections), both the new one and the old ones.

The words are similar to Jesus’ words when He finished His parables –

> “And He said *to* them, ‘Through this every scribe, having been discipled ‘the kingdom the heavens,’ he is similar *to* man, *a* house-master, who – he brings out from his treasure newbies and oldies’” Matthew 13:52 (CG).

That these are speaking of her loves, her doting affections, is seen in the final words of the verse and chapter...

13 (fin) Which I have laid up for you, my beloved.

dodi tsaphanti lakh – “My beloved – reserved to you.” The word translated as reserved is first person. She was referring to her loves, noting them as preciousnesses. She has reserved these to him alone.

The mandrakes give their fragrance
And the smell is so sweet
Love – like a heavenly dance
As we hold one another and step with our feet

Forever and ever united in love
There will be no tears, there will be no loss
This I promise to you, My precious dove
Because you have come to the foot of My cross

All precious things, both new and old
Are brought forth in this new life
Marvelous words, strong and bold
Unite us now, My beautiful wife

III. Jesus in the Details

Verse 7 began with Solomon likening the height of his beloved to a palm, a symbol of righteousness. He noted her breasts were like *eshkol*, clusters. The word is derived from *eshek*, a testicle. It is the place where semen is generated in a man.

Previously, it was seen that her breasts pictured the two testaments. There is the generation of man in the Old Testament and the generation of the new man in the New Testament. As always, when two things are noted, there is a contrast and yet a confirmation.

She has two breasts. They contrast, left and right, and yet they confirm the whole. The Bible has two testaments. They contrast, law and grace, but they confirm the whole counsel of God.

In verse 8, it said, "I said, I shall ascend in palm." No article was used before palm. Taking the words in a symbolic sense, it says, "I said, I shall ascend in righteousness." It speaks of the work of Christ resulting in His resurrection. It confirms the state of the church that put their faith in Him and are now deemed righteous.

Verse 8 continued with, "I shall seize in its fronds." In this case, the fronds stand for the head of the palm. Christ assumed the position as the head of the *ecclesia*, the called out, represented by the woman – God's redeemed.

Continuing on, it noted that her breasts would become "according to clusters the vine." As seen, the vine represents the basic expression of a thing. In this case, the basic expression of her breasts would become like clusters, again using the word *eshkol*.

The basic expression of the two testaments was revealed at the completion of Christ's work. This was something that could not be determined from the Old until the New was completed.

Still in verse 8, it noted that the fragrance of her nostril was like apples. That takes us back to the symbolism found in Chapter 2. The Lord breathed life into man at his creation in Genesis 2, and the Holy Spirit breathes life into man at the rebirth, as Jesus indicated in John 20.

It is through Christ that the breath of new life comes into man and establishes who the people of God are.

Verse 9 referred to her palate tasting like good wine. The meaning is that the cultural expression of God's redeemed is based upon proper reasoning, which leads to the appropriate expression of that reasoning through the proclamation of the mouth – "Jesus Christ is Lord."

Next, the beloved spoke to Solomon. She noted her palate, meaning the appeal of her words, was received smoothly by her beloved. Then she said the wine of her palate was "gliding lips – sleepers," speaking of those who were asleep but who awakened to righteousness –

> "Therefore He says:
> 'Awake, you who sleep,
> Arise from the dead,
> And Christ will give you light.'" Ephesians 5:14

The Greek reads, "You awaken, the 'sleeping.' And you arise from the dead." This is what happens when we call on Christ. We were dead in sin and awaken to righteousness.

Verse 10 put into words the stunning change of the woman longing for her husband (as noted in Genesis 3:16) to her beloved longing for her. The sin problem has been dealt with, as noted in the words to Cain in Genesis 4:7. As such, the affections of God in Christ for the people of the world can finally be realized.

It shows the intense love God has for the people of the world (John 3:16), which is finally realized in His redeemed. This thought is clearly revealed in the incredible words of her proclamation.

Verse 11 then had the woman saying to her beloved to walk, going into the field. As noted, the field represents the world. It is the call of the redeemed for Christ to be with them as they interact in the world. It is exactly what He said would transpire in the giving of the Spirit.

Verse 11 continued with, "We shall lodge in the villages." In essence, "We shall lodge in the atonements." The coverings or atonements of God for each of His people are a note of eternal salvation. Wherever the redeemed go in the world, God in Christ is there with them.

In verse 12, saying that they would rise early to the vineyards, speaks of the evangelization of the cultures of the world from the earliest moments of the church,

exactly as the book of Acts reveals. This evangelization is based on the finished work of Christ, represented by the time of the budded vine and the opening of the cluster.

As seen previously, it refers to the death and resurrection of Christ (March timeframe) to the giving of the Spirit (the May timeframe). That is reconfirmed by the blooming of the pomegranates.

The giving of the Spirit represents the entire church age, and it reveals those who are of a Mature Mind (having called on Christ) and who are Harvest Ready (waiting on the wonderful day that lies ahead!).

The final words of verse 12, "There I will give you my love," were well explained by Oettli – first freedom, then love. Christ loved us first. He gave us freedom through His completed work, and therefore, we can now express that love in a way to Him that was not previously possible.

Verse 13 expresses the state of love that exists because of the union of Christ with His redeemed, symbolized by the mandrakes. There is the giving of her loves (her boilings up) at the time when the boilings up (the loves) give off their fragrance.

At the time of Christ's completed work, the loves (the doting affections) of God's people can be realized. From then on, the openings (the entrances) between God and man can pull out the doting affections – the newbies and the oldies. Everything in the relationship is reserved for God in Christ.

This "Song the songs" has again brought us back to the time of Christ's cross and what stems from it. As such, we see why the book is read by the Jewish people each year at the Passover. Without the cross, nothing else could secure our salvation or bring us close to God.

But through the cross, the mutual loving relationship between God and His people, which exceeds all other loves, can be exhibited. Without it, even though God loves the world, the relationship cannot come about.

This is why John 3:16 says what it does. God sent His Son into the world to die on the cross so that we can have that restoration and perfect relationship. Let us remember this and store up all of our loves for Him because of what He has done.

The relationship is possible through a simple act of faith. It is not possible in any other way. Let us be people of faith, believing what the word says and accepting the payment

of Jesus Christ for our sins. In doing this, the loving relationship expressed between Solomon and his beloved can be even more perfectly expressed between God and His redeemed.

Closing Verse: *"The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree,*
He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.
13 *Those who are planted in the house of the LORD*
Shall flourish in the courts of our God.
14 *They shall still bear fruit in old age;*
They shall be fresh and flourishing,
15 *To declare that the LORD is upright;*
He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him." Psalm 92:12-15

Next Week: Song of Songs 8:1-7 *It is the way we can begin a new start...* (The Seal Upon Your Heart) (18th Song of Songs sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. He alone is the perfect example of love – untarnished, unblemished, and completely pure and holy. He offers this love to you. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Song of Songs 7:7-13 (CG)

7 This, your height, likened to palm,
And your breasts to clusters.
8 I said, 'I shall ascend in palm.
I shall seize in its fronds.'
And become, now, your breasts, according to clusters the vine.
And fragrance your nostril according to the apples.
9 And your palate according to wine, the good.
Walking to my beloved to evenesses,
Gliding lips – sleepers.
10 I to my beloved,
And upon me his longing.
11 Walk-ward, my beloved,
We shall go out – the field,
We shall lodge in the villages.
12 We shall rise early to the vineyards,
We shall see if budded the vine,
Opened the cluster,

And blossomed the pomegranates.
There give my loves.
13 The mandrakes give fragrance,
An upon our entrances all preciousnesses –
Newbies, also oldies.
My beloved – reserved for you.

Song of Songs 7:7-13 (NKJV)

7 This stature of yours is like a palm tree,
And your breasts *like* its clusters.
8 I said, "I will go up to the palm tree,
I will take hold of its branches."
Let now your breasts be like clusters of the vine,
The fragrance of your breath like apples,
9 And the roof of your mouth like the best wine.
The wine goes *down* smoothly for my beloved,
Moving gently the lips of sleepers.
10 I *am* my beloved's,
And his desire *is* toward me.
11 Come, my beloved,
Let us go forth to the field;
Let us lodge in the villages.
12 Let us get up early to the vineyards;
Let us see if the vine has budded,
Whether the grape blossoms are open,
And the pomegranates are in bloom.
There I will give you my love.
13 The mandrakes give off a fragrance,
And at our gates *are* pleasant *fruits,*
All manner, new and old,
Which I have laid up for you, my beloved.

SONG OF SONGS 8:1-
(THE SEAL UPON YOUR HEART)

The woman says that many waters cannot quench love. The many waters refer to that which is superlative. The Lord's voice is said to be like that of many waters.

Likewise, the forces that can overwhelm a person are considered many waters. It is a phrase used repeatedly in Scripture to get across the idea of that which is superlative in nature in whatever comparison is being made.

In the comparison of love seen in this passage, it means that even all the waters of this world cannot drown out or extinguish love. Considering that the love of God for His redeemed is mentioned throughout Scripture, one would think that people would understand the doctrine of eternal salvation.

However, such would not be the case. Various churches claim that if you leave their congregation, you will lose your salvation, as if it is the denomination or individual church that provides security. Other churches claim, without really explaining the mechanics of it, that salvation can be lost in various ways.

Not only do they teach this, but they also provide no biblical support for how an "unsaved" person can be resaved. In such theology, verses must be ripped out of their context or completely misapplied. Works, the supposed evidence of salvation, are the emphasis.

The problem is that no specific works are identified as being necessary for continued salvation. It's a sad trap that people find themselves in, but it is a rather common one.

Text Verse: *"The voice of the LORD is over the waters;*
The God of glory thunders;
The LORD is over many waters.
4 The voice of the LORD is powerful;
The voice of the LORD is full of majesty." Psalm 29:3, 4

The Lord did not come to live the perfect life under the Law of Moses, instruct Israel in what is right and proper concerning the things of God, and give His life up on the cross just so that believers would have eternal insecurity.

Rather, the Lord taught that whoever believes in Him would not perish but have everlasting life. That isn't something that comes with a lot of added theological baggage attached to it. Instead, it is a petition to believe.

How difficult it is to understand the meaning of the five-letter word, GRACE. The powerful and majestic voice of the Lord has told us what it is that saves us, His grace as revealed in the Person of Jesus Christ. If we aren't sure of the meaning of grace, it would be right to consult the nearest dictionary. That simple act would clear up a great deal of muddied waters flowing through the church.

May we be responsible and pay heed. Telling others that they can lose what they couldn't earn in the first place is not responsible. God has bestowed grace in the giving of Jesus. That bestowal is realized through belief. Nothing more.

Have faith. Believe the good news. This simple and yet marvelous truth is to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and… May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. His Right Embraces Me (verses 1-4)

[1] Oh, that you were like my brother,

mi yiten'kha k'akh – "Who gives you according to brother." The most common explanation for this is that she is wishing he were her brother so that they could express their affection for one another the way a brother and sister can. That way, they could be in public and dote upon one another.

However, though this idea may be correct, there is a fuller explanation. She wishes that he could be like her brother so that in their union, they would not have the difficulties that lovers face. For example, a brother is there in times of adversity (Proverbs 17:17), and the bond of brothers with sisters generally endures throughout life.

On the other hand, lovers have spats, and the love between them diminishes through the stresses and trials of life. He has previously called her "sister – completer." She wants him to be like a brother so that the sibling relationship is truly realized between the two of them. To more poignantly reveal this, she says...

[1 (con't)] Who nursed at my mother's breasts!

li yoneq shede imi – "To my 'sucking breasts my mother.'" In other words, she isn't simply asking him to be a brother but a brother of her own mother. For example, it was known that David had many wives and also concubines. From them came many sons. The listing is given in 1 Chronicles 3:1-9.

However, there was a great deal of rivalry between the sons of different mothers. At times, such rivalries ended in murder or an attempt to usurp Solomon's position as king.

Through all of this conflict, the bond between Absolom and Tamar is one of the strongest noted. This is because it is implied that they were born to David from the same mother. This strongest bond of blood through both the father and the mother is what the beloved is referring to. If this were the case...

1 (con't) ***If*** **I should find you outside,**
I would kiss you;

emtsaakha bakhuts eshaq'kha –

"Find you in the outside –
Kiss you."

These words reveal that the first reason for her wanting to be like a brother to him is that they could, in fact, express their doting affections upon one another in a public setting. For example, Cambridge states –

"Only the uterine brother and the father's brother's son have among the Bedawin the right to kiss a maiden. Cp. Wetzstein, *ZDMG*. XXII. pp. 93, 108."

This was probably true in the culture of Israel at the time as well. A brother and a sister could display affection openly without anyone giving a hoot, something that even married people might not feel comfortable doing. Instead, she could run up to him and say, "Hello, my dear brother!" while giving him a kiss on his cheek. Because he is her brother...

1 (con't) **I would not be despised.**

gam lo yavuzu li – "Also, not disrespect to me." Today, we tend to see people doing whatever they want in public. But when I was young, I don't ever remember seeing even married people showing intimate affection in public. Such displays were meant for the privacy of home.

However, I remember brothers and sisters acting as naturally as the best of friends or even giving a kiss on the cheek without anyone batting an eye. Not having my own sister, it was almost a point of jealousy that they could get away with such things.

This is the intent of her words. She is looking for the strongest bond, one that will not fade but which is also unashamed of the nearness that a full-blood relationship can allow. With such intimacy and yet boldness...

[2] I would lead you *and* bring you

enhagakha aviakha – "Lead you and bring you." One can follow the train of thought: she sees her brother, the son of her mother, outside. She runs up to him and kisses him without a qualm or concern. There is no timidity or shame, and no one bats an eye. Then she grabs his hand and says, "Come along, brother," dragging him as she takes him...

[2 (con't)] Into the house of my mother,

el beith imi – "Unto house, my mother." If he were a brother, she would lead him right to the house they grew up in. Nobody would question the matter because it is what brothers and sisters do all the time. With them there, instruction would take place. However, who the instructor is depends on how the next words are translated...

[2 (con't)] She *who* used to instruct me.

The words are incorrect, regardless of the "who." The verb is not past tense. Rather: *t'lam'deni* – "Will teach me." Some translations believe that this is a relative clause belonging to the previous words, making the verb feminine. In essence, "I will take you into the house of my mother, and she will teach me how to tend to you."

If it is the mother, an unstated but implied relative pronoun needs to be inserted, indicated by the word "who" in the NKJV. Other translations take the word as masculine, indicating it is Solomon who is the subject.

The mother is the nearest antecedent, so I would favor her being the subject, but it could be the woman saying that when she has brought Solomon to her house, he would teach her. The only other time this verb is used in this form *t'lam'deni* is in Psalm 119, when referring to the Lord –

"Must cause to utter, my lips, praise –
For will teach me [*t'lam'deni*] your enactments." Psalm 119:171 (CG)

It is hard to be dogmatic. Either way, she is saying that in taking him to her mother's house as if he were a brother, she would then receive instruction, be it from her mother or from Solomon. She would then know what to do...

2 (con't) I would cause you to drink of spiced wine,

The final word is neither a verb nor an adjective, as all translations make it. Rather, it is a noun: *ashq'kha miyayin hareqakh* – "Cause you to drink from wine, the vintner." The word *reqakh* is found only here. It is derived from the verb *raqakh*, to compound or mix perfumes or spices.

Because she is referring to wine, the word vintner gets the point across. A vintner does more than just make wine. He is involved in every step of the process, including mixing to obtain the most delightful flavor, bouquet, and notes. It is the one word that most succinctly explains her intent.

Wine symbolizes the merging of cultural expressions into a result. The thing that ought to happen can happen, symbolized by wine. As such, it represents our reasoning and that which can change our minds. The particular wine she refers to is next named...

2 (con't) Of the juice of my pomegranate.

measis rimoni – "From juice my pomegranate." Pomegranate wine has been around for thousands of years. You can buy it pretty much anywhere today, and if you want to make your own, you can buy a gallon of Vintner's Best Pomegranate wine starter mix from Amazon for about $50.00. Ooh. Ahh.

The *rimon*, pomegranate, is derived from *ramam*, to be high or exalted. It symbolizes harvest-ready fruit and means Mature Mind or Harvest Ready. From the idea of imbibing in her wine, she next turns to a new line of thought that was already expressed in verse 2:6...

3 His left hand *is* under my head,
And his right hand embraces me.

s'molo takhath roshi vimino t'khab'qeni –

“His left under my head,
And his right embraces me.”

The words are letter-for-letter identical to verse 2:6 with the exception of the letter lamed, translated as “to.”

> 2:6 – His left under ‘to my head,’
> And his right embraces me.
>
> 8:3 – His left under my head,
> And his right embraces me.

In Chapter 2, she was almost in a state of swooning when she said this. That is probably the same thought being conveyed here. Notice the similarities between the two –

> Chapter 2
> **4** Brought me unto house the wine,
> And his banner upon me – love.
> **5** Prop me in the pressed-cakes,
> Spread me in the apples,
> For rubbing love – I.
> **6** His left under ‘to my head,’
> And his right embraces me.
>
> Chapter 8
> **2** Lead you and bring you,
> Unto house, my mother –
> Will teach me.
> Cause you to drink from wine, the vintner,
> From juice my pomegranate.
> **3** His left under my head,
> And his right embraces me.

In Chapter 2, Solomon brought her into the house of wine. In Chapter 8, she brings him into her mother’s house, where she is instructed, and then gives him the wine of the vintner. In both instances, there is a loving embrace, and in both, there is also an adjuration which follows the scene...

[4] I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
Do not stir up nor awaken love
Until it pleases.

hishbati etkhem b'noth y'rushalim mah tairu u-mah t'or'ru eth ha'ahavah ad shetekhpats –

"Adjured you, daughters Jerusalem –
Why waken and why awaken the love,
Until she inclines?"

The words are very similar to verse 2:7. One difference is that in verse 2:7, the adjuration is made "in gazelles or in does the field." That is dropped out.

Next, 2:7 again says in the form of an adjuration, "If wakens and if awakens." Here, in the form of a question, it asks, "Why waken and why awaken?" The sense, then, is "Why would you try to arouse love before she is ready to act? She will stir when the moment is right."

Also, another change is that in the word translated as "awaken," a single letter, a *vav*, drops out of it from verse 2:7 –

תְּעוֹרֲרוּ
תְּעֹרְרוּ

This is the same thing that happened in the word "twins" found in verses 4:5 and 7:3. The pronunciation is identical, so unless you are inquisitive like Charlie, without putting the verses side by side, the change is completely indiscernible.

Without modern technology, the task would be much more laborious. The change is probably first noted for those who come to the Superior Word for their instruction.

Understanding these changes, we can put the verses side by side for comparison –

> 2:7 – Adjured you, daughters Jerusalem,
> In gazelles or in does the field –
> If wakens and if awakens the love,
> Until she inclines.
>
> 8:4 – Adjured you, daughters Jerusalem –

Why waken and why awaken the love,
Until she inclines?

We are at the final break of the book. Each break has been followed by a sudden new beginning. The fourth part ends, as noted by Jamieson-Faucett-Brown, "in full repose and refreshment." The fifth part is next...

A cross is there on the hill of Calvary
It is a sign of God's love to the people of the world
On that cross, Jesus died for you and for me
The greatest display of love was on that day unfurled

Oh! That Christ died for sinners like us!
How deep is the love of God for this to have come about?
Wondrous is the giving of His Son, Jesus
Take hold of the promise, stand fast, and do not doubt

Christ died, and into the grave He went – had death won?
A lifeless body, seemingly the end of the story
But No! Death could not hold the sinless Son
He burst forth from the grave in radiant glory!

II. Fffflame Yah! (verses 5-7)

5 Who *is* this coming up from the wilderness,

mi zoth olah min ha'midbar – "Who this ascending from the wilderness." The words are letter-for-letter identical to the first clause of verse 3:6. The words introduce what will only later be identified. They are intended to bring a sense of wonder and anticipation to the minds of the hearers.

As for the wilderness, it is any place that is uncultivated, usually with sparse vegetation. Therefore, it is in contrast to the one coming out of the wilderness. She is coming...

5 (con't) Leaning upon her beloved?

mithrapeqeth al dodah – "Reclining upon her beloved." The word *raphaq*, to recline, is found only here. She is ascending together with her beloved, reclining on him. It appears that they are together in his palanquin. It is unstated, but it would make sense based on the comparable words in Chapter 3 –

"Who this ascending from the wilderness,
According to columns smoke?
Smoked – myrrh and frankincense,
From all powder peddling.
7 Behold! His bed, that to Solomon –
Sixty mighties around to it,
From mighties Israel." Song of Songs 3:6, 7 (CG)

If she is reclining on him, it could be either that they are walking and she is reclining on him as they walk or that she is reclining on him as they are carried. I would go with the latter because of the parallel to the words of Chapter 3. Either way, the words next change direction...

5 (con't) I awakened you under the apple tree.

takhat ha'tapuakh orar'tikha – "Under the apple, I awakened you." The words are not complicated, but they at first appear to have no connection to what was asked. Further, in the Hebrew text, these clauses are masculine, making the woman the one speaking. However, the Syriac and the Latin have them as feminine, making Solomon the speaker.

Without being dogmatic, it is probable, therefore, that the words are those of Solomon, and this is how I would personally take them. For some reason, the Masoretes changed the vowel pointing to have it reflect the woman speaking instead of the man.

If so, they got a sniff of Jesus and did not want that to be considered. That is not unusual in their text. They have hidden or obscured obvious hints of Christ in key passages of Scripture.

Either way, Solomon and his beloved are coming out of the wilderness, she is reclining on him, and he asks rhetorically who she is, knowing full well the answer because one of them had aroused the other under the apple tree. Next...

5 (con't) There your mother brought you forth;

No way, José: *shamah khib'latkha imekha* – "There-ward bound you, your mother." The word *khaval* signifies to wind tightly and thus to bind. Specifically, then, it means to bind by a pledge. For example –

"If you ever take your neighbor's garment as a pledge [*khaval*], you shall return it to him before the sun goes down." Exodus 22:26

The sense then is that under the apple (there-ward) she (or he) was given in pledge by her (or his) mother. That is then repeated, stressing the idea and also forming parallelism...

5 (con't) There she *who* bore you brought *you* forth.

shamah khib'lah y'ladakha – "There-ward bound, 'borne you.'" The words "your mother" and "borne you" are set in apposition to highlight that the mother was a part of the process in bringing her to be with Solomon (or Solomon to be with her) as she reclines or leans on him.

With that, it is certain that she now speaks to him...

6 Set me as a seal upon your heart,

simeni khakhotham al libkha – "Set me according to the seal upon your heart." Saying "according to" tells us that this is figurative. A seal is something that marks something as dear or precious. It even gives a sense of ownership.

In the Bible, the heart is used metaphorically when referring to the inner person, the mind, the intellect, the will, etc. She is asking him to have her always in his thoughts and desires. Next, speaking in parallel, she says...

6 (con't) As a seal upon your arm;

kakhohtam al z'roekha – "According to the seal upon your arm." The *zeroa*, or arm, comes from the word *zara*, meaning "to sow" or "scatter seed." The arm thus speaks of power and exertion, but also of effectual reach to accomplish.

When a man desires to show his strength or to defeat an enemy, he will stretch his arms out. In this one stance, he will both defend some and work against others. Therefore, her appeal is for his protection and defense through his strength and reach...

6 (con't) For love *is as* strong as death,

ki azah khamaveth ahavah – "For strong, according to the death – love." This is not referring to its inevitability. Rather, the meaning is that the state of love is like death. It is something that cannot be escaped. She is completely captured by it. Likewise...

6 (con't) Jealousy *as* cruel as the grave;

qashah khish'ol qinah – "Severe, according to Sheol – jealousy." The word *qinah* signifies jealousy, envy, or even zeal. Love is set in apposition to jealousy, and Sheol is set in apposition to death. Just as the state of love is something that cannot be escaped, so is the state of jealousy.

These parallel clauses are based on her request to be set as a seal. She is in the state of love and jealousy for her beloved. She is entrapped by them and wants to be affixed to him both mentally and physically at all times. One can see that she is equating each with the other –

For strong^, according to the death* – love+
Severe^, according to Sheol* – jealousy+

Therefore, because love and jealousy are one thing, the singular is used to identify them as such...

6 (con't) Its flames *are* flames of fire,

r'shapheha rishpe esh – "Her embers – embers fire." The *resheph* refers to a live coal, meaning an ember. The state of love, which is a state of jealousy, is thus equated to such an ember. To accentuate and highlight that thought, she speaks in heightened parallelism...

6 (con't) A most vehement flame.

The NKJV is a poor paraphrase. Way more excitedly: *shalhevethyah* – "Fffflame Yah!" The word is rare, *shalheveth*. It is from the same as *lahav*, a flame, but it has a sibilant prefix. In other words, it is an extended sound, like a hiss. In this case, however, it has an extended f. Thus, fffflame.

But more, the word is suffixed with a shortened form of the divine name, Yehovah. Just as we say Hallelujah, to signify Praise Yah, this says *shalhevethyah*, "Fffflame Yah!" This is the one reference to the divine name in the book.

Understanding the emphatic nature of what is stated, she next continues to describe love...

7 Many waters cannot quench love,

mayim rabim lo yukh'lu l'khaboth eth ha'ahavah – "Waters, many, no able to extinguish the love." The term *mayim rabim*, translated by most as "many waters," is a superlative term indicating a roaring, raging torrent. It is something that is overwhelming.

The idea is that of a magnesium torch, even though she doesn't know what that is. The Fffflame of Yah, symbolizing the state of love, is such a powerful flame that it will burn even when completely doused in a great, roaring stream.

Next, continuing to speak in parallel thought, she says...

7 (con') Nor can the floods drown it.

un'haroth lo yishtphuha – "And streams, no quench her." It is the same idea as just expressed concerning the unquenchable, jealous nature of love. When the waters have dried up, the love will continue to exist.

This is such a powerful truth that she turns to an affirmative statement to highlight the value and preciousness of the state of love...

7 (con') If a man would give for love
All the wealth of his house,

im yiten ish eth kal khon beito ba'ahavah – "If give, man, all wealth his house in the love." The idea here is more expansive than what we would think of when referring to a house. My house got flooded last year. If it got swept away, someone might say, "All the wealth of his house is gone."

But that is not the totality of a house in Hebrew thought. Rather, it speaks of the family that issues from a man as well. The House of David refers to everything that the name David encompasses, meaning his descendants and all of the promises or blessings they accrue because he represents them.

The meaning is that if a man were to attempt to purchase love with everything his existence encompasses...

7 (fin) It would be utterly despised.

boz yavuzu lo – "Disrespecting disrespect to him." The word *buz*, to disrespect or despise, is used eleven times. All eleven by Solomon, and the last three are in this chapter. In this verse, it is used twice in a row.

This is the traditional way of emphasizing a verbal action to indicate the greatest or most superlative nature of what is being said. The word is stated as an infinitive absolute, and then it is restated in the imperfect. In English, we would say "utterly despised."

Everything that a man is comprised of would be an utterly disrespectful offer for the purchase of love. With that, the verses for today are complete.

The Word of God – holy, pure, and perfect too
Is given to satisfy man's weary soul
Let us take an eternal view
Let the word convert us to God's heavenly roll

There, in the Book of Life, our names will be
Because we pursued His word and found Jesus
Innumerable redeemed, there beside the glassy sea
Such a marvelous thing God has done for us

If we will just open the Bible, our own Book of Life
And accept what it says as holy and true
Then, between us and God, will end the strife
In believing the gospel, life begins anew

III. Jesus in the Details

The significance of these verses in relation to Christ is more difficult than in the previous few chapters. However, what is key is that it refers to the house of the woman's mother and the binding of the woman by the mother.

The woman speaks of the closest family relationship she could describe, where there is no hint of difficulty that lovers might face and no hint of impurity assumed by those who witness them. That relationship is of a brother from the same mother.

They are a couple, but this is the state she desires. That is the state of the redeemed in Christ –

> "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose. **29** For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. **30** Moreover whom He predestined, these He

also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified." Romans 8:28-30

There must be a common mother figure to identify the people of God. That is seen in Galatians 4 –

"Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? **22** For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. **23** But he *who was* of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, **24** which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar— **25** for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children— **26** but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all. **27** For it is written:
'Rejoice, O barren,
You who do not bear!
Break forth and shout,
You who are not in labor!
For the desolate has many more children
Than she who has a husband.'" Galatians 4:21-27

The Jerusalem above, identified by the New Covenant, is considered as our mother. This must apply to Christ, too, because He is the first of the brethren according to Paul in Romans 8.

Stating that he was like a brother sucking at her mother's breasts signifies the same source of nourishment. That is reflected in Peter's words –

"Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, **2** as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, **3** if indeed you have tasted that the Lord *is* gracious." 1 Peter 1:2, 3

She didn't say that her beloved actually sucked at her mother's breasts, but made the comparison, which in Christ is a valid one. The same source of the word applies to Him and to His people.

She also stated that she would kiss him openly. The final verse of the 2nd Psalm speaks of kissing the Son. In other words, it refers to paying homage to Him. The final words say, "Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him" (Psalm 2:12).

In such an act of love, there is no disrespect to that person. Verse 2 noted taking her beloved into her mother's house, being taught, and drinking from the vintner's wine, meaning juice of the pomegranate.

The pomegranate signifies that which is harvest-ready and of the mature mind. Previously, it has been used to refer to the redeemed of the Lord. Here, that follows as well. The cultural expression (the wine) of the mature-minded (the pomegranate) is what Christ drinks.

That would explain the intimate embrace of verse 3. The beloved gave her adjuration, asking why someone would waken and awaken love until she inclines.

In her question, the *vav*, the sixth letter which represents man, particularly fallen man, drops out of the word.

The change, though hidden and subtle, is purposeful. Just as it was in verse 7:3, it is a personal note telling us of our already assured heavenly state. Those who have not awakened love through that which is false, but rather allowed it to develop in Christ, are His, meaning fully redeemed. In other words, eternal salvation is realized in Christ. The nature of the person is changed in Him.

Verse 5 had the debated form of the words as to whether they were masculine or feminine. I argued because of the nature of the words and supporting source texts that they are masculine. As such, it is Solomon speaking throughout the verse.

The redeemed are those brought out of the wilderness and who recline on Christ. Next, he notes that He awakened them under the apple tree. As seen previously, the *tappuakh*, apple, is derived from *naphakh*, to breathe or blow.

It is what the Lord did when He breathed the breath of life into Adam, and it is what Christ does in His people when they believe in Him, awakening new life in us.

The binding of the mother (there-ward) refers to the inclusion of those who believe in the New Jerusalem. Next, the woman (the redeemed) spoke of being set as a seal upon His heart and His arm.

That is well-reflected in the sealing of the Spirit, where believers are sealed in the mind (the heart) of Christ and under the authority and power (the reach of the arm) of Christ.

That love is expressed in permanently binding (death/Sheol) and in the unquenchable nature of Christ's redemption (cinders and Fffflame Yah). It is eternal in nature. It cannot be extinguished, and yet, it cannot be purchased, even with everything that a man is comprised of. It can only be received by faith.

The passage speaks of the redemption of the redeemed: their state, their nature, and their security. It is why this is "Song the songs." It speaks not only of the work of Christ, but the nature of it in the people He came to bring unto Himself.

The unfailing nature of the love spoken of by the woman is reflected in the eternal nature of God's love for those He has covenanted with through the blood of Christ.

Let us consider what God has done. Thinking about the love between the king and a woman is anticipatory of the greatest love of all, the love of God for His people, because of Jesus. Hallelujah for the *shalhevethyah*, the Fffflame of Yah!

Closing Verse: *"In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,* ***14*** *who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory." Ephesians 1:13, 14*

Next Week: Song of Songs 8:8-14 *Your voice is so precious, My dear...* (Cause Me to Hear!) (19th and final Song of Songs sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. He alone is the perfect example of love – untarnished, unblemished, and completely pure and holy. He offers this love to you. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Song of Songs 8:1-7 (CG)

1 Who gives you according to brother,
To my 'sucking breasts my mother.'
Find you in the outside –
Kiss you.
Also, not disrespect to me.
2 Lead you and bring you,
Unto house, my mother –
Will teach me.
Cause you to drink from wine, the vintner,

From juice my pomegranate.
3 His left under my head,
And his right embraces me.
4 Adjured you, daughters Jerusalem –
Why waken and why awaken the love,
Until she inclines?
5 Who this ascending from the wilderness,
Reclining upon her beloved?
Under the apple, I awakened you.
There-ward pledged you, your mother.
There-ward pledged, 'borne you.'
6 Set me according to the seal upon your heart,
According to the seal upon your arm.
For strong, according to the death – love,
Severe, according to Sheol – jealousy.
Her cinders, cinders fire,
Fffflame Yah!
7 Waters, many, no able to extinguish the love,
And streams, no quench her.
If give, man, all wealth his house in the love,
Disrespecting disrespect to him.

Song of Songs 8:1-7 (NKJV)

1 Oh, that you were like my brother,
Who nursed at my mother's breasts!
If I should find you outside,
I would kiss you;
I would not be despised.
2 I would lead you *and* bring you
Into the house of my mother,
She *who* used to instruct me.
I would cause you to drink of spiced wine,
Of the juice of my pomegranate.
3 His left hand *is* under my head,
And his right hand embraces me.
4 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
Do not stir up nor awaken love
Until it pleases.

5 Who *is* this coming up from the wilderness,
Leaning upon her beloved?
I awakened you under the apple tree.
There your mother brought you forth;
There she *who* bore you brought *you* forth.
6 Set me as a seal upon your heart,
As a seal upon your arm;
For love *is as* strong as death,
Jealousy *as* cruel as the grave;
Its flames *are* flames of fire,
A most vehement flame.
7 Many waters cannot quench love,
Nor can the floods drown it.
If a man would give for love
All the wealth of his house,
It would be utterly despised.

SONG OF SONGS 8:8-14
(CAUSE ME TO HEAR!)

The verses in the sermon today seem to end with a whimper instead of a great crescendo to the love story that has continued for eight chapters.

Many other poems, love stories, and songs seem to drift off at the end as well. But in the Bible, one might expect a great resolution to the scene set before us so that we can say, "Everything will turn out just as it should." But because "Song the songs" is a part of the Bible, there is no need for there to be a full and tidy resolution to what has been presented.

This is because the Lord chose to focus on a select portion of the whole story of redemption. As we have seen, a main theme presented in the book is the time of year and events surrounding the cross of Christ.

Parts of the story looked back from that moment to explain various things that relate to salvation. We have also seen redemptive pictures that stem from the cross of Christ. But there is no need to sum up the church age, explain the tribulation period, refer to the millennium, etc., in "Song the songs."

It is "Song the songs" because of who is typologically highlighted and the love that stems from what He has done. To go beyond this would muddy the simplicity of the message.

Text Verse: *"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." Revelation 2:7*

Man was placed in the Garden of Eden. He probably wasn't there very long before he was exiled. But God promised restoration would come.

The Greek word translated as garden in the Garden of Eden, *paradeisos*, is also translated as paradise. It is found only three times in the New Testament and nineteen times in the Greek Old Testament.

It signifies an enclosure or park. For all we know, when Jesus said to the man on the cross next to Him that he would be with Jesus in paradise that day, He may have been referring to a place like the Garden of Eden for the departed souls of men.

That would make sense because we are told the wicked go to a place that is not so great as they await the final judgment. Jesus' parable about Lazarus and the rich man tends to confirm this.

A garden is a place of relaxation, even if a particular garden may include planting and watering. Those things generally bring us a state of enjoyment, not labor. In our verses today, the beloved of Solomon is said to be "sitting in the gardens."

Whatever she is doing, it gives the sense of one who is at rest and enjoying herself. Despite being in this difficult and tiring world, can you say that you are at rest and enjoying yourself in the Lord? We don't have to have stress-free, pain-free lives to be at rest mentally.

When we are the Lord's, regardless of our physical surroundings, we can and should consider ourselves at rest. Hebrews 4:3 says that "we who have believed do enter that rest," meaning our state of Sabbath rest. God modeled this day after the seventh day of rest following His creative efforts.

Let us not fret too much over the world in which we live. It is temporary, and we will be going to another, better place soon enough, be it the paradise in Sheol, or the paradise in heaven. Until then, be at rest in the garden, which is the hope of God found in Jesus Christ. May it be so for each of us.

Great things, such as the promise of eternal life with God, are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and… May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Finding Peace (verses 8-10)

There are many differing views on these final seven verses of "Song the songs." The differences refer to who the speaker is, who is being spoken of, etc. The differences also question whether this is a memory or if it is something happening at the time. These and other questions show how difficult it is to understand these final verses.

One view suggests that they are so disconnected from the rest of the song that the song actually ends with verse 8:7, making these a later addition. Some see them as the words of the woman's brothers, speaking of her when she was younger.

Others see them as the words of the woman who is speaking about her own younger sister. If so, then the plurals do not refer to her and other siblings, but are a way of

speaking of herself and her sister. In other words, if I had a little brother I was speaking about, I might say, “We have a little brother who needs correction in his thinking.” The “we” would be my brother and me.

With these varied views in mind, the words begin with...

8 We have a little sister,

akhoth lanu q’tanah – “Sister, to us, little.” Whether referring to her in the past or her own sister in the present, the meaning is that there is a younger sister who is still undeveloped in body and mind. This is understood because the next words are set in parallel...

8 (con’t) And she has no breasts.

v’shadayim ein lah – “And breasts none to her.” This means that a small female child is being referred to. The development of breasts is a mark of maturity towards womanhood, at least physically.

In this state, regardless of her mental awareness concerning intimate relations, she would be deemed of marriageable age. This remains the case in much of the Middle East and Africa even today. It extends beyond there into Asia and parts of South America as well.

The idea that a female can be a bride at 12 or 13 years old may be completely at odds with Western thought, but that is a minority opinion for most of human history. To us, mental development is the main consideration, something that comes years later.

Of this young girl, the words continue with...

8 (con’t) What shall we do for our sister

mah naaseh laakhotenu – “What do to our sister.” As already noted, the question of who is speaking and who is being referred to is debated. Leaving that aside for now, the mature sibling(s) asks the question about the care of this younger sister at a day yet ahead...

8 (con’t) In the day when she is spoken for?

bayom shey'dubar bah – "In the day that spoken in her?" The note about her previously was that she had no breasts. Thus, the words here, without repeating the thought, mean, "In the day that her breasts have developed." On that day, she would be spoken for.

As such, suitors would be coming by, looking things over. Typically, the father would be approached to arrange a marriage. Depending on how she looked, a dowry would be set. If she were exceptionally beautiful, the dowry would be higher. If not so much, it would be reduced.

Things like missing teeth, darker skin, or physical impurities like warts and scars would reduce the amount a father could get for a daughter. The handling of a daughter was often like that of a prize cow or donkey. And the payment for a daughter may be a cow, donkey, or even a goat.

The day would come when her breasts developed, and then her marriage would be arranged. This was often how things went in the life of a young maiden. The concern here, however, isn't the suitors coming by. When a young woman develops, she has her own inclinations as well. Thus, the next words are stated to explain the matter...

9 If she *is* a wall,

im khomah hi – "If wall, she." The *khomah* is a wall, but the idea is not like a wall around a house. Rather, it is generally one of protection. For example, its first use in Scripture was at the exodus from Egypt. There it said –

> "So the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea on the dry *ground,* and the waters *were* a wall [*khomah*] to them on their right hand and on their left."
>
> -Exodus 14:22

The walls of Jericho were described with this word, as are the exterior walls of many cities in the Old Testament. Understanding the meaning, the words metaphorically speak of her ability to handle her state of maturity.

It is essentially asking, "Is she a wall of protection for her virginity? Is she guarding it and mentally able to retain it by shunning advances and not caving to her own cravings?" If so...

9 (con't) We will build upon her
A battlement of silver;

nivneh aleha tirath keseph – "Build upon her enclave – silver." The word *tirah* is rare, being seen only seven times in Scripture. It is variously translated as a fortress, hamlet, castle, habitation, palace, row, etc. It comes from *tur*, a word meaning to range in a regular manner. Thus, it is a row.

Based on the other uses, I define it as an enclave, meaning a distinct territorial, cultural, or social unit enclosed within, or as if within, foreign territory. The meaning would be that they would adorn her with rows (an enclave) of silver to highlight her beauty, something you wouldn't do with a daughter who tended toward being a floozy.

Adorning her in such a way would only draw more attention, and thus more temptation, toward her. However, if she were a wall, highlighting her beauty would elevate her above the others as the epitome of virgin beauty.

Saying an enclave of silver was built upon her means that she was enclosed and yet marvelously highlighted, something we would think of in a modern, well-kept enclave.

As for *keseph*, silver, it is the common metal for transactions, often being translated as money. However, in typology, it is consistently used to signify redemption.

With the idea proposed above concerning the younger sister being a wall, another possibility may arise concerning her...

9 (con't) And if she *is* a door,

v'im deleth hi – "And if door, she." The *deleth*, door, comes from *dalah*, to dangle. The word is used when referring to drawing out water from a well. When a bucket is drawn in this manner, it swings to and fro, like a door swinging back and forth.

Thus, the *deleth* signifies something swinging, as a door on its valve, like the door at the front of the church. The meaning, then, is that she may grow up to be someone who is willing to swing open, allowing access where it should not be allowed.

This could range from a girl who spends too much time hanging around with guys to one who is morally unsound in her interactions with them. If she turns out to be like this...

9 (con't) We will enclose her
With boards of cedar.

Rather: *natsur aleha luakh arez* – "Confine upon her tablet – cedar." The word *luakh* is a tablet. For example, it is the word used to describe the tablets of the Ten Commandments. The word is derived from a root signifying "to glisten." It is thus a tablet which is polished and smooth.

This particular tablet is said to be of *erez*, cedar. That is from *araz*, to be strong or firm. This is set in contrast to the silver. If she is a wall, they will highlight her beauty for all to see. If she is a door, they will place over her a tablet of cedar.

The idea of a chastity belt is the intent, but not literally. Rather, she is to be kept chaste as they keep her out of the public eye as if she were hidden away behind a tablet of cedar. So which will it be???

10 I *am* a wall,

ani khomah – "I – wall." I identify the girl being spoken of as Solomon's beloved, who has been the subject of the entire song, rather than referring to her younger sister. It is looking back on when she was young and immature, wondering how she would turn out.

Now, she proclaims that she is a wall. Her morals and her interactions have proven her faithfulness as she matured, and as a husband was anticipated for her. This appears evident from her repeated words to the daughters of Jerusalem about not wakening or awakening love until she inclined.

Her walled state continued, even as she matured. That is seen with her next words...

10 (con't) And my breasts like towers;

v'shaday kamigdaloth – "And my breasts – according to the towers." She grew up, and her breasts had become fully developed. Despite her mature age, she remained a wall. Therefore...

10 (con't) Then I became in his eyes
As one who found peace.

az hayathi b'enav k'motseth shalom –

"Then became in his eyes,
According to finding peace."

The words are difficult, and interpretations vary widely. But the meaning seems to be that because she remained a wall. Solomon's advances before their wedding night were rebuffed. If they weren't, Solomon would never have truly found peace with her.

However, in being steadfast and awaiting love to arise, she became one who had found peace and also became the source of peace for her beloved.

Remembering that Solomon is *sh'lomoh*, a word etymologically connected to *shalem* (to be whole or complete), *shalom* (safe, i.e., peace), and *shillumah*, (reward or recompense), it appears she is making a pun on his name. She has found *shalom* with Solomon...

Cause Me to hear your voice!
Let it go throughout the world
Open your mouth, it is the right choice
May the words come forth, let them be unfurled

Many will hearken and join with you
As long as the word continues to be spoken
Speak the word! This you shall do
And I have left behind for you a Token

Cause Me to hear your voice!
Let it go throughout the world
Let the nations triumphantly rejoice
When the words of life to them are unfurled

II. Bolt, My Beloved!

[11] Solomon had a vineyard at Baal Hamon;

Rather: *kerem hayah lishlomoh b'vaal hamon* – "Vineyard became to Solomon in Baal Hamon." The sudden introduction of the acquisition of a vineyard is striking. It is as if the thought just jumped out of nowhere. And yet, it is certainly intentional. Otherwise, the words would seem incongruous, even bizarre.

The vineyard represents the cultural side of humanity. There are various vineyards that represent various cultures. The name Baal Hamon comes from two words. The first is *baal*, lord or master. The next, *hamon*, signifies a multitude, like a horde. It can also signify a great commotion.

That word is from *hamam*, an onomatopoeia meaning to make a loud sound, like our word hum. Therefore, the name means Lord of a Multitude. Next, it says...

11 (con't) He leased the vineyard to keepers;

Rather: *nathan eth ha'kerem lanot'rim* – "Gave the vineyard to 'the guardings.'" The word "leased" is the intent, but saying "gave" indicates that the custody has been given into their hands. The term "the guardings" signifies those who are put in charge of it and who are to ensure it is tended to properly.

With this responsibility set upon them, it next says...

11 (con't) Everyone was to bring for its fruit
A thousand silver *coins*.

The verb is causative: *ish yavi b'phiryo eleph keseph* –

"Man, he caused to bring in his fruit –
Thousand silver."

In Solomon's vineyard at Baal Hamon, each man guarding it (tending to it), is expected to produce fruit according to one thousand of silver.

The number is a multiple of ten, which means completeness of order, marking the entire round of anything. It "implies that nothing is wanting; that the number and order are perfect; that the whole cycle is complete" (Bullinger).

Next, she says...

12 My own vineyard *is* before me.

Her words are emphatic: *karmi sheli l'phanay* – "My vineyard, that to me, to my faces." This refers back to the words of verse 1:6. She is not referring to an actual vineyard, but to herself –

> "Not seeing me, that I swarthy,
> That tanned me the sun.
> Sons my mother burned in me.
> Set me keeping the vineyards.
> My vineyard, that to me, not kept." Song of Songs 1:6

In essence, she is saying that she is her own vineyard and has kept, maintained, and guarded herself, reserving herself for only one. That one, and the benefits of her efforts are...

12 (con't) You, O Solomon, *may have* a thousand,

ha'eleph l'kha sh'lomoh – "The thousand to you, Solomon." The proceeds of her efforts, the completeness of order where nothing is lacking, belong to him. She has yielded herself and her efforts to him....

12 (con't) And those who tend its fruit two hundred.

u-matayim l'not'rim eth piryo – "And two hundred to 'guardings its fruit.'" This is referring to those who watched over her as noted in verses 8:8 and 8:9. Before she could tend to her own vineyard, those who tended to it are to be recompensed.

Of the number two hundred, Bullinger, while providing sufficient examples from the Bible, says that it signifies *insufficiency*. Next...

13 You who dwell in the gardens,

hayavosheveth baganim – "The 'sitting in the gardens,'" It is Solomon speaking to the beloved. She is in her place of contentment, sitting in the gardens. It is her place of rest and happiness.

13 (con't) The companions listen for your voice—

khaverim maqshivim l'qolekh – "Associates causing to hearken to your voice." The meaning of this and the next clause is debated. However, it appears that Solomon is telling her that those who have known her have heeded her words. The verb being causative means that when she spoke, it caused them to listen, hear, and attend to what was said.

Because of this, he next says...

13 (con't) Let me hear it!

hashmi'ini – "Cause me to hear!" The previous clause used the word *qashav*, to listen, but implying paying heed, as in regarding and responding. Here, it is the word *shama*, to

hear. The sense is to hear intelligently. She has caused others to hearken to her voice, and now he wants her to speak (or maybe sing) so that he can hear.

In response, she says...

[14] Make haste, my beloved,

Rather: *berakh dodi* – "Bolt, my beloved." The words are similar to verse 2:17, but with some differences –

> "Revolve!
> Resemble to you, my beloved..." 2:17
>
> "Bolt, my beloved!
> And resemble to you..." 8:14

The word here is *berakh*, to bolt. But it is always in the sense of fleeing or driving someone away. There is no indication of location. And so it is unknown if she is asking him to bolt toward her, as in verse 2:8, or away from her, as in verse 2:17. The verb is used in this same form three other times. Each instance signifies to flee.

As he bolts, she says to him...

[14 (con't)] And be like a gazelle
Or a young stag

ud'meh l'kha litsvi o l'opher ha'ayalim –

"And resemble to you
To gazelle or to fawn, the stags."

The second clause is identical to the corresponding words of verse 2:17. The *ts'viy*, gazelle, comes from *tsavah*, to amass or swell, and thus prominent. That also leads to the idea of beauty or splendor, which is a prominent trait. As such, the word is used to describe the gazelle because of its graceful beauty.

The *opher* is a fawn of the stags. The word is derived from *aphar*, dust, thus signifying the dusty color of the fawn. The *ayyalah*, doe, is the feminine form of *ayal*, a stag. That ultimately comes from a root signifying strength. Being a fawn of the stags, it would have a strong form and be dusty in appearance.

He is to be like one of these animals...

14 (fin) On the mountains of spices.

al hare v'samim – "Upon mountains fragrances." The parallel thought in verse 2:17 was "Upon the mountains division." It is that which was to divide them again until the right time. This time, however, she says the mountains of *bosem*, fragrance. Being plural, it is the mountains of fragrances.

As always, a mountain is a lot of something gathered. In typology, it is synonymous with a large but centralized group of people.

The number is set at two
They form a whole, My word it contains
No other number will do
But in these two, there is the severing of your chains

They provide what you need
To find and be granted eternal life
So study up, and do it with speed
In them is found the ending of strife

It is not one, five, seven, or three
No, the testaments are numbered at just two
In them, are words to make you free
Just these two suffice, nothing else will do

III. Jesus in the Details

This passage continues the thought from the first half of Chapter 8. Verse 8 began with the thought of having a little sister. It is the redeemed noting that a sister exists who is in a state of immaturity, indicated by having no breasts.

As has been seen, her breasts picture the two testaments. It is looking back on a time when the beloved did not yet have access to the Bible.

That there is a younger sister means there are those who are older. Without specifying who they are, they are the ones who watch over her. When her time comes, what will be done for her? Two choices were given for the time when her breasts had developed.

The first option was that she would be a wall. If so, they would build upon her an enclave of silver. Silver signifies redemption. If she were a door, they would confine upon her a tablet of cedar, meaning a firm tablet.

Without needing to consider the tablet of wood, she proclaims that she is a wall. Thus, by default, she is adorned with an enclave of redemption. It speaks of the status of believers since the coming of Christ, adorned in redemption.

The idea is that any redeemed person is a part of the row of redeemed wherever they may be. Thus, it is one enclave over the entire world, even if spotted in rows among the nations.

The proclamation that her breasts are "according to towers" signifies that the two testaments of the word of God are fully developed and prominently on display. The symbolism is similar to that seen in Joshua and Judges in the sense that it excludes additions to the two-fold nature of the Bible.

In other words, adding the apocrypha, as the Catholics did in the 1400s, or the Book of Mormon in the 1800s, is proven to be a false, heretical addition to the word of God.

With the statement concerning her breasts, she then said –

"Then became in his eyes,
According to finding peace."

The granting of peace is finally and fully realized in the completion of Christ's work, something only understandable with the completion of both testaments of the Bible.

From there, the words referred to the vineyard, the cultural expression, that had become to Solomon in Baal Hamon (Lord of a Multitude). It speaks of Christ receiving authority over the vineyard noted in Matthew 21 –

> "There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. **34** Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit. **35** And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. **36** Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them. **37** Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' **38** But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come,

let us kill him and seize his inheritance.’ [39] So they took him and cast *him* out of the vineyard and killed *him.*” Matthew 21:33-39

Being Lord of a Multitude speaks of Jesus as the Lord of all the redeemed. However, not all in the vineyard are the redeemed of the Lord.

Each man was to bring forth a thousand of silver for its fruit. In other words, the expectation was to be completeness of redemption. The poem doesn’t deal with that issue from Matthew any further because it isn’t the subject of the love story.

Rather, the woman picturing the redeemed is. She said that she had kept her own vineyard. She guarded it and reserved it only for one, her beloved. In doing so, she grants to Solomon the thousand. This means that the completeness of the redemption belongs to him (picturing Christ) alone.

It speaks of the complete reliance on Him and His redemption alone. The redeemed have no share in the process. The note about the two hundred to those who guarded its fruit speaks of *insufficiency*. In other words, it is referring to those who came before the woman, specifically noted in verses 8:8 and 8:9.

As they came before the church, it refers to Israel, who guarded the fruit of the vineyard until the woman came. They were under the law, something insufficient for redemption.

This doesn’t mean that none of those during the time of the law are redeemed, but it speaks of the wages of being under the law. They are insufficient to save. Whether before or after the coming of Christ, only faith in Him can save.

Next, in verse 13, came Solomon’s words about his beloved sitting in the gardens. Gardens are places where things are planted and watered. They then increase and bear fruit. They are also often places of order and arrangement, such as rock gardens. The beloved is said to be the one “sitting in the gardens.”

The word sit generally means to dwell. It is one of the many metaphors Paul uses concerning the gospel, where one plants, another waters, and God gives the increase. It is as if the nations are gardens and the voice of the beloved goes out, causing her associates to hearken to her voice. This is the call and positive response to the gospel.

Solomon then says, “Cause me to hear!” It is not a call for him to hear and hearken, but to hear (*shama*) the sound of her causing others to hearken (*qashav*).

In response, the poem closes with the words of the woman in verse 14. She tells her beloved to bolt in a manner similar to verse 2:17. The main difference, however, was instead of upon the mountains of division, he was to bolt upon the mountains of fragrances.

Mountains, being synonymous with large but centralized groups of people, speak of the nations of the world. Being the mountains of fragrances, it refers to what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 2 –

> "Now thanks *be* to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. **15** For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. **16** To the one *we are* the aroma of death *leading* to death, and to the other the aroma of life *leading* to life. And who *is* sufficient for these things?"
>
> -2 Corinthians 2:14-16

In other words, it is essentially the church calling out to the Lord, "While you are gone from us, and until the day we are eternally united, we know You will be with us as we go throughout the world sharing the knowledge of You, to every nation, tribe, and tongue."

With the poem complete, it leaves the future open and unfinished in one way, but it assures us that there is a completion that lies ahead. The "Song the songs" is written as it is to show us the intimacy that God has in His heart for His people because of Jesus.

The redeemed of the world from any time, age, or dispensation are only credited with salvation because of what He has done. And yet, it is clear from these final verses that our participation is included. But it is not participation that merits salvation. Rather, we understand and accept the salvation, by faith, that has been offered by God.

The woman gave the silver of her field, meaning herself, to Solomon. Our redemption rightfully belongs to Jesus because we are betrothed to Him. Who we are and what we do in maintaining our vineyard, our cultural expression, is His because we are members of His called-out people. There would be no church without Christ, who heads the church.

The interactive nature of our relationship with God in Christ is on full display in the pages of this wonderful, tender, and amazingly beautiful book. The intimacy of the two beloveds should be considered and meditated upon by each of us as we await the final consummation of our relationship with God.

God is sharing Himself with us in Christ, and we are to reciprocate by sharing ourselves with Him through Christ. We can do it now through the fellowship of the Spirit, and someday it will be realized in its fullness when we are brought before Him for all eternity. And may that day be soon. Amen.

I'm lost in my days
again and again.
I fail You Lord,
the same and the same.
My ups and my downs
keep rolling in,
I try and I fall again,
keep on failing, but believe!

Your love never changes.
Your love doesn't roll
in and out,
like my failing scroll.
You love is the same
on my ups and my downs.
Forgiveness doesn't change,
doesn't turn around.

Like grass in a field
tossed back and forth,
my life's accomplishments
surely sometimes fall.
Oh, Father Everlasting!
Oh, Lord above all ages!
In a stream of time of sorrows
Your love never changes.

And when the blessings come,
in spite of all my fears,
Your love find me there
and helps my disbelief.
Oh, Praise your Holy name!
Praise your goodness, Lord!
Praise that You remain the same,
no matter where I go.

Your hand will find me there,
Your voice will bring me in.
Since You Are my Shepherd, Lord,
and I'm one of your sheep.
Oh, grass on the fields
tossed back and forth,
my flesh may be weak,
but strong is my soul.

The power in me
Is not of myself,
but from the day
I found my faith.
Oh, Father Everlasting!
Oh, Lord above all ages!
Oh, praise Your Holy name,
for Your love never changes!
~Izabela Bednara, 2 February 2025 (Same day we started SS)

Closing Verse: *"God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." 1 Corinthians 1:9*

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. He alone is the perfect example of love – untarnished, unblemished, and completely pure and holy. He offers this love to you. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Song of Songs 8:8-14 (CG)

8 Sister, to us, little.
And breasts none to her.
What do to our sister
In the day that spoken in her?
9 If wall, she –
Build upon her enclave – silver.
And if door, she –
Confine upon her tablet – cedar.
10 I – wall.
And my breasts – according to the towers.

Then became in his eyes,
According to finding peace.
11 Vineyard became to Solomon in Baal Hamon.
Gave the vineyard to 'the guardings'.
Man, he caused to bring in his fruit –
Thousand silver.
12 My vineyard, that to me, to my faces.
The thousand to you, Solomon.
And two hundred to 'guardings its fruit.'
13 The 'sitting in the gardens,'
Associates causing to hearken to your voice –
Cause me to hear!
14 Bolt, my beloved!
And resemble to you
To gazelle or to fawn, the stags,
Upon mountains fragrances.

Song of Songs 8:8-14 (NKJV)

8 We have a little sister,
And she has no breasts.
What shall we do for our sister
In the day when she is spoken for?
9 If she *is* a wall,
We will build upon her
A battlement of silver;
And if she *is* a door,
We will enclose her
With boards of cedar.
10 I *am* a wall,
And my breasts like towers;
Then I became in his eyes
As one who found peace.
11 Solomon had a vineyard at Baal Hamon;
He leased the vineyard to keepers;
Everyone was to bring for its fruit
A thousand silver *coins*.

12 My own vineyard *is* before me.
You, O Solomon, *may have* a thousand,
And those who tend its fruit two hundred.
13 You who dwell in the gardens,
The companions listen for your voice—
Let me hear it!
14 Make haste, my beloved,
And be like a gazelle
Or a young stag
On the mountains of spices.