



THE BOOK OF SONG OF SOLOMON



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INTRODUCTION

‘The Song Of Solomon’ or ‘The Song Of Songs’ as it is sometimes known, is truly a love poem at its best, which describes so beautifully the wonderful love relationship between a man and a woman, Genesis 2:21-23. It also appears to imply that Solomon in his later years, gave up the practice of polygamy and found his one true love, Ecclesiastes 7:2. As with all Old Testament books, there are many lessons we can learn from this beautiful book, Romans 15:4 / Ephesians 5:25-33.

AUTHOR

It’s widely accepted that King Solomon wrote the book, in fact, we only have to read Song of Songs 1:1, to see that Solomon himself claims to be the author of it. Song of Solomon would have been one of the 1005 songs which he wrote in his lifetime, 1 Kings 4:32.

DATE

If Solomon did write the book, then he would have written it sometime during his reign as king of Israel, probably near the end of his forty-year reign. We know that he died in 931 B.C., so that means it was obviously written before then.

THE CHARACTERS

Shulamite Woman
King Solomon
Daughters of Jerusalem
The Watchmen
Citizens of Jerusalem
Queens and Concubines
Villagers
Wedding Guests

Although there are a few characters mentioned within the book, the two main characters are as follows.

1. King Solomon.

Solomon meets a Shulammite woman under an apple tree in the country, Song of Songs 8:5, and falls immediately in love with her. He’s never met anyone like her before, and so he treats her with great respect, Song of Songs 8:10.

2. The Shulammite Woman.

She is a Shulammite woman, Song of Songs 6:13, who was beautiful not only physically, Song of Songs 2:1 / Song of Songs 1:5, but also inwardly, Song of Songs 8:2 / Song of Songs 8:10.

She was also a woman who worked hard under any conditions, Song of Songs 1:6, and knows to handle sheep, Song of Songs 1:7 / Song of Songs 2:16.

JEWISH TRADITION

One of the customs of the week of Passover is the reading in the synagogue of the biblical poem ‘The Song of Songs.’ ‘The Song of Songs,’ or ‘The Song of Solomon,’ is associated with Passover because it is a love poem set in the Palestinian spring, which comes in late February or early March and generally lasts until mid-April.

INTERPRETATIONS

When it comes to interpreting the book, there are several views held by many people. I don’t want to go through each one, but here are four of the most popular.

1. Some have interpreted the book as an allegory.

In the Jewish Targum, the book is described as an allegory with the congregation of Israel being the bride and Solomon a representation of God.

2. Some have interpreted the book as an allegory but pointing to something else.

They see the Shulammite as the church and Solomon as God. However, the problem with this allegory is seen when we remind ourselves of the sinfulness of Solomon, [Song of Songs 6:8-9](#) / [Deuteronomy 17:17](#).

3. Some have interpreted the book as an allegory, which represents the Shulammite woman as wisdom personified.

The problem with this interpretation is seen in the fact that the humble Shulammite actually asks to be taught wisdom by Solomon, [Song of Songs 8:2](#).

4. Some have interpreted the book as literal.

As someone once pointed out, the title of the book isn’t ‘The Song of Solomon’ to praise the church, the wicked behaviour of Solomon, the chaste behaviour of a woman, or wisdom.’ The Song is rather Solomon’s expression of deep and devoted love for a woman.

This fourth and final interpretation is the one we will continue to keep in mind as we go through this study. I believe this to be an inspired true story, [2 Timothy 3:16](#), of Solomon and his newfound love for the Shulammite woman and her love for him.

OUTLINE

The bride expresses her deep desire to be with her lover and sings praises about him. Song Of Solomon 1:1-2:7
The affection between the bride and her lover becomes more intimate, and she pours out more praise on the one she loves was very elaborate and exquisite analogies from nature. Song Of Solomon 2:8-3:5
King Solomon gives his praise, as does the bride, and the engagement takes place. Song Of Solomon 3:6-5:1
The bridegroom goes away for a period of time, and during his absence the bride longs for his return and continues to give him praises. Song Of Solomon 5:2-6:9
This section contains some very descriptive verses describing the beauty of the bride. Song Of Solomon 6:10-8:4
The conclusion deals with the durable eternal bond of consummated love. Song Of Solomon 8:5-14

THE TEXT

‘Solomon’s Song of Songs.’ Song Of Solomon 1:1

In the very first verse of the book, we find that Solomon declares himself to be the author of the book, Song of Songs 1:1. As was noted earlier, this song would have been one of 1005 songs written by Solomon, 1 Kings 4:32. This also tells us that it wasn’t written or spoken in a language in ordinary form but written as poetry.

SETTING THE SCENE

‘Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth—for your love is more delightful than wine. Pleasing is the fragrance of your perfumes; your name is like perfume poured out. No wonder the young women love you! Take me away with you—let us hurry! Let the king bring me into his chambers. We rejoice and delight in you; we will praise your love more than wine. How right they are to adore you!’ Song Of Solomon 1:2-4

The song begins by depicting a group of women sitting together and talking about their desire for one man. All the virgin daughters of Jerusalem, Song of Songs 1:5, including the Shulammite woman, Song of Songs 6:13 / Joshua 19:18, are present at this point.

Using their imagination, they’re thinking about what it would be like to kiss Solomon, Song of Songs 1:2 / Song of Songs 1:4 / Song of Songs 4:10. They long for the touch of his lips on theirs and think it would be sweeter than wine, very enjoyable and intoxicating, Song of Songs 1:3. The perfume was used by Solomon to anoint himself and so his name is as refreshing and soothing as the perfume, Song of Songs 1:3.

The very name of Solomon is known far and wide abroad, 1 Kings 10:1-10 / Ecclesiastes 7:1, and is compared to perfume being poured out, Song of Songs 1:3. Solomon would have been very attractive to all the virgin daughters of Jerusalem because of his charm and world glory.

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Orientals have always been passionately fond of perfumes. The literatures of Egypt, Greece, and Rome abound in references to them, in the Bible, Psalms 23:5 / Psalms 45:7-8 / Proverbs 7:17 / Proverbs 27:9 / Luke 7:46 / John 12:3.’ The Shulammite woman was taken from her home in Shulem and although no one knows where this place actually is, many believe it is a place called, Shunem, which was a village in the territory of Issachar, north of Jezreel and south of Mount Gilboa, Joshua 19:18. She was possibly taken against her will and placed first of all in Solomon’s home in the mountains of Lebanon. However, she and the other virgin daughters of Jerusalem are ready and willing for Solomon to take them away and take them into his chambers, Song of Songs 1:4, but they had to wait, Esther 2:12.

‘Dark am I, yet lovely, daughters of Jerusalem, dark like the tents of Kedar, like the tent curtains of Solomon. Do not stare at me because I am dark, because I am darkened by the sun. My mother’s sons were angry with me and made me take care of the vineyards; my own vineyard I had to neglect.’ Song Of Solomon 1:5-6

Now that the Shulammite and the other daughters of Jerusalem have made their desires known to each other and they continue to sing together. We can picture the scene as they are all assembled in one place, they begin to look at each other and there among them is one who looks different from all the others, Song of Songs 1:5.

We can almost imagine the daughters of Jerusalem asking themselves as they look at the Shulammite woman, what is she doing here? Fair skin women were highly prized and were a sign of royal care in the palaces. She tells the daughters that although she has dark skin, she is still ‘lovely’, Song of Songs 1:5. We can also imagine the Shulammite woman answering their thoughts by saying, ‘yes, I’m dark’.

She then goes on to compare herself to the ‘tents of Kedar’, [Song of Songs 1:5](#), that is, like the tents of the Ishmaelites, [Genesis 25:13](#). These tents were known to be made from black or dark coloured goat skins. Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Kedar was the name of an Arab tribe, [Genesis 25:13](#) / [Psalms 120:5](#). The word itself signifies ‘dark’ or ‘black.’ Possibly ‘tents of Kedar’ stand here poetically for shepherds’ tents in general [Isaiah 60:7](#).’

She also compares herself to the ‘tent curtains of Solomon’, [Song of Songs 1:5](#). Solomon’s house was furnished with beautiful and glorious curtains and these would have been woven tapestries which were very beautiful and brought much joy to the king.

She goes on to explain why she looks the way she does, she is ‘dark’ because the sun had scorched her whilst she was working, [Song of Songs 1:6](#). Because she was working, this tells us that she wasn’t a woman with royal connections but just an everyday common woman.

She then makes a plea to the daughters of Jerusalem and asks them not to ‘stare at her because she is dark’, [Song of Songs 1:6](#). In other words, she’s pleading with them not to look at her as if she is some kind of foreigner. She wants them to understand that she is ‘dark’ because she’s been working hard in the vineyards, [Song of Songs 1:6](#) / [1 Samuel 16:7](#) / [John 7:24](#).

She then tells the daughters of Jerusalem that her brothers were ‘angry’ with her and forced her to work in the vineyards, [Song of Songs 1:6](#). It’s interesting to note that she too must have been angry with her brothers because she doesn’t refer to them as her brothers but as ‘my mother’s sons.’ We’re not told what caused her brother’s anger but clearly there was some kind of family issue going on behind the scenes, which had never been dealt with, [Proverbs 29:2](#) / [Ephesians 4:26-27](#).

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The bringing of a foreigner to the throne would no doubt excite jealousy among the Jewish females, who, from their own superior complexion, national and religious advantages, might well suppose that Solomon should not have gone to Egypt for a wife and queen, while Judea could have furnished him with every kind of superior excellence.’

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Her mother’s sons have made it impossible for her to avoid this, treating her with that arbitrary tyranny which male relatives so often display in the East.’

Notice she had to neglect her own vineyard, [Song of Songs 1:6](#). This one verse stands as a warning for all preachers and evangelists. While dedicating their lives to the work of God, they mustn’t neglect their own families in the process.

‘Tell me, you whom I love, where you graze your flock and where you rest your sheep at midday. Why should I be like a veiled woman beside the flocks of your friends?’ Song Of Solomon 1:7

Even though Solomon isn’t present at this point in time, the Shulammite woman now starts daydreaming and addresses him in song. It’s worth noting that she refers to Solomon as the one she ‘loves’, [Song of Songs 1:7](#). We know that she hasn’t met him personally so far in the story and we know there hasn’t been any previous relationship between them both.

This tells us that she knows of Solomon but because of what she knows about him, she loves him, [Proverbs 22:1](#) / [Ecclesiastes 7:1](#). She longs to meet Solomon on her own and away from the daughters of Jerusalem. She wants to know where the king is so that she can go to him.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘This is spoken as if the parties were shepherds or employed in the pastoral life. But how this would apply either to Solomon, or the princes of Egypt, is not easy to ascertain. Probably in the marriage festival there was something like our masks, in which persons of quality assumed rural characters and their employments.’

Although Solomon is never described as a shepherd, Song of Songs 1:7 / Song of Songs 2:16 / Song of Songs 6:3, it is possible that Solomon kept sheep in his younger days before David selected him as his successor and he continued to watch the flock for the peace it gave him, 2 Chronicles 7:5. We do know that Solomon owned herds and flocks, Ecclesiastes 2:7, and he personally got involved in everything he had going on, Ecclesiastes 2:10.

The Shulammite woman doesn’t want to be seen aimlessly wandering around like ‘a veiled woman’, Song of Songs 1:7, that is, like a prostitute looking for business. In those days prostitutes wore a veil in order to hide their identity and because shepherds were usually on their own, they would be prime targets for business. She’s basically saying that she doesn’t want to leave the wrong impression about her character among those who might see her.

‘If you do not know, most beautiful of women, follow the tracks of the sheep and graze your young goats by the tents of the shepherds.’ Song Of Solomon 1:8

After asking where Solomon can be located, the daughters of Jerusalem answer her by saying if she doesn’t know where he is, then she should go to the sheep and take care of the young goats by the shepherd’s tents, Song of Songs 1:8. In other words, if the beautiful Shulammite woman has no idea where Solomon is, then she should just go back to her simple shepherd life.

These words of the daughters of Jerusalem aren’t very kind, possibly because they were jealous of the Shulammite woman’s beauty. They treat her as if she were totally stupid and someone who wasn’t worthy of the king or the king’s attention.

‘I liken you, my darling, to a mare among Pharaoh’s chariot horses. Your cheeks are beautiful with earrings, your neck with strings of jewels. We will make you earrings of gold, studded with silver.’ Song Of Solomon 1:9-11

It’s at this point in the scene that Solomon appears. Up until now, the Shulammite woman has been revealing her thoughts towards Solomon and now Solomon is going to reveal his thoughts about her. We don’t know when they met or how they met, we’re only told that they have this initial intense interest in each other. It’s possible that she was brought to Solomon as one of his many virgin wives, and it’s possible because she was ‘lovely’ and ‘dark’, Song of Songs 1:4-6, she stood out from all the other virgins.

When Solomon sees the Shulammite woman, he sees within her ‘a mare among Pharaoh’s chariot horses,’ Song of Songs 1:9 / 1 Kings 10:28-29. I don’t know how a woman would react today if she was described as a mare but a mare is not only a beautiful horse, it’s also a highly spirited horse. Horses were highly prized as animals of beauty and anyone who owned horses took great pride in them, especially the chariot horses.

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following.

‘In Damascus ‘the mare comes before wife and child’, she may be worth £40,000, and there really is no more beautiful creature. The Egyptian horse was once prized much as the Arab now is, 2 Chronicles 9:28.’

Solomon sees her natural beauty and pictures her with ‘earrings’ and ‘jewels around her neck,’ Song of Songs 1:10. After complimenting her, he then tempts her to stay in the palace with gold and silver, Song of Songs 1:11 / Genesis 24:53 / Genesis 34:12.

Barnes in his commentary, says the following.

‘They promise the bride ornaments more worthy and becoming than the rustic attire in which she has already such charms for the king: ‘Ornaments of gold will we make for thee with studs (or ‘points’) of silver.’ The ‘studs’ are little silver ornaments which it is proposed to affix to the golden, Proverbs 25:12, or substitute for the strung beads of the bride’s necklace.’

‘While the king was at his table, my perfume spread its fragrance. My beloved is to me a sachet of myrrh resting between my breasts. My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blossoms from the vineyards of En Gedi.’ Song Of Solomon 1:12-14

If you’re an ‘old romantic’, you will love what is happening here, as the Shulammite woman now meets Solomon for the first time. We can picture the love scene being built here, where we have the Shulammite woman and Solomon, both of whom have a deep attraction to one another. All those thoughts of each other they kept deep within themselves and all those feelings they buried deep within each other.

All of those emotions were leading to this moment, the moment when they actually met for the first time. We can imagine two young people who noticed one another from a distance, two young people who have each other on their minds all day long and finally they meet face to face and actually start talking to each other, in the hope that they will begin a relationship together.

Solomon is sitting at his table when the Shulammite woman appears in front of him, Song of Songs 1:12. She then begins to flirt with Solomon. There are many ways to flirt with someone to indicate that you’re interested in someone else, we do this through eye contact or simply by using body language. Figuratively speaking, her presence sends out a fragrance of her love toward him and Solomon picks up on it, Song of Songs 1:12 / Mark 14:3.

Notice that she calls Solomon her ‘beloved’ and compares him to ‘a sachet of myrrh resting between my breasts’, Song of Songs 1:13. Myrrh is a perfume from India, Africa, and Arabia, and it appears to have been applied between the breasts of women. The fragrant aroma of myrrh was a constant refreshment to the woman wearing it. Solomon held such a special place within the mind of the Shulammite woman that he reminded her of this myrrh. She thought about Solomon all the time and his name was refreshing to her.

She says that Solomon was like ‘a cluster of henna blossoms from the vineyards of En Gedi,’ Song of Songs 1:14. She’s looking forward to the time when she can lie as close to her beloved as her perfume sachet does each evening. The En Gedi was a fertile area on the western shore of the Dead Sea. The area surrounding the En Gedi is desert country, which makes the oasis stand out as even more desirable. In other words, she sees Solomon as standing out among those around him as a blossoming bush in an oasis which stands out against the desert surrounding it.

‘How beautiful you are, my darling! Oh, how beautiful! Your eyes are doves.’ Song Of Solomon 1:15

While Solomon sits at his table and looks at the Shulammite woman, he declares that she is physically beautiful and her eyes are like the eyes of a dove, Song of Songs 1:5. The eyes of a dove are seen as representing purity and gentleness. Domesticated doves are often white and known for their peacefulness, so Solomon may be describing her dark pupil in midst of her white eyes, which were full of peace. Everything about her totally impresses the king. Notice that whilst she called Solomon her ‘beloved’, Song of Songs 1:12-14, Solomon now calls her, ‘my darling’, Song of Songs 1:15, some translations use the words, ‘my love’.

‘How handsome you are, my beloved! Oh, how charming! And our bed is verdant. The beams of our house are cedars; our rafters are firs.’ Song Of Solomon 1:16-17

The Shulammite woman replies to Solomon by telling him that he is ‘handsome’ and ‘charming’, Song of Songs 1:16. She envisions future days together as a married couple living in the green countryside, reclining on grass which has become a luxuriant couch. The stately cedars have become the pillars supporting their home, while the branches overhead form the rafters and the roof, Song of Songs 1:17.

I don’t know about you, but this is such a beautiful story, a story which many people can relate to, especially when they finally meet the person of their dreams.

The Shulammite woman and Solomon both have neutral affections for each other, they sing the right words and suggest the right things. But more importantly, they treat one another with total respect and take their time in building their relationship together, Song of Songs 8:4.

CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION

‘I am a rose of Sharon, a lily of the valleys. Like a lily among thorns is my darling among the young women. Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest is my beloved among the young men. I delight to sit in his shade, and his fruit is sweet to my taste.’ Song Of Solomon 2:1-3

Here the Shulammite woman compares her love for Solomon with the professed love among the daughters of Jerusalem. She compares herself to two flowers, first, she is like a ‘rose of Sharon’, a crocus plant, Song of Songs 2:1. There are seven species of rose that grow in the Holy Land and the most widely distributed of these is Rosa Phoenicia, which grows on the coast and in the mountains. The flower was recognised as ‘Sharon’ due to the plain it grew in. The Plain of Sharon was a coastal plain found on the Mediterranean coast between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Sharon was a very fruitful place, where David’s cattle were fed, 1 Chronicles 27:29. It is mentioned as a place of excellence, Isaiah 35:2, and as a place of flocks, Isaiah 65:10.’

While her love for Solomon is like a ‘lily’, she sees herself among the thorns, Song of Songs 2:2. The young women’s love for Solomon was a thorny kind of love, a love full of deception and ulterior motives. In other words, the young daughters want a share in the king’s glory and riches, while the Shulammite woman simply just wanted Solomon for who he is.

Second, the Shulammite woman sees in this apple tree her beloved Solomon, Song of Songs 2:3. This tree, which is among other trees in the forest, produces fruit and is apparently the noblest of trees in this geographic region.

Solomon is the shade that the tree produces, which means she feels safe and protected when with him. Song of Songs 2:3. Solomon’s fruit, that is, his character, his words and actions, Matthew 7:15-20 / John 15:5-8 / Galatians 5:22-23, is a refreshing sweet apple to the Shulammite woman. Song of Songs 2:3.

‘Let him lead me to the banquet hall and let his banner over me be love. Strengthen me with raisins, refresh me with apples, for I am faint with love. His left arm is under my head, and his right arm embraces me. Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you by the gazelles and by the does of the field: Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires.’ Song Of Solomon 2:4-7

Solomon now brings the Shulammite woman to the ‘banquet hall’, Song of Songs 2:4, which literally means ‘the house of wine’ and is the place where he entertains his closest friends. However, the Shulammite woman appears to be a little uncomfortable with this setting because she is ‘dark’, Song of Songs 1:4, and not of royal descent. Solomon realises that she’s feeling uncomfortable and his love is shown as a ‘banner over’ her, Song of Songs 2:4, as a result, Solomon makes her feel comfortable.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following, concerning the banner.

‘As the standard is the rallying-point and guide of the individual soldier, so the bride, transplanted from a lowly station to new scenes of unaccustomed splendour, finds support and safety in the known attachment of her beloved. His ‘love’ is her ‘banner.’ The thought is similar to that expressed in the name ‘Jehovah-Nissi’, Exodus 17:15.’ The Shulammite woman begins to feel herself going down into a realm of intense loving feelings for Solomon. She knows this isn’t a dream, she knows this isn’t a fantasy, she’s refreshed by the reality of his love, like raisins and apples refresh the physical body, Song of Songs 2:5 / 2 Samuel 6:19 / 1 Chronicles 16:3 / Hosea 3:1. It’s clear she isn’t looking to end this feeling but rather to be refreshed and so she calls upon raisins and apples to refresh her from her state of being lovesick. Notice that it’s Solomon who does the refreshing, he uses his left hand to support her lovesick head and his right hand to embrace her, Song of Songs 2:6 / Deuteronomy 33:27 / Proverbs 4:8.

Because Solomon embraced her in front of the daughters of Jerusalem, this was the moment when Solomon gave his public approval of her. It’s at this point, while she’s being embraced by Solomon that the daughters of Jerusalem are filled with jealousy that the Shulammite woman charges them to leave them alone. The moment of her greatest feelings of love are being fulfilled here as her love sickened heart is made comfortable and fulfilled by Solomon.

She has witnessed wild animals performing mating rituals and understands that even animals must become acquainted before they mate, Song of Songs 2:7 / Song of Songs 8:6-7. Gazelles and does are sleek, graceful creatures who, when startled, will quickly disappear. The Shulammite woman insists that the young women from Jerusalem don’t try and force her to love the king but to give love time to awaken if it is to be, Song of Songs 2:7 / Song of Songs 3:5 / Song of Songs 8:4. By speaking about these animals, the Shulammite woman is warning us that in a rush for love, we can easily lose the very thing we are pursuing.

The passion of sexual intercourse must never be aroused outside the limits of God’s intended relationship between a man and a woman, Matthew 5:28. And that intended relationship is in the bond of marriage. Young people should never place themselves in a situation where their sexual passions are aroused to the point of being out of control, Proverbs 23:6-7. In the first chapter, we saw how the Shulammite woman was singing and daydreaming of Solomon, Song of Songs 1:2-4. Now at this point in time, her daydream has become a reality, as she is now in the arms of Solomon.

‘Listen! My beloved! Look! Here he comes, leaping across the mountains, bounding over the hills. My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag. Look! There he stands behind our wall, gazing through the windows, peering through the lattice.’ Song Of Solomon 2:8-9

It’s been a long winter and the Shulammite woman sees Solomon coming to her through the mountains and excitement is in the air. Solomon, with the speed of a gazelle, rides through the mountains to reach his beloved at her house, Song of Songs 2:8 / Proverbs 5:19.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The points of comparison here are beauty of form, grace, and speed of movement. In 2 Samuel 2:18 / 1 Chronicles 12:8, princes are compared to ‘gazelles.’

When he arrives he gazes through the windows, walls, and lattice as though he’s frantically searching for her, Song of Songs 2:9 / Song of Songs 5:7 / Song of Songs 8:9-10.

‘My beloved spoke and said to me. Arise, my darling, my beautiful one, come with me. See! The winter is past; the rains are over and gone. Flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing has come; the cooing of doves is heard in our land. The fig tree forms its early fruit; the blossoming vines spread their fragrance. Arise, come, my darling; my beautiful one, come with me.’ My dove in the clefts of the rock, in the hiding places on the mountainside, show me your face, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely. Catch for us the foxes, the little foxes that ruin the vineyards, our vineyards that are in bloom.’ Song Of Solomon 2:10-15

The Shulammitte explains that Solomon finds her and calls upon her to ‘arise’ and come with him back to the royal city, Song of Songs 2:10. It appears the long winter is over and spring has arrived, flowers, songbirds, turtle doves, and the plants starting to display their green leaves are all signs of the warmer season, Song of Songs 2:11-13. Solomon then calls the Shulammitte woman to ‘arise, my darling, my beautiful one, come with me’, Song of Songs 2:13. Earlier Solomon referred to the Shulammitte woman as having the eyes of a dove, Song of Songs 1:15. He told her of her beauty, Song of Songs 1:9-10, and he calls her ‘darling’, Song of Songs 1:9. He now calls upon this beautiful dove that he loves to leave her home in the mountains and come back to the city with him, Song of Songs 2:13. He said that it’s a good time due to the weather warming, hence it’s spring.

Solomon now longs to see her face and hear her voice, Song of Songs 2:14, and it appears that nothing can please him like seeing her face and hearing her voice. It’s all too easy to forget how wonderful our wives are, especially when we’ve been married for several years. I wonder how many married men still see their wives in this way today! Foxes dig holes and burrow underground destroying root systems and creating holes where the roots can gain no sustenance from, Song of Songs 2:15. This is a picture of a vineyard which is overrun with foxes and is now ruined. Clarke, in his commentary, says the following, concerning the foxes.

‘They love the vine, and they are eaten in autumn in some countries, according to Galen, when they are very fat with eating the grapes. They abounded in Judea and did most damage when the clusters were young and tender.’

Throughout the Scriptures, foxes are used figuratively to denote the physical, Nehemiah 4:3, and spiritual destroyers, Ezekiel 13:4 / Luke 13:32. The Shulammitte woman wants nothing to do with fox-like people who would destroy the love that she and Solomon share, such as the daughters of Jerusalem who live in the royal city. The Shulammitte woman thinks about the vineyard she works at in relation to her love for Solomon and his love for her, Song of Songs 2:15 / Song of Songs 1:6.

‘My beloved is mine and I am his; he browses among the lilies. Until the day breaks and the shadows flee, turn, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or like a young stag on the rugged hills.’ Song Of Solomon 2:16-17

Notice that the one who holds the Shulammitte’s affection is her ‘beloved,’ Song of Songs 2:16. Up until this point she’s referred to a man as her beloved and the one to whom her soul loves ten times. Although Solomon wasn’t a shepherd the Shulammitte woman has nothing better to compare him to in relation to her experiences.

The idea of Solomon belonging to the Shulammitte woman and the Shulammitte woman belonging to Solomon, Song of Songs 2:16, conjures up ideas of monogamy. It appears that she has taken the ultimate place in Solomon’s heart. Although the N.I.V. says that ‘he browses along the lilies’, Song of Songs 2:16, other translations use the words, ‘he feeds his flock among the lilies’. The ‘feeding of the flock among the lilies’ considers Solomon’s kingly work viewed with beauty by the Shulammitte woman. She requests that he comes quickly like a gazelle and finish his work so that they may be together again in the evening, Song of Songs 2:17 / Song of Songs 4:6.

Note again back in Song of Songs 1:12-13, the beloved is attributed to the ‘king’. This tells us that even though the Shulammitte woman uses ‘shepherd’ terms, there’s no second man in the picture, as some suggest. As we saw in the very beginning, this is ‘Solomon’s song’, Song of Songs 1:1.

Up until this point in time, there have been three main characters in the song, Solomon, the Shulammitte woman and the daughters of Jerusalem.

CHAPTER 3

INTRODUCTION

‘All night long on my bed I looked for the one my heart loves; I looked for him but did not find him. I will get up now and go about the city, through its streets and squares; I will search for the one my heart loves. So I looked for him but did not find him. The watchmen found me as they made their rounds in the city. ‘Have you seen the one my heart loves?’ Scarcely had I passed them when I found the one my heart loves. I held him and would not let him go till I had brought him to my mother’s house, to the room of the one who conceived me. Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you by the gazelles and by the does of the field: Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires.’ Song Of Solomon 3:1-5

Evening time arrives and the Shulammite woman hasn’t left her mountain home and so, she lies in bed thinking about the one her ‘heart loves’, [Song of Songs 3:1](#). It’s possible the Shulammite woman is beginning to dream of searching for her beloved, Solomon, but she can’t find him, [Song of Songs 3:1](#).

She now begins to stress out as she can’t find Solomon anywhere, she’s searched the city streets and squares but she can’t find him anywhere, [Song of Songs 3:2](#). She is then found wandering through the city streets at night by the ‘watchmen’ of the town and she asks them if they have seen Solomon [Song of Songs 3:3](#).

It’s worth noting if a shepherd boy were intended by the Shulammite woman in this passage, the watchmen wouldn’t have as great of knowledge of his whereabouts. This is clear evidence that she is referring to the king, that is, Solomon, rather than a second man, a shepherd boy.

In Old Testament times, watchmen protected vineyards and fields during harvest season, [Jeremiah 31:6](#). They were posted on city walls, [2 Kings 9:17-20](#), and at city gates, [2 Samuel 18:24-27](#). The watchman also guarded the walls day and night against enemy attack or siege, [1 Samuel 14:16](#) / [Isaiah 21:6-8](#) / [Jeremiah 51:12](#), and he was responsible for warning the citizens of an impending attack by sounding a trumpet, [Jeremiah 6:17](#).

The Shulammite woman is told by the watchmen about Solomon’s whereabouts. Notice again that she uses the term, ‘the one my heart loves’, to describe Solomon, [Song of Songs 3:4](#). She used this term back in [Song of Songs 3:1](#) / [Song of Songs 1:7](#), and it is connected to the ‘king’ and the term ‘beloved’ back in [Song of Songs 1:12-13](#).

When she finds the one her ‘heart loves’, she holds him tightly so that she won’t lose him again, [Song of Songs 3:4](#).

It’s interesting to note that back in [Song of Songs 2:7](#), where we find the Shulammite woman being held in the comforting arms of her beloved and once again here in [Song of Songs 3:4](#), she’s holding on to him. The statement appears to mark an embracing moment in the song, [Song of Songs 8:3-4](#). She won’t let go of Solomon ‘till I had brought him to my mother’s house,’ [Song of Songs 3:4](#) / [Song of Songs 6:9](#) / [Song of Songs 8:2](#) / [Genesis 24:67](#).

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The ‘mother’s house’ is the women’s apartments, into which a strange man dare not enter.’

There’s no way she’s going to lose track of him again. What we have here is a picture of intense love between the Shulammite woman and Solomon. God wants us to love Him and devote ourselves to Him first, [Matthew 22:37](#), but He does bless us with godly wives and husbands, so we can devote ourselves to them too, [Ecclesiastes 9:9](#) / [Ephesians 5:21-31](#).

Once again we read the words, ‘Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires,’ [Song of Songs 3:5](#). The sexual passions of love shouldn’t be aroused and fulfilled unless it’s in the context of marriage, [Song of Songs 2:7](#) / [Song of Songs 8:4](#).

‘Who is this coming up from the wilderness like a column of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and incense made from all the spices of the merchant? Look! It is Solomon’s carriage, escorted by sixty warriors, the noblest of Israel, all of them wearing the sword, all experienced in battle, each with his sword at his side, prepared for the terrors of the night.’ Song Of Solomon 3:6-8

Here we read about the spectacular entrance of the Shulammitte woman into the royal city to wed Solomon. The resident, apparently the Shulammitte woman whom Solomon has summoned, fills the air with pleasant fragrances, such as perfume, myrrh, and incense, Song of Songs 3:6.

It appears that the Shulammitte woman has accepted Solomon's offer to come to the royal city and to be wed, Song of Songs 2:10. The question she asked about 'who is coming', Song of Songs 3:6, is now answered, 'Look! It is Solomon's carriage,' Song of Songs 3:7. The carriage would have been a portable bed or coach.

Notice that the carriage is accompanied by 'sixty warriors', Song of Songs 3:7. This would amount to one-tenth of the royal guard, 1 Samuel 27:2 / 1 Samuel 30:9. The sixty warriors and those experts in war, had a ready sword attached to their thigh, Song of Songs 3:8. The picture here is one of protection against any enemies in the wilderness and it's a picture of honour for the Shulammitte woman who is now riding in this special carriage.

'King Solomon made for himself the carriage; he made it of wood from Lebanon. Its posts he made of silver, its base of gold. Its seat was upholstered with purple, its interior inlaid with love. Daughters of Jerusalem, come out, and look, you daughters of Zion. Look on King Solomon wearing a crown, the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of his wedding, the day his heart rejoiced.' Song Of Solomon 3:9-11

It appears that Solomon had a special carriage to travel in and it's made of the costly wood from Lebanon, Song of Songs 3:9.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

'It is very likely that a nuptial bed, not a chariot, is intended by the original word appiryon. Montanus properly translates it sponsarum thalamum, a nuptial bed. It may, however, mean a palanquin.'

His travelling carriage is now used by his love, the Shulammitte woman and as the Shulammitte woman approaches the royal city with great splendour, all eyes are on her. She moves toward the royal 'palanquin' of Solomon's, that is the marriage bed. This bed would have been carried on poles on the shoulders of two or four men. It's obviously been given special attention in areas of workmanship. The bed has pillars of silver and a base of gold, Song of Songs 3:10. This is the love that exists between Solomon and the Shulammitte woman in preparation for their marriage. Keil and Delitzsch in their commentary make an interesting point here.

'Nowhere do we see her up to this point resisting; much rather she is happy in her love. The shepherd-hypothesis cannot comprehend this marriage procession without introducing incongruous and imaginary things.'

C. Cook in his commentary also has some interesting points here.

'If in other Scriptures are found words of indignation and wrath and terrible threatening, the characteristics of this Book are sweetness, cheerfulness, and joy, characteristics somewhat at variance with 'the hypothesis' so-called 'of the shepherd lover'. This hypothesis, held by many distinguished critics, assumes that there are two lovers in the Song, one a faithful simple-minded shepherd, the other a magnificent voluptuous king, by each of whom the affections of a Shulammitte maiden are alternately solicited; while she, faithful in her allegiance to her shepherd-lover, rejects with scorn the monarch's blandishments, and finally compel him to abandon his pursuit.'

Solomon's mother is Bathsheba, Song of Songs 3:11 / 1 Kings 1:11, and the use of the term 'daughters of Zion' Song of Songs 3:11, is used to distinguish them from the 'daughters of Jerusalem' found back in Song of Songs 1:5 / Song of Songs 3:5. The daughters of Zion are more likely to be the general population of Jewish women.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

'This is the exhortation of the companions of the bride to the females of the city to examine the superb appearance of the bridegroom, and especially the nuptial crown, which appears to have been made by Bathsheba, who it is supposed might have lived till the time of Solomon's marriage with the daughter of Pharaoh. It is conjectured that the prophet

refers to a nuptial crown, Isaiah 61:10. But a crown, both on the bride and bridegroom, was common among most people on such occasions. The nuptial crown among the Greeks and Romans was only a chaplet or wreath of flowers.’

Notice that the women are called upon to view two things.

1. The women of Zion were to look upon the king as his mother who put ‘the crown of his wedding’, Song of Songs 3:11.

The ‘crown’ and ‘his wedding’ have an apparent relationship to marriage and the wedding procedure. The word ‘wedding’ in Hebrew is ‘chathunnah’ and it means to give, a daughter, away in marriage, to contract affinity by marriage. This tells us that Bathsheba’s purpose for crowning Solomon wasn’t to pronounce him king but rather for giving him away in marriage. This is like the custom of some places today, instead, it’s usually the father of the bride who gives her, his daughter, away.

2. The wedding day and marriage was a day ‘the day his heart rejoiced’, Song of Songs 3:11.

The love and wedding between Solomon and the Shulammite woman were very public and there was a clear distinction to be made on this occasion with his other wives, Song of Songs 6:8-13.

CHAPTER 4

INTRODUCTION

‘How beautiful you are, my darling! Oh, how beautiful! Your eyes behind your veil are doves. Your hair is like a flock of goats descending from the hills of Gilead. Your teeth are like a flock of sheep just shorn, coming up from the washing. Each has its twin; not one of them is alone. Your lips are like a scarlet ribbon; your mouth is lovely. Your temples behind your veil are like the halves of a pomegranate. Your neck is like the tower of David, built with courses of stone; on it hang a thousand shields, all of them shields of warriors. Your breasts are like two fawns, like twin fawns of a gazelle that browse among the lilies.’ Song Of Solomon 4:1-5

It’s obvious that Solomon is physically attracted to the Shulammite woman and here we find him describing her physical beauty in seven different ways. He begins by describing her eyes, Song of Songs 4:1. Earlier he described her eyes and compared them to a dove, Song of Songs 1:15, but here they are seen behind a veil. The name Solomon means ‘peace’, the Shulammite woman later, is called ‘Shulammite’ which is the female form of the word for peace. The dove is often used as a symbol of peace.

He moves on to her hair and compares her hair to goats that have gathered upon the side of mount Gilead and have the appearance of long flowing hair alongside the mountain, Song of Songs 4:1. Goats in that region were dark-haired, almost black in colour. This gives us an idea of what the colour of Shulammite woman’s hair was. Although the words Solomon uses to describe the Shulammite woman’s physical beauty may seem foreign to us today, there’s no doubt that she would have really appreciated his thoughts, especially as she spent most of her life outdoors.

Solomon goes on to describe her beauty as seen by her teeth, and he says that her teeth are white as the sheep and perfect in their number, Song of Songs 4:2. Sheep wool is normally white, but the wool becomes gray from the dirt in the outdoors. Shearing the sheep exposes the clean, fresh wool underneath and a freshly bathed sheep is even whiter yet. So in a poetic way, Solomon is saying her teeth are pearly white.

He also says that there is beauty in her lips and mouth, her lips and mouth are attractive as is scarlet ribbon Song of Songs 4:3. Her temples can be seen and are compared to pomegranates for beauty, Song of Songs 4:3. Her

complexion is compared to a slice of ripe pomegranate, the flesh inside of a pomegranate is rosy colour, Song of Songs 4:3.

Her neck is described as the ‘tower of David’, Song of Songs 4:4. This tower is mentioned in Nehemiah 3:25 / Micah 4:8, as being repaired. Apparently, the tower was a very beautiful structure. This tower, in the city of Jerusalem, was used for hanging the armament of David’s elite guard, 1 Kings 1:8 / 2 Kings 24:14 / Ezekiel 27:10-11.

Solomon now goes on to describe the Shulammite woman’s breasts and describes them as fawns browsing among the lilies in a field, Song of Songs 4:5 / Song of Songs 2:17. By calling them twins, he says they are evenly matched and by referring to them as fawns, he gives the allusion to soft, gentle creatures that fills one with a desire to hold, Proverbs 5:18-19. But as gazelles, he acknowledges that he must approach quietly and gently or they may be frightened off.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The poet speaks the language of nature; and in a case of this kind, where the impassioned lover attempts to describe the different perfections of his bride, language often fails him, and his comparisons and similitudes are often without strict correctness. In love songs we have heard ladies’ necks compared to that of the swan, not only for its whiteness, but also for its length! The description here shows more of nature than of art, which I consider a high recommendation.’

It’s clear that Solomon is describing almost every part of the Shulammite woman’s physical body, he started from the top of her body and worked his way down to the toes. Although physical attraction is everything in a relationship, it’s certainly important. Two people who are thinking about getting married are usually physically attracted to each other.

Although the Bible doesn’t tell us that Eve was beautiful, we see from Adam’s reaction that she certainly was very attractive when God created her, Genesis 2:3. The Scriptures speak of the beauty of Rachael, Genesis 29:17, David, 1 Samuel 16:12, Abigail, 1 Samuel 25:3, Bathsheba, 2 Samuel 11:2, Esther, Esther 2:7, and Absalom, 2 Samuel 14:25.

‘Until the day breaks and the shadows flee, I will go to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of incense.’ Song Of Solomon 4:6

After all those compliments from Solomon, the Shulammite woman acknowledges his praise with the request to go into the mountains and hills where the myrrh and frankincense trees grow, Song of Songs 4:6. It appears that on this day she would be wed to Solomon but for now, she wants to meditate alone.

‘You are altogether beautiful, my darling; there is no flaw in you. Come with me from Lebanon, my bride, come with me from Lebanon. Descend from the crest of Amana, from the top of Senir, the summit of Hermon, from the lions’ dens and the mountain haunts of leopards. You have stolen my heart, my sister, my bride; you have stolen my heart with one glance of your eyes, with one jewel of your necklace. How delightful is your love, my sister, my bride! How much more pleasing is your love than wine, and the fragrance of your perfume more than any spice! Your lips drop sweetness as the honeycomb, my bride; milk and honey are under your tongue. The fragrance of your garments is like the fragrance of Lebanon. You are a garden locked up, my sister, my bride; you are a spring enclosed, a sealed fountain. Your plants are an orchard of pomegranates with choice fruits, with henna and nard, nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with every kind of incense tree, with myrrh and aloes and all the finest spices. You are a garden fountain, a well of flowing water streaming down from Lebanon.’ Song Of Solomon 4:7-15

Solomon has described the Shulammite woman physically in seven ways and comes to the conclusion that she is absolutely perfect, without any flaws, Song of Songs 4:7 / Ephesians 5:25-27. This is also the way that Absalom, David’s son was described, 2 Samuel 14:25.

If you remember Solomon referred to the Shulammite woman as ‘my darling’ back in Song of Songs 4:1, but here he calls her ‘my bride’, Song of Songs 4:8 / Song of Songs 4:9 / Song of Songs 4:10 / Song of Songs 4:11 / Song of Songs 4:12 / Song of Songs 5:1. It appears that the day of their wedding has arrived.

He asks her to sit upon the high mountains of royalty, Song of Songs 4:8, which was a place of comfort and protection. The crest of Amana was the same as Abana, one of the rivers of Syria mentioned by Naaman, 2 Kings 5:12. Senir is the Amorite designation of Mount Hermon, Deuteronomy 4:48.

The Shulammite woman has stolen Solomon's heart, Song of Songs 4:9, and he exclaims that he is overwhelmed by a single look and even one chain upon her neck, Song of Songs 4:9. The most modest of apparel worn by the right person can appear overwhelming, in a good sense.

The Shulammite is viewed not only as beautiful but to experience her love in the smells of aromatic fragrances is better than wine, Song of Songs 4:10. It appears that Solomon is looking at his bride and breathes in everything that the Shulammite is to him and she is indeed fulfilling and refreshing.

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The smell of her garments is like the fresh and healthy odour of the cedars, or, as we in England should say, of the pinewoods, Genesis 27:27 / Psalms 45:8. Honey and milk are most highly prized amongst Orientals, Isaiah 7:15.’ A garden locked up, a spring enclosed and a fountain sealed, Song of Songs 4:12, all mean that the Shulammite bride now belongs to Solomon, Proverbs 5:15-20. She is his garden sealed for his eyes and taste alone, Song of Songs 4:11. Solomon looks to the Shulammite woman as a garden that belongs to him and so, he now envisions his ravishing garden as a beautiful orchard of pomegranates, fruits, aromatic plants, and spices, Song of Songs 4:13-14 / Song of Songs 1:14.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The pomegranate was for the Jews a sacred fruit, and a characteristic product of the land of promise, Exodus 28:33-34 / Numbers 20:5 / Deuteronomy 8:8 / 1 Kings 7:18 / 1 Kings 7:20. It is frequently mentioned in the Song, and always in connection with the bride. It abounds to this day in the ravines of Lebanon.’

Indeed, this garden is a pleasant place to dwell, Song of Songs 4:15 / 1 Kings 4:33. A fountain within the garden gives life to all its waters, Song of Songs 4:15 / Revelation 22:1-2, and so, the Shulammite woman is viewed by Solomon as one who sustains his innermost desires and fulfils his every need.

Water, Song of Songs 4:15, is sometimes used to describe sexual intercourse in the Scriptures. For example, in Proverbs 5:15-20, Solomon warns of the unreasonableness of seeking sexual satisfaction with someone who isn't your wife. One should drink water, that is, have intercourse, with his own wife. The water in your own well is clean, pure, and refreshing.

‘Awake, north wind, and come, south wind! Blow on my garden, that its fragrance may spread everywhere. Let my beloved come into his garden and taste its choice fruits.’ Song Of Solomon 4:16

The Shulammite woman now continues the illustration used by Solomon in that she is compared to a garden with wonderful fruit and fragrances. She calls upon the wind to stir up the aromatic fragrances and send them to Solomon so that he would be pleased with her, Song of Songs 4:16.

Up until this point she has been saying, ‘Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires.’ Song of Songs 3:1-5 / Song of Songs 2:7, but now she invites Solomon to partake of his garden and to eat ‘his choice fruits’, Song of Songs 4:16. This means that she now belongs to Solomon and she is ready to consummate the marriage through the sexual union, 1 Corinthians 7:4.

CHAPTER 5

INTRODUCTION

‘I have come into my garden, my sister, my bride; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice. I have eaten my honeycomb and my honey; I have drunk my wine and my milk. Eat, friends, and drink; drink your fill of love.’ Song Of Solomon 5:1

As we begin this chapter we find that the very first verse reveals the climax of the Song Of Solomon. Remember what’s just happened in the previous chapter, it refers to its fruits and trees, this is the Shulammite woman herself, Song of Songs 4:12. She has called upon Solomon to come and partake of the garden, Song of Songs 5:1 / Song of Songs 4:16.

And now Solomon partakes of his bride’s love in a sexual union which belongs to married couples alone, Genesis 2:24 / 1 Corinthians 6:16 / Hebrews 13:4. The sexual union marked the wedding day of Israelite couples and afterwards would come the celebratory feasts with all of its guests, Song of Songs 5:1 / Genesis 29:28 / Judges 14:12 / Matthew 22:1-14 / Matthew 25:1-13.

Solomon thereby calls upon ‘friends’ to drink abundantly as guests of the wedding feast, Song of Songs 5:1 / Song of Solomon 3:11 / John 2:1-10.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘These are generally supposed to be the words of the bridegroom, after he returned from the nuptial chamber, and exhibited those signs of his wife’s purity which the customs of those times required. This being a cause of universal joy, the entertainment is served up and he invites his companions, and the friends of both parties, to eat and drink abundantly, as there was such a universal cause of rejoicing.’

It is God who gives His blessing to their union, Proverbs 18:22. It was God who created us and created sex for the enjoyment of husbands and wives, Ecclesiastes 9:9. Solomon and the Shulammite woman are now married!

‘I slept but my heart was awake. Listen! My beloved is knocking: ‘Open to me, my sister, my darling, my dove, my flawless one. My head is drenched with dew, my hair with the dampness of the night.’ I have taken off my robe—must I put it on again? I have washed my feet—must I soil them again? My beloved thrust his hand through the latch-opening; my heart began to pound for him. I arose to open for my beloved, and my hands dripped with myrrh, my fingers with flowing myrrh, on the handles of the bolt. I opened for my beloved, but my beloved had left; he was gone. My heart sank at his departure. I looked for him but did not find him. I called him but he did not answer.’ Song Of Solomon 5:2-6

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Some time may be supposed to have elapsed since the bride’s solemn espousals with the king Song of Songs 4:7-11. A transient cloud of doubt or estrangement is now passing over her soul, as by the relation of this dream she intimates to her friends.’

We don’t know how long Solomon and the Shulammite woman have been married at this point, but here we’re given a small insight into their married life. It appears that she has turned in for the night and is sleeping but her sleep is disrupted by the voice of Solomon, Song of Songs 5:2.

Her ‘beloved’, Solomon, Song of Songs 1:12-13, knocks at the door of the Shulammite woman, Song of Songs 5:2. Notice that Solomon refers to her as his ‘sister, darling, dove, and flawless one.’ The term sister, Song of Songs 5:2, was a common expression of closeness and love.

The word ‘flawless’ in Hebrew is ‘tam’ which means complete or perfect. This is an important word in this text because it tells us that Solomon wasn’t simply after the Shulammite woman because of her seven physical traits of beauty, Song of Songs 4:1-5, it also means that he was drawn to her inner beauty too, 1 Peter 3:1-6.

It appears he has travelled through the ‘night’ to see her and so has ‘dew’ in his hair, Song of Songs 5:2. It appears that the Shulammite woman rejected Solomon’s request to enter her room due to the fact that she had already removed her garments and washed her feet, Song of Songs 5:3. We must remember in those days floors weren’t covered with carpets. To get up meant having to wash the dirt off your feet again before climbing back into bed. In other words, she wasn’t willing to get up, put her clothes on, and soil her feet so that Solomon may come in. It’s interesting what’s happening here because before in the previous chapter, she illustrated her intense love and desires for Solomon, but now she isn’t even willing to come to the door to greet him. I wonder if they had their first marriage feud.

It’s possible that they had a serious disagreement about something and she is still upset with Solomon. Maybe she was upset with Solomon because he had been gone for so long but whatever the reason was, she was still upset and needed some time alone. This is a good lesson for us husbands today when our wives are upset with us, there are times we simply need to leave them alone until she’s ready to come out of the room and talk.

Remember this entire book is all about relationships between a man and a woman and so if the woman or the man in that relationship doesn’t act worthy of attention, and give the other person honour, affection, love, and praise, then it will be harder for the other to receive them. If all couples do is put one another down, and treat each other with no respect, then things just get harder within the relationship, 1 Peter 3:1-7.

The Shulammite woman, who is still in bed, didn’t want to put her clothes back on and dirty her feet, hears Solomon ‘thrust his hand through the latch-opening,’ Song of Songs 5:4. Notice it says that her ‘hands dripped with myrrh, my fingers with flowing myrrh,’ Song of Songs 5:5. Pouring a little of her favourite perfume on objects was common practice for married couples back then, it was Solomon’s way of saying, ‘I love you, I was here and I was thinking of you’. Solomon wasn’t trying to force his way in, he was quietly leaving a message before he left.

Whatever the reason she and Solomon fell out, is quickly forgotten because she now gets out of bed to unlock ‘the handles of the bolt’ in order for him to come in Song of Songs 5:5. Her ‘heart sank’ when she realizes she’s made a mistake in not letting him in because Solomon had gone Song of Songs 5:6.

Solomon had come to her in the night with sweet words of care, respect, and honour but she rejected him. It’s clear that Solomon felt upset by his bride and left the scene in sorrow. This is another lesson married couples must learn from, it’s all too easy to try and let your husband or wife know that you are upset with them, but the longer this attitude of selfishness and self-pity goes on, the longer it takes for the couple to get back together again, 1 Corinthians 7:5.

‘The watchmen found me as they made their rounds in the city. They beat me, they bruised me; they took away my cloak, those watchmen of the walls! Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you—if you find my beloved, what will you tell him? Tell him I am faint with love.’ Song Of Solomon 5:7-8

Notice that the Shulammite woman is searching for her ‘beloved’ in the ‘city’, Song of Songs 5:7, as opposed to the countryside where a so-called ‘shepherd lover’ would be located. This again reinforces the fact that this story has nothing to do with a ‘shepherd lover’, as some believe.

She now seeks help from the watchman, Song of Songs 5:7, just did she did in her troubling dream earlier, Song of Songs 3:3. However, this time the Shulammite woman isn’t consoled or helped, the watchmen mistake her for a prostitute or some other low-life looking for trouble and so they start to rough her up, but when her cloak is removed, Song of Songs 5:7. She doesn’t seem to care or to notice, the only thing on her mind is that she has to find Solomon. And so, to avert capture she struggles away from the men leaving her outer garment in their hands. Clarke, in his commentary, says the following, concerning the removal of her cloak.

‘They tore it off rudely, to discover who she was, Song of Solomon 5:2. To tear the veil signifies, in Eastern phrase, to deflower or dishonour a woman.’

She then goes to the daughters of Jerusalem, to see if they know what has happened to him Song of Songs 5:8. Earlier the Shulammite woman ‘charged’, that is commanded the daughters of Jerusalem to leave their love undisturbed, Song of Songs 2:7 / Song of Songs 3:5. She now calls upon these women to tell Solomon that she is sick over her love for him, Song of Songs 5:8.

‘How is your beloved better than others, most beautiful of women? How is your beloved better than others, that you so charge us?’ Song Of Solomon 5:9

Remember the daughters of Jerusalem longed to be with Solomon, they admired him greatly, Song of Songs 1:4-5. Here they ask the Shulammite woman, what is so special about Solomon? Why is he better than all other men? Song of Songs 5:9.

The daughters of Jerusalem acknowledge the Shulammite woman’s ‘charge’ with a question. They’re being called upon to tell Solomon how love-sick she is over him. They seem to want to know why the Shulammite is so enthralled by Solomon. In other words, they are saying, Solomon won’t return her love, so why not go after another ‘beloved’.

I wonder how wives would answer that question the same way today. How would you describe your husband? Would you say your husband is ‘affectionate, kind, gentle, show me honour and respect’ or would you say, ‘he never does this, that, or anything for me’, Proverbs 27:15.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following concerning Song of Songs 5:9-6:3.

‘Section 5:9–6:3: The bride’s commendation of the beloved. In the allegorical interpretations of Jewish expositors all is here spoken by exiled Israel of the Holy One whose praise she sings ‘by the waters of Babylon,’ Psalms 137:1. Christian interpreters apply the description directly to the Incarnate Son, partly in His Eternal Godhead, but chiefly in His risen and glorified Humanity.’

‘My beloved is radiant and ruddy, outstanding among ten thousand. His head is purest gold; his hair is wavy and black as a raven. His eyes are like doves by the water streams, washed in milk, mounted like jewels. His cheeks are like beds of spice yielding perfume. His lips are like lilies dripping with myrrh. His arms are rods of gold set with topaz. His body is like polished ivory decorated with lapis lazuli. His legs are pillars of marble set on bases of pure gold. His appearance is like Lebanon, choice as its cedars. His mouth is sweetness itself; he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, this is my friend, daughters of Jerusalem.’ Song Of Solomon 5:10-16

The Shulammite woman answers the daughters of Jerusalem’s question and it’s clear this is a description of a lovesick woman for a man to whom she had committed herself. Back in Song of Songs 4:1-5, Solomon revealed the sevenfold aspects of the Shulammite woman’s physical beauty and later in Song of Songs 7:1-5, the daughters of Jerusalem will describe her beauty too.

But here she now reveals her assessment of Solomon’s physical beauty. She describes Solomon as ‘radiant and ruddy, outstanding among ten thousand’, Song of Songs 5:10. She describes Solomon as ‘outstanding among ten thousand’, Song of Songs 5:10, which tells us that she not only loved Solomon but she also highly honours him, in that no one could ever take his place.

The Hebrew word for ‘radiant’ or ‘white’ as some translations use is ‘tsach’, and it means dazzling, white or bright. The Hebrew word for ‘ruddy’ is ‘adom’, which means red, which is having a healthy, reddish colour.

Solomon’s head is depicted as gold for splendour, Lamentations 4:2, and his hair was curly and black as a raven, Song of Songs 5:11. Solomon’s eyes are depicted as doves near water, Song of Solomon 4:1, the white in his eyes is like milk and set perfectly within his head like perfectly mounted jewels, Song of Songs 5:12. His cheeks and lips are admired and desired as well, Song of Songs 5:13.

With a spirit of fondness, she continues to reveal the strong and royal appearance of Solomon’s arms hands, Song of Songs 5:14 / Exodus 28:20. Note the KJV uses the word ‘hands.’

Clarke, in his commentary says the following concerning his hand.

‘This really seems to refer to gold rings set with precious stones on the fingers, and perhaps to circlets or bracelets about the wrists. Some suppose it to refer to the roundness and exquisite symmetry of the hand and fingers.’

Solomon’s body is like polished ivory decorated with lapis lazuli, Song of Songs 5:14. In other words, he is well shaped. His legs are like pillars of marble set on bases of pure gold and His appearance is like Lebanon, choice as its cedars, Song of Songs 5:15. In other words, his legs are strong. His mouth sweetness itself, Song of Songs 5:16. In other words, he speaks well and every word he speaks is simply full of sweetness and mildness.

They clearly still praise and honour each other, as well as still being physically attracted to each other. Notice also that Solomon isn’t only the one whom the Shulammite woman is physically attracted to but he is also her ‘friend’, Song of Songs 5:16. This is another lesson married couples can learn from Solomon and the Shulammite woman’s marriage. It’s good and healthy to still be physically attracted to each other, especially if you’ve been married for a while, but it’s also important to be friends, Proverbs 18:24.

Although Solomon is described as having a great body, we must remember that this isn’t the reason why the Shulammite woman wants Solomon so badly. The real reason for her love is because he is ‘her beloved and her friend,’ Song of Songs 5:16. Near the end of Solomon’s life in Ecclesiastes 4:9-11, he tells us that life doesn’t have much meaning without the companionship of a close friend.

CHAPTER 6

INTRODUCTION

‘Where has your beloved gone, most beautiful of women? Which way did your beloved turn, that we may look for him with you?’ Song Of Solomon 6:1

At the very beginning of the song, the daughters of Jerusalem longed to be with Solomon because they admired him greatly, Song of Songs 1:4-5. In the previous chapter, they asked the Shulammite woman what is so special about Solomon? Why is he better than all other men? Song of Songs 5:9.

Here we see that the daughters of Jerusalem aren’t totally heartless, they appear to have genuine care and concern for helping the Shulammite woman and so, they offer moral support to help the Shulammite woman find Solomon, Song of Songs 6:1.

‘My beloved has gone down to his garden, to the beds of spices, to browse in the gardens and to gather lilies. I am my beloved’s and my beloved is mine; he browses among the lilies.’ Song Of Solomon 6:2-3

The Shulammite woman assumes that Solomon has travelled ‘down to his garden’ Song of Songs 6:2. This is a physical garden, not a figurative one, Song of Songs 5:1. It appears that Solomon loved his garden with its flowers and so the Shulammite woman is sure that her beloved has gone there to meditate on the day’s events, Song of Songs 6:2.

She concludes by saying, ‘I am my beloved’s and my beloved is mine’, Song of Songs 6:3. It’s clear that they have a very strong bond together. A bond which was built on their mutual love, honour, physical attraction, and respect for each other which is a testament to their marital vows. Even though they have fallen out and separated, for reasons which we aren’t told about, Song of Songs 5:2-6, they know that their love is real.

This is another lesson that married couples can learn from. Every married couple will have their moments when they fall out and every married couple will have times when they upset each other, but what will help bring them back

together and keep them bonded is when they remember that ‘I am my beloved’s and my beloved is mine’, Song of Songs 6:3.

When they remember this, then nothing and no one will come between them, no matter what they’re going through. She repeats the phrase she said back in Song of Songs 2:16, to say that they belong to each other. However, there is a subtle difference here, before her hold on his love was foremost but now his hold on her love occupies her first thoughts, Song of Songs 6:3.

The Shulammite woman didn’t think the worst, she didn’t think that Solomon had run off with another woman. She knew in her heart exactly where Solomon would be, he’s browsing among the lilies, Song of Songs 6:3. Before they were married, Solomon would often spend time among the sheep in his garden when he needed time away from the hectic life of a king, Song of Songs 1:7.

Her earlier rejection of Solomon, Song of Songs 5:2-6, sent him to a quiet place where he could think. He went to the ‘bed of spices’, the Hebrew word for ‘spices’ is ‘bosem’, this is a herb used for healing wounds and he needed time to heal the wounds she gave to his spirit.

‘You are as beautiful as Tirzah, my darling, as lovely as Jerusalem, as majestic as troops with banners. Turn your eyes from me; they overwhelm me. Your hair is like a flock of goats descending from Gilead. Your teeth are like a flock of sheep coming up from the washing. Each has its twin, not one of them is missing. Your temples behind your veil are like the halves of a pomegranate.’ Song Of Solomon 6:4-7

Here we find Solomon praising his bride, the Shulammite woman once again, Song of Songs 4:1-5. Her beauty is compared to two principal and beautiful cities within Israel. The first, Tirzah, Song of Songs 6:4, was the main royal city before Samaria and Jerusalem and is known as the ‘perfection of beauty’ among the Israelites, Joshua 12:24 / Psalms 50:2 / Lamentations 2:15.

Notice that Solomon isn’t only captivated by the Shulammite woman’s beauty but he is also captivated by her strength. He says she is ‘majestic as troops with banners’, Song of Songs 6:4, which means he sees her as a confident army marching to war with their banners flying. She has the air of a great and beautiful conqueror about her. It appears that Solomon is stunned by her beauty and noble approach to life and so he requests that she turn her eyes away from him so that he doesn’t get overcome with lovesickness, Song of Songs 6:5. This doesn’t mean that he restrains himself from her because she doesn’t belong to him but because he has work to do and her very being can’t interfere with his royal duties.

In other words, a husband can be love-sick for his wife but the husband has to maintain his responsibilities in life. Solomon shows the type of love all husbands should have for their wives, Ephesians 5:25.

He compares her hair to goats that have gathered upon the side of mount Gilead and have the appearance of long flowing hair alongside the mountain, Song of Songs 6:5 / Song of Songs 1:8 / Song of Songs 4:1. Goats in that region were dark-haired, almost black in colour. This gives us an idea of what the colour of Shulammite woman’s hair was. Although the words Solomon uses to describe the Shulammite woman’s physical beauty may seem foreign to us today, there’s no doubt that she would have really appreciated his thoughts, especially as she spent most of her life outdoors.

Solomon goes on to describe her beauty as seen by her teeth, and he says that her teeth are white as the sheep and perfect in their number, Song of Songs 6:6 Song of Songs 4:2. Sheep wool is normally white, but the wool becomes gray from the dirt in the outdoors. Shearing the sheep exposes the clean, fresh wool underneath and a freshly bathed sheep is even whiter yet. So in a poetic way, Solomon is saying her teeth are pearly white.

Her temples can be seen and are compared to pomegranates for beauty, Song of Songs 6:7 / Song of Songs 4:3. Her complexion is compared to a slice of ripe pomegranate, Song of Songs 6:7 / Song of Songs 4:3, the flesh inside of a pomegranate is rosy colour.

‘Sixty queens there may be, and eighty concubines, and virgins beyond number; but my dove, my perfect one, is unique, the only daughter of her mother, the favourite of the one who bore her. The young women saw her and called her blessed; the queens and concubines praised her.’ Song Of Solomon 6:8-9

Earlier the Shulammitte woman said that Solomon is ‘outstanding among ten thousand’, [Song of Songs 5:10](#), and that ‘he is altogether lovely’, [Song of Songs 5:16](#). Solomon now looks to the Shulammitte woman as one who stands out among the masses of women. Solomon speaks of his sixty queens and eighty concubines, and virgins beyond number, [Song of Songs 6:8](#), those who were a part of his harem, but yet the Shulammitte woman is ‘my dove, my perfect one and unique,’ [Song of Songs 6:9](#).

In [1 Kings 11:1-3](#), we learn that there were seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines among the women in Solomon’s court. It appears that Solomon’s relationship with the Shulammitte occurs somewhere at the beginning of his kingship. All the women in the king’s court recognised the Shulammitte woman as Solomon’s preferred bride. The interpretation of this book as being an allegory with Solomon representing God or Christ and the Shulammitte his bride or church falls apart here. Solomon was a sinful man who violated God’s marital law principles, the Lord is not one with sin, [Deuteronomy 17:17](#) / [1 John 3:5](#).

‘Who is this that appears like the dawn, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, majestic as the stars in procession? I went down to the grove of nut trees to look at the new growth in the valley, to see if the vines had budded or the pomegranates were in bloom. Before I realized it, my desire set me among the royal chariots of my people.’ Song Of Solomon 6:10-12

Although Solomon and the Shulammitte woman have been on an interesting relationship journey together in this book, the daughters of Jerusalem have also been on an interesting relationship journey with the Shulammitte woman.

Remember they were originally in competition with the Shulammitte woman for Solomon’s love, [Song of Songs 1:2-7](#) and they went on to ridicule her, [Song of Songs 1:8](#).

Their perception of the Shulammitte woman is changed once Solomon publicly illustrates his desire for her, [Song of Songs 2:4-7](#) / [Song of Songs 3:6-11](#). They confess that she is the most beautiful among women, [Song of Songs 5:9](#).

They offer to help her, [Song of Songs 6:1](#). Here, we find them praising her beauty. Notice that the daughters of Jerusalem praise the Shulammitte in four areas.

1. She ‘appears like the dawn,’ [Song of Songs 6:10](#).

She overcomes the darkness of night with her presence in the garden.

2. She is ‘fair as the moon,’ [Song of Songs 6:10](#).

When we look to the moon in the heavens, we see the beauty of creation.

3. She is as ‘bright as the sun,’ [Song of Songs 6:10](#).

The purity of the soul is compared with the purity of the sun burning and glowing with perfect heat.

4. She is ‘majestic as the stars in procession,’ [Song of Songs 6:10](#).

She walks with the nobility and confidence of a feared and victorious army.

The Shulammitte goes to the garden to see how the plants are doing, [Song of Songs 6:11](#), and it appears that the vines and pomegranates were of interest to her, [Song of Songs 6:11](#). She obviously enjoyed watching the new growth come upon the vines and fruit trees. To watch the progress of plant life is to witness and enjoy nature.

It’s at this point that the ‘shepherd lover’ hypothesis approach to interpreting this book looks to the Shulammitte woman as being abducted, in a state of unconsciousness, by Solomon’s chariot and taken to the royal city that she may be seduced by Solomon, [Song of Songs 6:12](#).

However, if we remember, Solomon and the Shulammitte woman have been separated due to the Shulammitte woman shunning Solomon, [Song of Songs 5:2-3](#). Rather than being abducted by Solomon the Song portrays the Shulammitte woman’s voluntarily going in the chariot to see her beloved, [Song of Songs 6:12](#).

‘Come back, come back, O Shulammitte; come back, come back, that we may gaze on you! Why would you gaze on the Shulammitte as on the dance of Mahanaim?’ Song Of Solomon 6:13

The Shulammitte’s name is given for the first time in the book. It’s not a name as we understand it but a name that indicates her descent and thereby one to which we may refer to, Song of Songs 6:13.

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The title Shulamite is derived from the town-name Shulem (otherwise spelled ‘Shunem’), from which Abishag, the fairest maiden of her day, came, 1 Kings 1:4, obviously it is another way of calling her ‘fairest among women’, Song of Songs 1:8 / Song of Songs 5:9 / Song of Songs 6:1.’

The Shulammitte woman was being taken from the garden to the royal palace in Solomon’s chariot, Song of Songs 6:12. Apparently, the daughters of Jerusalem are pleading with her to come back so that they may behold her beauty. She appears to hear the cries of the daughters of Jerusalem and asks them, ‘Why would you gaze on the Shulammitte as on the dance of Mahanaim?’ Song of Songs 6:13. The daughters of Jerusalem see the beauty of the Shulammitte woman as the beautiful angelic dance of Mahanaim.

Keil and Delitzsch in their commentary, says the following.

‘This dance derives its name from the town named Mahanaim which derived its name from Jacob’s vision of two encampments of angels that came to protect him, Genesis 32:1-2. There is beauty in such an angelic dance’.

CHAPTER 7

INTRODUCTION

‘How beautiful your sandaled feet, O prince’s daughter! Your graceful legs are like jewels, the work of an artist’s hands. Your navel is a rounded goblet that never lacks blended wine. Your waist is a mound of wheat encircled by lilies. Your breasts are like two fawns, like twin fawns of a gazelle. Your neck is like an ivory tower. Your eyes are the pools of Heshbon by the gate of Bath Rabbim. Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon looking toward Damascus. Your head crowns you like Mount Carmel. Your hair is like royal tapestry; the king is held captive by its tresses.’
Song Of Solomon 7:1-5

Earlier the daughters of Jerusalem voiced their views of the Shulammitte woman’s beauty back in Song of Songs 5:9 and back in Song of Songs 6:10-12. In the previous chapter, they view her beauty as angelic in form while dancing, Song of Songs 6:13.

It appears that the Shulammitte woman danced, and the daughters of Jerusalem are utterly in awe of her beauty. Her beauty is seen from her feet to her head, and a total of ten body parts are described. Ten is a special number among the Hebrews as it represents things that are complete. Hence the daughters of Jerusalem are implying that nothing is lacking in her.

The first part of her body they noticed was her ‘sandaled feet’, Song of Songs 7:1. They admired both the beauty of her feet and her sandals. In other words, she has the beautiful feet of a princess. They go on to describe her ‘legs’, which are precisely formed as if carved by a jeweller Song of Songs 7:1. It’s possible that she wore some kind of ornaments around her knees or legs, as was the custom of women at this time, Isaiah 3:18-23.

Her ‘navel’ brings satisfaction and her ‘waist’ is narrow and white, like a bundle of wheat tied with lilies, Song of Songs 7:2. Wine and wheat were the basic foods of any meal.

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The Talmud states that the proportions for mixed wine (RV) were two-thirds water, one-third wine. In Syria, the colour of wheat is considered to be the most beautiful for a human body.’

Ainsworth, in his commentary, says the following concerning the wheat tied with lilies, Song of Songs 7:2.

‘The metaphor is taken from a pregnant woman; the child in the womb being nourished by means of the umbilical cord or navel string, till it is brought into the world. After which it is fed by means of the mother’s breasts, which are immediately mentioned. Possibly the whole may allude to the bride’s pregnancy.’

The Shulammite woman’s ‘breasts’ are described as fawns, Song of Songs 7:3 / Song of Songs 1:13 / Song of Songs 4:5 / Song of Songs 7:8. They are called twins because they are evenly matched and by referring to them as fawns, this gives us the allusion to soft, gentle creatures that fills one with a desire to hold, Proverbs 5:18-19. Gazelles must be approached quietly and gently or they may be frightened off.

Her ‘neck’ is like a tower of ivory, Song of Songs 7:4 / Song of Songs 4:4, possibly comparing it to one of the towers which Solomon built, 1 Kings 10:18, it’s white and stately, showing dignity in character. The idea with this image isn’t so much of an extremely long neck, but of one that speaks of nobility and strength of character.

Her ‘eyes’ are like the pools in Heshbon, Song of Songs 7:4. In other words, they are large and clear, possibly blue in colour. Among the ruins to the south of Heshbon still remain several deep wells cut in the rock and a large reservoir of water.

Her ‘nose’ is like the tower of Lebanon, Song of Songs 7:4, that is, stately. We don’t know if this is a literal tower or not, it’s possible it’s speaking of ‘the house of the forest of Lebanon’ or part of it, 1 Kings 7:2 / 1 Kings 9:19, built by Solomon in the early part of his reign or possibly a watchtower erected by David to overawe Damascus after his war with Hadadezer, 2 Samuel 8:6. The reference here speaks more of the colour of the Shulammite woman’s nose than the size or shape of it.

Her ‘head’ is as majestic as a mountain and the beauty of her ‘hair’ is so striking that it can only be related to royalty, Song of Songs 7:5, that is possibly purple in colour. Notice that the daughters of Jerusalem observe that it’s due to her beauty that the ‘king is held captive by its tresses,’ Song of Songs 7:5. The word, ‘tresses’ in Hebrew is ‘rahat’ and it means to run or flow, which means her hair has the appearance of running, rippling water. This surely tells us that it’s not Solomon who is attempting to seduce the Shulammite here but rather the daughters of Jerusalem praising the Shulammite woman’s beauty.

‘How beautiful you are and how pleasing, my love, with your delights! Your stature is like that of the palm, and your breasts like clusters of fruit. I said, ‘I will climb the palm tree; I will take hold of its fruit.’ May your breasts be like clusters of grapes on the vine, the fragrance of your breath like apples, and your mouth like the best wine. May the wine go straight to my beloved, flowing gently over lips and teeth.’ Song Of Solomon 7:6-9

It appears from these verses that Solomon and the Shulammite woman are now reunited after their falling out, Song of Songs 5:2-3. Solomon sees his beloved wife and immediately praises her beauty, Song of Songs 7:6. Notice that his description is more sensual than on the night of their wedding, Song of Songs 5:1. It’s clear they are now familiar with each other and aren’t embarrassed to enjoy any part of each other. We get the impression that they also play around more in their lovemaking.

Solomon compares his wife to a palm tree with her breast being ripe fruit waiting to be picked, Song of Songs 7:7 / Song of Songs 8:6-7. He starts down at her feet and slides up her body, taking time to enjoy the tenderness of her breasts, the fragrance of her breath, Song of Songs 7:8, and the intoxicating kisses from her lips, Song of Songs 7:9 / Proverbs 23:31.

Solomon knows that nothing satisfies the soul of man like love. Love fulfils one’s innermost desires in man’s emotional, physical, and spiritual being. Love will always manifest itself in words and actions. He isn’t merely infatuated with his bride but he is head over hills in love with her. Every part of her being captured his attention. The

Shulammitte woman's stature, breasts, breath, and mouth fulfil his deep inner cravings for his wife. When Solomon looks at her, the Shulammitte woman is everything that a woman should be.

'I belong to my beloved, and his desire is for me. Come, my beloved, let us go to the countryside, let us spend the night in the villages. Let us go early to the vineyards to see if the vines have budded, if their blossoms have opened, and if the pomegranates are in bloom—there I will give you my love. The mandrakes send out their fragrance, and at our door is every delicacy, both new and old, that I have stored up for you, my beloved.' Song Of Solomon 7:10-13

This is the third expression of unity between the Shulammitte woman and Solomon, Song of Songs 7:10. While it essentially says the same thing back in Song of Songs 2:16, and Song of Songs 6:3, it's slightly different. She is now fully secure in her relationship with her husband and she has fully lost herself in him.

Solomon has left no doubts within the Shulammitte woman's mind regarding his feelings for her. The Shulammitte woman is the queen of his life and he remains her beloved, Song of Songs 7:10. When two people have such strong mutual feelings toward each other and they reveal this, the relationship is healthy.

Solomon's bride doesn't appear to be forcefully abducted here, she is obviously just as happy to see Solomon as he is to see her, Song of Songs 7:10. It's clear that their absence from each other has heightened their desire to be with each other, Song of Songs 5:2-6.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

'It has been conjectured that the bridegroom arose early every morning, and left the bride's apartment, and withdrew to the country; often leaving her asleep, and commanding her companions not to disturb her till she should awake of herself. Here the bride wishes to accompany her spouse to the country and spend a night at his country house.'

The Shulammitte woman suggests that the two of them go to the garden, Song of Songs 7:11, and view the new growth of vegetation together and partake of each other's love, Song of Songs 7:12. She has apparently set aside various fruits and planned this special time together, in order that they may both enjoy each other and the garden's fruits.

'Mandrakes', Song of Songs 7:13, also known as 'love apples', and they were considered to be aphrodisiacs, Genesis 30:14-16. This will be a sensual moment of pleasure for the two of them which is again healthy for married couples. This tells us that the sexual part of the marital relationship isn't just for procreation but can also be used to enjoy each other's love and affection.

CHAPTER 8

INTRODUCTION

'If only you were to me like a brother, who was nursed at my mother's breasts! Then, if I found you outside, I would kiss you, and no one would despise me. I would lead you and bring you to my mother's house—she who has taught me. I would give you spiced wine to drink, the nectar of my pomegranates. His left arm is under my head and his right arm embraces me. Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you: Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires.' Song Of Solomon 8:1-4

After making love together, Song of Songs 7:10-13, the Shulammitte woman longs to spend more time with Solomon as a sister and brother do early in life, Song of Songs 8:1. Now that they're in the countryside, Song of Songs 7:10,

away from all the busy life of the king and queen, they want to spend some time together and kiss each other with no one to despise her, **Song of Songs 8:1**.

Notice that the Shulammite woman is expressing a desire to be taught wisdom rather than personifying it, **Isaiah 54:13**. This tells us the theory about the Shulammite woman being ‘wisdom personified’, can’t be a correct interpretation. Once again she expresses a desire to bring him to her mother’s house, **Song of Songs 8:2 / Song of Songs 3:4**. Here the implication is that in this secure place she would make love with her husband. She’s saying that her mother taught her some things in regard to lovemaking, but she’s interested in learning some ideas from her husband. The wine mentioned here is the freshly squeezed juice of the pomegranate, **Song of Songs 8:2 / Psalm 104:15**. The rejoicing isn’t in drunkenness but rather in the blessings of such grand taste and availability. Both Solomon and the Shulammite woman enjoy a long embrace in each other’s arms, **Song of Songs 8:3 / Song of Songs 2:6**.

Notice she says, ‘Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you: Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires,’ **Song of Songs 8:4 / Song of Solomon 2:7 / Song of Solomon 3:5**. This exact phrase was used back in **Song of Songs 2:6-7**, where the Shulammite woman is comforted by Solomon after being chosen above all other women available to the king. She was comforted back then and she is being comforted here too. She charges the daughters of Jerusalem, not to disturb their moment of love. She’s in the arms of her beloved and there’s no other place she would rather be.

‘Who is this coming up from the wilderness leaning on her beloved? Under the apple tree I roused you; there your mother conceived you, there she who was in labour gave you birth. Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm; for love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame. Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot sweep it away. If one were to give all the wealth of one’s house for love, it would be utterly scorned.’ **Song Of Solomon 8:5-7**

It appears that the Shulammite woman finally has Solomon in her homeland and the two are alone. They are seen by the villagers who exclaim, ‘Who is this coming up from the wilderness leaning on her beloved?’ **Song of Songs 8:5**. These villagers see Solomon and the Shulammite from far away, but they don’t recognise them.

Meanwhile, Solomon and the Shulammite woman remind each other of the time and place where their love was first born, **Song of Songs 8:5**. This isn’t referring to the place of her physical birth but the birthplace of their love, **Song of Songs 2:3**, under the very apple tree that they are now at. The apple tree is seen as the sweetheart tree and their love was awakened in romance, just as Solomon was born in romance, **2 Samuel 12:24**. His parents were as deeply in love as she and Solomon.

She wants to be like a seal over Solomon’s heart, **Song of Songs 8:6**. In those days, a person didn’t sign documents with an ink pen. Each person had a personal seal, usually a small cylinder of stone with etchings on it. The stone was rolled over soft clay to make an impression and indicated that it was from the person. Seals were valuable possessions and if someone else acquired it, it was possible for them to forge documents in their name. To keep a seal safe, it was typical to bind it close to the body, such as strapping it to the chest or tying it around the upper arm.

Bullinger, in his commentary, says the following.

‘It was worn round the neck, **Genesis 38:18 / Genesis 38:25**, or worn on the right hand, **Jeremiah 22:24 / Haggai 2:2 / Haggai 2:3**.’

By comparing herself to a seal, she’s saying that she wants to be Solomon’s valued personal possession, someone he treasured, **Ephesians 5:29**, and doesn’t want to lose. A binding above the heart shows an emotional bond between them. The binding of the arm shows a strong relationship that isn’t easily broken, in other words, the Shulammite woman requests that Solomon take her as a possession that is inseparably connected to his very being, that is his heart and arm.

Such a position within his heart is compared to the possession of death as the grave and jealousy, **Song of Songs 8:6**, as it captures and holds hostage one who has intense feelings for another. The intensity of love is looked upon as

‘blazing fire’, **Song of Songs 8:6**. In other words, she would be held so tightly in Solomon’s heart as to become one with him. The intense fire of love that burns within the hearts of two married people can’t possibly be quenched by the greatest of floods, **Song of Songs 8:7 / 1 Corinthians 13:4-8**.

If we learn anything from these verses, it’s simply this, there should be a strong bond between a husband and wife, this is what a marriage is supposed to look like, the two have become one, **Matthew 19:4-6 / Ephesians 5:28-31**. This is a picture of a married couple who are simply inseparable, **Matthew 19:6**.

‘We have a little sister, and her breasts are not yet grown. What shall we do for our sister on the day she is spoken for? If she is a wall, we will build towers of silver on her. If she is a door, we will enclose her with panels of cedar.’
Song Of Solomon 8:8-9

Brothers of early Hebrew families would play the part of teachers toward younger sisters. In other words, the Shulammite woman desires to be taught Solomon’s wisdom as a brother would teach his sister. She desires to know better how to be a just and perfect wife and godly woman, **Proverbs 31:10-31**.

The Shulammite woman asks a question on behalf of her brothers and in light of her current state of love and marriage. She reminisces back to the day when she was but a little girl with no breasts **Song of Songs 8:8**. During this time no one worried about who would court her or pursue her love.

However, through the process of time, that little no breasted girl blossoms into a woman and young men begin to pursue her interest. What shall her brothers do in such a time? **Song of Songs 8:8**. It’s interesting to note that it was a girl’s brothers who took precedence over the father and mother when it came to her marriage, **Genesis 24:50-67 / Genesis 34:1-14**.

Remember in the beginning, the Shulammite woman appeared to be frustrated with the careful and strict treatment of her brothers, **Song of Songs 1:6**, but here, she appears to realise that they performed their loving duty toward her as her brothers. The brothers answer the question posed by the Shulammite woman and they answer if she, their little sister, grew up to be like a wall, **Song of Songs 8:9**, that is, impenetrable by the forwardness of lustful men, then they shall honour her with towers of silver.

On the other hand, if their little sister becomes like a door that swings upon its hinges, **Song of Songs 8:9 / Proverbs 7:11-12**, that is, seems willing to open herself to the lustful advances of men, they will board her up with cedar so that she can’t be defiled, **Song of Songs 8:9**.

Waddey, in his commentary, says the following.

‘In the days of her adolescence, they were concerned to protect her innocence and purity until she was of marriageable age. ‘If she be a wall,’ meant that she would be strong and virtuous, and that no man would be able to seduce her. ‘If she be a door,’ meant that she would be weak and easily ‘entered,’ as through a door, by some seducer.’

Those who have younger sisters have clearly got a responsibility to care for them, we should encourage them to stay pure and undefiled from sexual immorality. Those who are in a relationship with a young woman should also understand that not only are that young girl’s father and brothers watching over them but so is God, her heavenly Father, **1 Corinthians 6:12-20**.

‘I am a wall, and my breasts are like towers. Thus I have become in his eyes like one bringing contentment. Solomon had a vineyard in Baal Hamon; he let out his vineyard to tenants. Each was to bring for its fruit a thousand shekels of silver. But my own vineyard is mine to give; the thousand shekels are for you, Solomon, and two hundred are for those who tend its fruit.’ Song Of Solomon 8:10-12

To the joy of her brothers, the Shulammite woman declares that she was that impenetrable wall that her brothers wanted to honour, **Song of Songs 8:10 / Song of Songs 8:8-9**. She didn’t allow herself to be taken in by any lustful men, no one could seduce her.

And although her breasts brought the attention of enemies, like a tower upon a wall she remained pure and undefiled, **Song of Songs 8:10 / Song of Songs 6:10**. The phrase ‘I have become in his eyes like one bringing contentment,’ **Song of Songs 8:10**, is a joke in Hebrew. The name Solomon means ‘peace’ and she found ‘contentment’ or peace as some translations have it, in Solomon. This is why she is known as ‘Shulammite’, the female version of the Hebrew word for peace, **Song of Songs 6:13**.

This also tells us a lot about Solomon’s actions towards her. He obviously treated her with the honour that she demanded and in no way was allowed to approach her in lustful ways. He treated her with honour and dignity rather than as an object of one’s lust, as some men treat women today.

The Shulammite woman goes on to compare herself to a true vineyard that Solomon rented out for a ‘thousand shekels of silver’ in Baal Hamon, **Song of Songs 8:11**. Her ‘vineyard’, that is, her own person belongs to Solomon, hence why he receives the full thousand shekels of silver, **Song of Songs 8:12**.

Even though she didn’t like working in the vineyard, **Song of Songs 1:6**, without being there, she would have never met Solomon. She may have thought her brothers were mean, **Song of Songs 1:5-6**, but she now sees that they had protected her. She wants Solomon to remember those who ‘tend the vineyard’, **Song of Songs 8:12**, that is, her brothers, who so lovingly protected and cared for her.

It’s important to note that she doesn’t necessarily ask Solomon to give these brothers money but rather reminds him to be thankful to them for their careful watch and development of such a sister that has turned out to be a jewel among women, **Song of Songs 6:8-9**.

‘You who dwell in the gardens with friends in attendance, let me hear your voice! Come away, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or like a young stag on the spice-laden mountains.’ **Song Of Solomon 8:13-14**

It appears that Solomon has been quietly listening to the Shulammite woman’s requests and his answer appears to meet it with approval. Solomon requests that she would sing him a song of love. Solomon used to go to the gardens with his sheep to get a few moments of peace, **Song of Solomon 6:2**. His garden is still his sanctuary but it’s his wife who brings him peace.

It has been years since their engagement but he still longs for the sound of her voice, **Song of Songs 8:13 / Song of Songs 2:14**. If we cast our minds back to the beginning of the book, we remember it began with a song, **Song of Songs 1:2-4**, and here it ends the book with a song.

Notice that the last words of her song, **Song of Songs 8:14**, are almost the same words she used back in **Song of Songs 2:17**, however, there is one significant change. Back in **Song of Songs 2:17**, she refers to ‘the rugged hills’, which is a reference to ‘the hills of Bether’, that is, the hills of division.

Here, she refers to ‘the spice-laden mountains’, which is a reference to the mountains of Besamim, that is, a mountain of spices. In other words, she no longer thinks of the possibility of separation, where Solomon liked to hang out, was where she liked to hang out, **Song of Songs 4:6**.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The ‘Mountains of Bether’ (division) of **Song of Songs 2:17**, are now ‘Mountains of Besamim’ (spices). His haunts and hers are henceforth the same, **Song of Songs 4:6**.

CONCLUSION

The Song of Solomon really is a beautiful love story about Solomon and the Shulammite woman. Although they eagerly desired each other in the beginning, they resisted the temptation of sleeping together, Song of Songs 2:17 / **Song of Songs 3:6**, until they were married, **Song of Songs 5:1**.

It's such a shame that many couples get together and live together but when they decide to get married, the time of sexual union isn't as exciting as it could have been because they have already had a sexual union together.

When couples are going through problems in their marriage, I usually encourage them to read this book together. The husband reads Solomon's words and the wife reads the Shulammite woman's words. This brings a few giggles but it certainly encourages them to 'check out' their partners again and it reminds them of when they first met and fell in love with each other.

When was the last time you told your husband or wife that they are beautiful, not just physically but spiritually too? Ecclesiastes 4:9-12.