

The Song of Songs

Lesson 11: She's a Beauty

Intro:

Don't fall in love, she's a beauty
One in a million girls a beauty
Why would I lie? Why would I lie?
"She's a Beauty" by The Tubes

"For beauty is a bonus that makes our world a better place." **Tom Gledhill**⁸⁷

BIG IDEA: Men do well to not only _____, but _____, their wives.

He

4 You are beautiful as Tirzah, my love,
lovely as Jerusalem,
awesome as an army with banners.

5 Turn away your eyes from me,
for they overwhelm me—

Your hair is like a flock of goats
leaping down the slopes of Gilead.

6 Your teeth are like a flock of ewes
that have come up from the washing;
all of them bear twins;
not one among them has lost its young.

7 Your cheeks are like halves of a pomegranate
behind your veil.

8 There are sixty queens and eighty concubines,
and virgins without number.

9 My dove, my perfect one, is the only one,
the only one of her mother,
pure to her who bore her.

The young women saw her and called her blessed;
the queens and concubines also, and they praised her.

10 "Who is this who looks down like the dawn,
beautiful as the moon, bright as the sun,
awesome as an army with banners?"

- Some commentators believe that she is _____ in front of him.⁸⁸
- Two cities and an army make strange comparisons for a beautiful woman.

⁸⁷ Gledhill, pp. 194.

⁸⁸ Gledhill, pp. 190.

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- **Tirzah:** “She is my delight” This was the name of a daughter of Zelophehad (Numbers). It was the capital of the northern _____ just after the split. Described as having great _____ & _____ beauty.



- **Jerusalem:** the capital of the united kingdom, and the southern kingdom after the kingdom divided. The sight of Jerusalem evoked joy and awe (Ps. 50:2; 122)
- This may reflect a date after Solomon’s death. She is beautiful as the 2 capital cities.
- The army with banners incites _____, and _____. We are often _____ by the beauty of women.
- Perhaps she is like a capital city to be taken: a great prize and “conquest”.⁸⁹
- There are moments we don’t want to be seen by our women. He is _____ by her _____.
- 5b and 6a reflect 4:12. She has long, flowing _____ and good _____.
- Her temple or cheeks are _____, like a pomegranate behind her veil.
- He lists 3 classes of women, probably reflecting the classes within the _____ household: queens, concubines and virgins (concubines in the future?). Decreasing _____.

⁸⁹ Kinlaw, pp. 1235.

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- **Queens** are the _____ wives of the king. They could bear _____ to the throne.
- **Concubines** are _____ wives. She was often a slave or taken in warfare. She also could be a woman w/out a bride price or _____. Any children would often be born “on the knees” of the legal wife to legitimacy.
- **Virgins** (‘alma- the word used in Isaiah 7) is less clear. These were the _____ women of the court, often pursued by _____.
- Solomon had _____ wives and _____ concubines (1 Kings 11:3). He could only hope to _____ them, not _____ them.
- She is superior to them all. They will all _____ her in verse 9.
- She is innocent like a dove, and an only child. (note the brothers in a previous poem- don’t expect continuity). Some say “only daughter.”



“Beauty is a gift on loan to us as it were, to be received and cultivated with joy. To recognize its transitory and ephemeral nature is not to denigrate it, however.” **Tom Gledhill**⁹⁰

Allegorical Interpretation: Jesus is speaking favorably of the Church. She is an army in the world (church militant). It is also an object of His love. We are positionally perfect in Christ. She is united in Christ and the light of the world.

Dramatic Interpretation: He returns her “insult” with blessing and affirmation (what happened to his pity party?). She is able to conquer him with her eyes. He inherited the harem from David,

⁹⁰ Glehill, pp. 194.

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and didn't know them in a biblical sense. He sees her as the supreme beauty in the realm. She also has superior love-making skills (not sure how he got there).

“You know, girls, a prostitute is skilled in all the techniques of giving sexual pleasure to a man she does not even know or love. If they can do that for a man they do not even know or love, just for money, surely we should be even more skilled in giving sexual pleasure to our husbands whom we do love.”⁹¹

Typological Interpretation: Christ affirms His Bride, and its members, as a husband affirms his wife. We don't make things up but speak what is truly there. Christ praises the effects of grace upon us.

She

11 I went down to the nut orchard
to look at the blossoms of the valley,
to see whether the vines had budded,
whether the pomegranates were in bloom.

12 Before I was aware, my desire set me
among the chariots of my kinsman, a prince.

Others

13 Return, return, O Shulammitte,
return, return, that we may look upon you.

He

Why should you look upon the Shulammitte,
as upon a dance before two armies?

- This is a difficult passage. Translations and commentators differ on who speaks verse 11. NIV has it as the _____.
- “*Orchard*” construct of the more common word translated “_____.” It is often used to represent her _____, which explains the NIV's choice.
- She brings us to the cultivated _____ in the spring with everything in blossom.
- One commentator, Pope, notes the connection between _____ and genitalia. A _____ nut represented the male's, and the _____ nut the female's.
- She is _____ the man's body, including his private parts.



⁹¹ Paraphrase of comments by the wife of an evangelical leader in Dillow, pp. 122.

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- Or those implications are not present but she's _____ a grove when desire _____ her.
- Verse 12 is probably the most difficult in the Song. "The meaning of the words is ambiguous and the syntactical connection are dubious."⁹²
- The key word in Hebrew can mean "desire" or "appetite" or the speaker referring to themselves "my soul" or "myself."
- "'*ammi-nadib*' can be a combination of "people" and "prince." The last part could mean "generous" or "willing." Some understand it as a proper name, Amminadab.
- She has a strong _____ that overwhelms her so she end up in his chariot or litter. Physically or in her _____?
- In the Hebrew texts verse 13 is in chapter 7 and connected with the content of chapter 7.
- Vs. 13 seems to back up the view of her in an orchard overcome with longing for him in _____. The others encourage her to return to reality.
- Some translate it as "leap, leap" encouraging her to _____ to tie in with 13b.
- 13b is confusing. The last word, translated here as "two armies" could be the name of a dance: perhaps a _____ dance.
- In traditional Middle Eastern folk dances, the woman often dances between two _____ (often men).
- It seems to rebuke the others of _____. She is not there for their _____.
- "A public dancer is an untouchable entertainer. She always remains at a distance, leaving her audience in a state of high tension."⁹³



Allegorical Interpretation: This is the Lord speaking to the church. He has healed the breach she created by her neglect with his grace. If we continue to seek God, He will return to us. The church speaks in 13b. "She is saying, 'There is nothing in me but conflict and confusion. In my heart two enemies are at war.'"⁹⁴ So they see this as a struggle between the flesh & the Spirit.

⁹² Longman, pp. 185.

⁹³ Gledhill, pp. 203.

⁹⁴ Fortner, pp. 165.

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Dramatic Interpretation: She goes to a garden to meditate. She may be thinking back to their courtship. She has a longing for her home. But she has a longing for him (yes, I'm confused too), and dances for him to arouse his desire.

Wisdom Literature: Her rejection is powerful to him. He's not like Solomon who can just pick a different wife or concubine. In marriage, rejection matters! They know each other far more intimately than Solomon could ever know any wife.

Typological Interpretation: If this is more about her fear of rejection, we discover that God invites us into greater communion with Him. Jesus does not stay at a distance when we draw near.

Conclusion:

“When we fail to be aroused by the physicality of our spouse we have turned away from being captured by God’s creation. ... There is beauty in every body, in every portion of creation. Second, beauty is bound not merely to sight but also to soul. The more we delight in inner beauty, the more we will be readily disposed to be in awe of the beauty even in an aging person.”
Allender & Longman⁹⁵

⁹⁵ Allender & Longman, pp. 80.