

THE SONG OF SOLOMON

AN INTERPRETATION

Introduction

There has been a great deal of controversy over the “The Song of Solomon,” questioning its theological legitimacy. This has arisen because of general confusion over how it should be interpreted.

A more literal approach sees this book as a narrative poem describing a love relationship between King Solomon and a country maiden. Throughout the poem Solomon compares the beauty of his bride symbolically to a picturesque garden with its delicious fruits. However descriptions like, **“Your waist is a heap of wheat.”** (Song 7:2), and **“Your neck is like the tower of David, built for an armour on which hang a thousand bucklers...”**(Song 4:4), do not fit into this mould, and point to a different type of interpretation.

The more literal interpretation justifies its theological validity by suggesting that it expresses God’s opposition to sexual activity before marriage, whilst on the other hand His desire for married couples to have pleasure in their sexual relationship.

A second method of interpretation, and this is the one we will adopt, views **“The Song of Songs”** as an allegorical portrayal of the relationship between Jesus Christ and a prospective bride, as she is gradually transformed into a member of what is referred to in the bible as “the Bride of Christ.”

It should be understood at the outset that the Bride of Christ is not the whole Church, but a relatively smaller group who have responded to Christ’s invitation to become united with Him in a personal relationship, brought about by laying their carnal self-nature on the altar of the cross that it might be put to death by the Spirit, so that the mind, heart, and righteousness of Christ may be forged in them. This pilgrimage may extend over a life time, and the dealings with the prospective bride to bring her forth as a member of the Bride of Christ, is the real subject of “The Song of Songs.”

In the bible there are a few figurative pictures of the perfected Bride of Christ, one of which is the one hundred and forty four thousand standing with Christ on Mount Zion, which represents the presence of God.

“Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads... These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God.” Rev 14:1-5.

The members of the Bride of Christ are pictured with Jesus standing on Mount Zion, depicting their spiritual status as being in Christ in God. The Father's name on their foreheads show that in every area of their lives they are totally consecrated to Him.

In the bible harlotry is a term describing turning away from God and engaging in idolatrous worship. The one hundred and forty four thousand are called virgins because they have forsaken self-desire, and are totally consecrated to their Lord. They are declared to be "firstfruits to God and to the Lamb because they are the first representations of the Bride of Christ formed on the earth. It also suggests that there will be spiritual growth in our heavenly life, and more and more souls will be added to the Bride.

The fact that they are **without fault before the throne of God**, does not mean that they are sinless, but that in their hearts they are totally consecrated to God and Christ.

The Song of Solomon presents us with an account of the spiritual growth of a soul that the Holy Spirit has awakened to an awareness of the indwelling presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, and invested it with a fervent desire to know Him personally, and embark on a pilgrimage leading to oneness with Him.

The two main characters in the Song of Solomon are "the Beloved," representing Jesus Christ, and "the Shulamite," who is a person who has embarked on a spiritual pilgrimage that leads to becoming a member of the Bride of Christ.

The real subject matter of the Song of Solomon is the various means by which the Lord draws the soul out of self to be wholly possessed by Him, and the gradual changes that are wrought in the heart of a bridal soul that has embarked on a pilgrimage that leads to life lived in union with Jesus Christ in God the Father.

In this pilgrimage the bridal soul is drawn out of bondage to self-consecrated works of the flesh, and led on through degrees of maturity before becoming wholly the Lord's, enabled to be used by Him without the interference of her flesh.

In the first chapters of the Song, the Beloved, or the Lord, refers to the Shulamite only as His loved one, but in the final Chapters, due to her spiritual advancement, He calls her His spouse or betrothed one.

SONG OF SOLOMON

Verse 1.

"The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's."

Verse 1 establishes Solomon as the author.

The Shulamite

Verses 2.

“Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth — for your love is better than wine.”

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth:

This should not be viewed literally as a physical experience. Kisses of his mouth figuratively express a desire for a more personal and intimate spiritual relationship - in this case with the Lord Jesus Christ. What has prompted this desire is her awakening by the Holy Spirit to awareness of Christ’s abiding presence, and His attributes, such as love, joy, peace, health, compassion, grace, etc. being expressed to her as they are manifested within her.

...for your love is better than wine:

Jesus likened His love for us as equivalent to the love of His Father towards Him. **“As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.”** John 15:9-10.

The Shulamite has experienced the Lord’s divine love and declares it to be much better than wine, or transient earthly pleasures that soon vanish.

Verse 3.

“Because of the fragrance of your good ointments, your name is ointment poured forth: therefore the virgins love you.”

Because of the fragrance of your good ointments, your name is ointment poured forth:

The Beloved’s or Lord’s attributes are likened to fragrant ointments poured forth, as balm healing and refreshing the whole being. His name is the sum of His total attributes being expressed to His children.

...therefore the virgins love you:

Here the virgins are Christians attracted by the fragrance of the Lord, but not to the extent of embarking on the pilgrimage to membership in the bride of Christ.

Verse 4.

Verse 4 relates a conversation between the Shulamite (a Christian set on the bridal path), the daughters of Jerusalem (members of the church), and the Beloved (representing Jesus Christ)).

The Shulamite: **“Draw me away!**

The Daughters of Jerusalem: **We will run after you.**

The Shulamite: **The king has brought me into his chambers.**

The Daughters of Jerusalem: **We will be glad and rejoice in you. We will remember your love more than wine.**

The Beloved: **Rightly do they love you.”**

The Shulamite

Draw me away!:

The Shulamite asks the Beloved, or Lord, to deliver her from all bondage to the world and the flesh, and to draw her into Himself.

The Daughters of Jerusalem

We will run after you:

The daughters of Jerusalem respond to the Shulamite’s commitment to the Lord by crying out, **we will run after you**, expressing a fleshly reaction rather than a deep commitment.

The Shulamite

The king has brought me into his chambers:

The king refers to King Solomon, who in this book is the Beloved, and indirectly, the Lord Jesus Christ. The chambers speak of the king’s dwelling place, and in the case of the Lord Jesus Christ, His dwelling place in in the hearts of those who believe it by faith. Paul prayed, **“...that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith...”** Eph 3:16-17, and Jesus told us, **“At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.”** John 14:20.

The Shulamite has been brought to the realization of the abiding presence of the Lord within her, and she within Him.

The Daughters of Jerusalem

We will be glad and rejoice in you. We will remember your love more than wine:

The Daughters of Jerusalem have observed her new spiritual walk, and that the changes that are being wrought in her are more than those of a normal Christian, and they respond with a statement of love and admiration that still lacks a depth of commitment.

The Beloved

Rightly do they love you:

The Beloved encourages the Shulamite by saying that the Daughters love is well placed.

The Shulamite

Verses 5.

“I am dark, but lovely, O daughters of Jerusalem, like the tents of Kedar, like the curtains of Solomon.”

As the Shulamite draws closer to the Lord, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth reveals two sides of her spiritual state - she is **dark, but lovely**. The Spirit has brought to mind the many past sins and carnal nature of the Shulamite, but has also revealed the righteousness she now has through Jesus Christ, so she says, **I am dark, but lovely**. In saying this, the Shulamite is presenting two seemingly contradicting realities or truths, one physical and the other spiritual. Of the two, Paul says that physical reality is temporary, continually changing, while spiritual reality is eternal.

“...we do not look at the things which are seen (physical reality), but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen (spiritual reality) are eternal.” 2 Cor 4:18.

The Shulamite says, **I am dark**, because her carnal nature is sinful and although it causes her to sin repeatedly, her nature is continually changing as sin is being overcome.

The reality of her spiritual state of being **lovely** was acquired by the efficacy of the blood of Jesus in cleansing her from all unrighteousness, so now she is holy and without reproach in God's sight.

“And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight...” Col 1:21-23.

As long as we believe that we have been cleansed from all sin by the death of Jesus, it remains as a permanent reality in heaven, no matter what our physical state is on earth. Those embarking on this pilgrimage of holiness should leave their eyes fixed on the spiritual reality, knowing that past and present sins have been washed away by the blood of the cross.

Verse 6.

“Do not look upon me, because I am dark, because the sun has tanned me. My mother's sons were angry with me; They made me the keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard I have not kept.”

Do not look upon me, because I am dark, because the sun has tanned me:

The sun, the searing light of God's truth has revealed her sins, making her appear dark, but she says **do not look upon me**, or my dark side, for the spiritual reality is that she is lovely in God's sight. Satan continually endeavours to focus our minds and hearts on the physical reality of our sins, whereas Paul enjoins us to keep our minds on the spiritual reality of our acceptance by God as holy and blameless.

“Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you (your ‘old man’ with its carnal nature) died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.” Col 3:2-3.

My mother's sons were angry with me; They made me the keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard I have not kept:

Now we see a conflict of priorities between the Shulamite's brothers, who are fellow workers in her church. The vineyards are areas of Christian ministry, or activities and work for the Lord.

The Shulamite's main priority in her Christian walk was to grow up into the Lord, and know His mind and heart and will being formed in her. The priority of her brothers was to be engaged in Christian work and ministry. They thought that she had neglected her responsibility of ministry, and coerced her to be involved in their church work, to the neglect of her spiritual pathway. Their works are those of consecrated flesh, earnestly involving themselves in the programs and activities devised by the leaders of the church. She has begun to see that the only valid works are those initiated and empowered by her Lord. Both are earnest in their desire to serve the Lord, but her pathway is the most pleasing to the Lord.

The Shulamite to Her Beloved

Verse 7.

“Tell me, O you whom I love, where you feed your flock, where you make it rest at noon. For why should I be as one who veils herself by the flocks of your companions?”

Tell me, O you whom I love, where you feed your flock, where you make it rest at noon:

The Shulamite recognises her need for guidance and further enlightenment concerning her spiritual path, and seeks help from the Lord. She wants to see Him working through His ministers in feeding truth those in need, and bringing them into His to rest.

For why should I be as one who veils herself by the flocks of your companions:

In self-consciousness she asks “Why should I have to hide my face in embarrassment as one who has no knowledge?”

Verse 8.

“If you do not know, O fairest among women, follow in the footsteps of the flock, and feed your little goats beside the shepherds' tents.”

The Shulamite is told to follow in the footsteps of those who have gone before her, and learn from shepherds who have been appointed to guide people on this pilgrimage. In this case one may gain much knowledge and blessing by reading *“Thy Hidden Ones”* by Jessie Penn Lewis, and *“Song of Songs”* by Watchman Nee.

Verse 9.

“I have compared you, my love, to my filly among Pharaoh's chariots.”

The Beloved now assures the Shulamite that she is much treasured, using the example of his filly among the world acclaimed Pharaoh's chariots.

Verse 10. “Your cheeks are lovely with ornaments, your neck with chains of gold.”

Your cheeks are lovely:

The Beloved then compliments her on attributes associated with members of the Bride. Cheeks reflect softness, and ready compliance to His working within her.

...your neck with chains of gold:

The neck symbolises the strength of the will, and so someone labelled as ‘stiff-necked,’ has an unbending will. Because of her softness, her will is conformed to the Lord’s will, which is that His nature is formed in her. As a result her neck will be adorned with chains of gold, gold being a symbol of God’s nature forged in us. As gold is refined in the furnace until the impurities are brought to the surface and drained off, God’s nature is formed in us in the furnace of suffering, where over our lifetime, our carnal traits are brought to the surface and forsaken.

“Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin...”1 Peter 4:1.

For those embarking on the bridal path, there is no escaping our carnal nature being put to death, for it is a necessary part of God’s workmanship - the only way the hard carnal core of our flesh can be broken, and finally forsaken. **“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”** Eph 2:10.

The Daughters of Jerusalem

Verse 11.

“We will make you ornaments of gold with studs of silver.”

Gold represents the nature of God, and silver our redeemed nature, formed in the image of Jesus Christ. These things can only be wrought by God’s workmanship in us. This is a warning concerning those with good intentions who would endeavour to minister to those on this pathway, inadvertently hindering God’s work in them.

The Shulamite

Verse 12.

“While the king is at his table, my spikenard sends forth its fragrance.”

At the king’s table represents being in close fellowship with the Lord. Spikenard symbolises humility that is being formed in her. Spikenard was the same fragrant oil used by Mary in her ultimate act of humility in washing Christ’s feet with her tears, and anointing them with fragrant oil. **“Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.”** John 12:3.

Verse 13.

“A bundle of myrrh is my beloved to me, that lies all night between my breasts.”

Myrrh is a symbol of death, but in this case it is not death of the body, but of our carnal self-centred natures. In the New Testament the flesh and the spirit are incompatible, warring against each other for control over our lives. The myrrh is lying between her breasts, or over her heart, where the direction of our wills and our life’s decisions are formed. This shows that the Shulamite has chosen to forsake flesh, consigning it to the altar of the cross to be put to death by the Spirit. **“For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live (spiritually).”** Rom 8:13. The Lord is called the myrrh or death to her, because she understands that there is no escaping giving up her carnal nature to death, if she is to be His disciple.

Verse 14.

“My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blooms in the vineyards of En Gedi.”

En Gedi is an oasis west of the Dead Sea, watered by springs of fresh water. In the time of King Solomon, they supported vineyards, which were often protected by hedges of henna adorned with henna blooms. The sight of henna blooms around the vineyard were an assurance

of its hedge of protection. Likewise, the abiding presence of the Beloved was an assurance to the Shulamite of his faithful loving care and protection.

The Beloved to the Shulamite

Verse 15.

“Behold, you are fair, my love! Behold, you are fair! You have dove's eyes.”

She is fair, not clouded by deceitful thoughts and motives. The dove is a symbol of the Holy Spirit, and so her view of things is open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. By comparison, Jesus condemned the scribes and Pharisees for their spiritual blindness. **“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees... Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!”** Matt 23:23-24.

The Shulamite to the Beloved

Verse 16.

“Behold, you are handsome, my beloved! Yes, pleasant! Also our bed is green.

Behold, you are handsome, my beloved! Yes, pleasant:

The Shulamite responds to the Beloved’s praise in similar words, knowing that any praiseworthy attributes she has are the result of His indwelling presence in her.

Also our bed is green:

The bed symbolises rest, echoing Psalm 23, **“He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters.”**(or waters of rest). In union with Him she has found rest and peace.

Verse 17.

“The beams of our houses are cedar, and our rafters of fir.”

The beams of our houses are cedar:

Cedar is noted for its durability and strength, and cedar rafters supporting the roof speak of His enduring support, covering and protection.

...and our rafters of fir (cypress):

Cypress grows in a place called “The City of Death,” and was commonly planted around graves, and known as ‘the cemetery tree.’ It symbolises union with Christ in His death. It is the death of our carnal natures with their reactions, thus leading to peace and rest.

CHAPTER 2

The Shulamite

Verse 1.

“I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.”

The Shulamite continues her response to the Beloved, saying, I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys. The rose of Sharon is a wild rose dotted sparsely on the Plain of Sharon, and the Lily of the valley is a small white flower that may grow unnoticed in a garden. She is content to pass unnoticed by the world, her self-effacing assessment of her own worth, and that of her ministry differing greatly from the prominence sought by many ministers in the church. Because of her close relationship with the Lord, it would be easy for the Shulamite to be overtaken by spiritual pride, but her response shows that she is content to remain unnoticed, hidden away in her Lord.

The Beloved

Verse 2.

“Like a lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.”

The lily, with its purity and beauty is a type of Christ’s indwelling life, now beginning to be manifested in the Shulamite. Thorns, which are manifested among the daughters, are the traits that emanate from an undealt with carnal nature, continually opposing spiritual growth. The daughters are not the daughters of Jerusalem, or true church, but carnal; worldly Christians. To the Lord, the contrast between the Shulamite and the daughters is so stark that He compares her to a lily amongst thorns.

The Shulamite

Verse 3.

“Like an apple tree among the trees of the woods, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down in his shade with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.”

Like an apple tree among the trees of the woods, so is my beloved among the sons:

In comparing the spiritual nourishment she receives from the abiding presence of the Lord with that received from fellow members of the church, she says that He is like an apple tree amongst the non-fruit bearing trees of the woods. As Jesus was sustained by the abiding presence of the Father, He told us to receive spiritual nourishment by feeding on His abiding presence in us.

“As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live (experience abundant spiritual life) because of Me.” John 6:57.

I sat down in his shade with great delight:

Next the Shulamite says, I sat down in his shade with great delight. The shade speaks of the peace and security provided by His covering protection, as expressed in Psalm 91.

“He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, “He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust.” Ps 91:1.

...his fruit was sweet to my taste:

In finding rest and spiritual nourishment in His abiding presence, she says his fruit was sweet to my taste.

The Shulamite to the daughters of Jerusalem

Verse 4.

“He brought me to the banqueting house and his banner over me was love.”

He brought me to the banqueting house:

The banqueting house can also be translated as ‘the house of wine.’ It was the place where guests had freedom to satisfy their epicurean desires with food and wine. Being in the banqueting house means that the Shulamite experiences all of the pleasures of Christ’s indwelling life, strengthening her for the trials ahead.

...his banner over me was love:

The Shulamite has been given a revelation of the power of the Lord’s indwelling life to sustain her, and satisfy all of her true needs, but the one thing that needs to be strengthened most is the knowledge of his love. In the banqueting house she was assured that his banner over me was love. A banner with love as its insignia, assures her that in whatever trial she might face, all was in the hands of her loving Father, and that all that will face her will be for her ultimate wellbeing.

Verse 5.

“Sustain me with cakes of raisins, refresh me with apples, for I am lovesick.”

...I am lovesick:

Lovesick means made sick, or physically weakened through revelation of the Lord's love. This reaction indicates that even though she has embarked on her pilgrimage, she is still spiritually immature. A more appropriate reaction would be to praise and worship the Lord, and express a deeper consecration to Him. Her reaction shows that the revelation of the Lord's love has affected her physically and emotionally rather than spiritually.

Sustain me with cakes of raisins, refresh me with apples:

The fact that her lovesickness is physical rather than spiritual, is shown by her asking for food to strengthen her.

Verse 6.

“His left hand is under my head, and his right hand embraces me.”

His left hand is under my head:

His left hand under her head indicates that the Lord was upholding her mind, the main area of Satan's attack.

...his right hand embraces me:

His right hand, or hand of his strength, embraces or enfolds her whole being in his protective care.

The Beloved

Verse 7.

“I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or by the does of the field, do not stir up nor awaken love until it pleases.”

I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or by the does of the field:

The gazelles and does are known to be stirred up easily. The Shulamite has reached a stage in her pilgrimage where the Lord wants her to be still, contemplate and assimilate all that she has been shown. The daughters of Jerusalem, or members of the church, are earnest in their own spiritual walk, but they have no knowledge of being in union with Christ, and they certainly have not learned to be still and wait on God. In Chapter 1 they had stated, **“We will run after you,”** and **“We will make you ornaments of gold with studs of silver,”** showing their eagerness to be involved in the Shulamite's walk.

...do not stir up nor awaken love until it pleases:

The Beloved's request, do not stir up nor awaken love until it pleases, begs the question, 'what love pleases the Lord, and what love dose not?'

The love that pleases is that which is born of the Spirit, and implanted in the heart. It is not emotional love, but a sacrificial love that engenders obedience. Jesus said, **“If you love Me, keep My commandments.”** John 14:15.

The love that does not please is that which is evoked from fleshly emotion or zeal. It is this fleshly zeal and emotional love that the Daughters of Jerusalem would stir up in the Shulamite.

The Shulamite

Verse 8.

“The voice of my beloved! Behold, he comes leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.”

This is a picture of the Lord’s readiness and quickness to come to our aid. No mountains or satanic blocks or barriers can hinder His progress - only the barriers we ourselves impose on Him.

Verse 9.

“My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag. Behold, he stands behind our wall; He is looking through the windows, gazing through the lattice.”

My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag:

The **gazelle or a young stag** presents a picture of the power and adroitness of the Lord in overcoming all obstacles that Satan confronts us with.

Behold, he stands behind our wall:

At this point the Beloved is confronted by a barrier imposed by the Shulamite - a wall of self-absorption. Her mind and heart have been turned inward to her relationship with the Lord, and what she has gained from Him. She has learned to appropriate His life to meet each need and overcome all difficulties. She wanted to keep this precious relationship to herself, lest any outside interference take away what she has. She thinks that this is the Lord’s will, so she calls the wall **our wall**. But this is not the Lord’s will for her, as His desire is that His life will flow out from her to minister to others. **“He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.”** John 7:38-39. Her self-absorption had caused her to look to her own needs and neglect ministry to the wider body.

He is looking through the windows, gazing through the lattice:

The Beloved looks through the ‘windows and lattice,’ seeking an opening to present the truth, that before she can go any further this wall of self-absorption must be broken down, so that she can be used to reach out to others.

The Beloved

Verse 10.

“My beloved spoke, and said to me: “Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.”

The Beloved intervened, urging her to turn her mind and heart away from self, and come out from her self-imposed wall, and join him in ministry to others.

Verse 11.

“For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone.”

The Lord commands the Shulamite to come away. **For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone.** During the past winter period she has been engaged in experientially drawing on the life of Jesus to meet each need. She had been so preoccupied with her own spiritual walk, and retaining the blessings of the Lord within herself, that she lost sight of the need to minister to the needs of other members of the body of Christ. Added to that, she was fearful that she would lose her experience of the blessing of Christ if she came out from behind her wall of self-protection. She had yet to see that the power of the Lord she has experienced personally would remain in her, so that it could be used by the Lord to ministers to others.

Verses 12-13.

“The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. 13. The fig tree puts forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grapes give a good smell. Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away!”

In these verses 12 and 13, the Beloved indicates that in his ‘garden,’ there are many opportunities for them to bear fruit together. Again he urges her to **Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away!** She now has to experience the reality of the Lord’s words, **“he who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit...”** Jn 15:5.

The Path of the Cross

The Beloved

Verse 14.

“O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the cliff, let me see your face, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely.”

The Beloved is asking the Shulamite to embark on a new path. **O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the cliff** (of the stairs. KJV), **let me see your face, let me hear your voice.** The **cleft of the rock** is a generally accepted reference to the cross of Jesus. The Shulamite has been united with him in his resurrection, and has experienced the power of

his indwelling life. Now the Beloved asks her to share with him in the power of his cross, or his death.

“Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?” Rom 6:3-4.

This new pathway is generally known as ‘the path of the cross,’ where self-will and self-orientation is forsaken, and laid on the altar of the cross to be put to death by the Spirit. It is a call to die to self and live entirely for Christ. When this choice is made, the Holy Spirit commences a lifelong work in which certain carnal traits are highlighted, and dealt with one at a time, until they are burnt out and forsaken. This usually involves a process of suffering as our hedge of protection is removed every time the fleshly trait is entertained until it finally loses its power. Many Christians may be discouraged by the prospect of this refining suffering, but it is the only way that the hard core of flesh may be broken so that the life of Jesus may shine forth. The work is God’s, and **“we are His workmanship”** Eph 2:10. All things are measured by Him, and in every trial we are upheld in His arms. **“Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”** Heb 12:11.

In the reading, **in the secret places of the cliff**, the King James translation of the word **cliff** is **stairs**, which is far more appropriate. Figuratively, the stairs are stages of spiritual growth The Beloved is saying, let me see your face and hear your voice as you grow in maturity on the path of the cross. The Lord is delighted with those who have chosen to give up their self-lives to the death and embark on the path of the cross, and their voice, or personal prayers, and their face, or their openness to Him, are sweet, and lovely.

Note: It is not the extent of our knowledge, or our ability to do the Lord’s work that is the measure of our spiritual growth, but rather the degree to which our carnal nature has been dealt with, for it is only when carnal flesh has been removed that the nature of the Lord can take its place.

Procrastination

The Shulamite

Verse 15.

“Catch us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes.”

Procrastination is a form of disobedience in which the right course of action is delayed by being pushed into the background, so that other more pleasurable or acceptable activities may be pursued. The Beloved had implored the Shulamite to rise up and come away with him, to lay down her self-life, and to embark with him on the path of the cross. Her reply is evasive, showing that at this stage she is not at it. Instead of replying in the affirmative she turns the conversation to a new direction, saying, ‘let us catch the little foxes.’

The little foxes are the small habits and manifestations of the old carnal self-life that are still being manifested. The vineyard is her ministry. She has become concerned that the little foxes, or manifestations of her old life will impact on her ministry, and spoil its fruit. She

has to learn that the responsibility of dealing with the 'old man' has been relinquished into God's hands, and her position is to be still and trust in His faithfulness to complete the work He has started. God can only work if we let the work go into His hands. The moment we interfere and try to tame the 'old man' ourselves, He withdraws until we learn the futility of our own efforts.

The Shulamite continues.

Verse 16.

“My beloved is mine, and I am his. He feeds his flock among the lilies.”

Again the Shulamite turns the conversation away from the Lord's request with a self-centred statement that avoids a commitment to embark on the path of the cross. It implies that her Beloved is hers as long as he is inside her wall where she is able to enjoy His abiding presence without outside interference.

Lilies denote purity, so this pictures the Lord's ministry to the pure in heart. The Shulamite's statement, He feeds his flock among the lilies, expresses a detachment from his work.

The Shulamite

Verse 17.

“Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young stag upon the mountains of Bether” (mountains of separation).

Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away, is an acknowledgement by the Shulamite that she is not in a right position. Darkness of night and the shadows are indicative of a time of separation from the Lord, when she has ceased hearing his voice. She implores him to return to her swiftly like a young stag on the mountains of separation, to be with her behind her wall until she is ready to make the necessary commitment.

CHAPTER 3

The Shulamite

Verse 1.

“By night on my bed I sought the one I love; I sought him, but I did not find him.”

At the end of Chapter 2, we left the Shulamite restrained from embarking on the path of the cross by introspection and procrastination. In order to overcome these traits, the Beloved removes her perception of his indwelling presence.

Many Christians have been faced with this experience of spiritual dryness, finding it difficult to seek the Lord in prayer, or find answers, despite earnest efforts to know His will. In these cases the Lord may deliberately withdraw our perception of His presence to remove self-imposed fleshly barriers that have hindered our relationship. His desire is to remove all blocks from our spiritual pathway, in this case a heavy reliance on an actual feeling of His presence, so that we might believe in His abiding presence by faith.

The word **night** symbolises separation, in the reading above meaning that the Shulamite’s feeling of separation may have been experienced for some duration - for as long as it took to break the power of introspection and procrastination. At first she sought to restore the knowledge of his presence on the bed by stirring up her previous feelings of his presence but failed. Only an act of the will to discard her present path and seek to know the Lord by faith could set her free to find the Lord, and know His constant presence.

Verse 2.

“I will rise now,” I said, “and go about the city; in the streets and in the squares I will seek the one I love.” I sought him, but I did not find him.”

At last the Shulamite exercises her will by saying **I will rise now... I will seek the one I love.**, releasing her from the power of introspection and procrastination that had bound her. Introspection had made her keep her spiritual problems within herself, and she had been reluctant to seek help from others in the church. Now the Shulamite sought the Beloved in the streets and in the squares, or all spiritual avenues open to her, as in the Scriptures, prayer, quiet times, reading appropriate literature, and so forth. But she still could not find him. Jesus said, **“You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.”** John 5:39-40.

In periods of straightness and dryness, we have to believe by faith that the Lord resides in us, and walk and act in the light of that belief. As yet the Shulamite is not ready, and instead seeks help from the watchmen.

Verse 3.

“The watchmen who go about the city found me; I said, “have you seen the one I love?”

The watchmen are church elders, who have the responsibility of watching over and counselling church members. They found the Shulamite, but having little experience of her spiritual path, their counsel was of little help. It was up to her to approach the Lord personally, and to allow Him to show her where she had gone astray, and to set her path straight. She had to open her heart to see that procrastination had stopped her spiritual progress, and prevented her from making an initial commitment to step on the path of the cross, and lay down her self-life so that Jesus might become her life.

Verse 4.

“Scarcely had I passed by them, when I found the one I love. I held him and would not let him go, until I had brought him to the house of my mother, and into the chamber of her who conceived me.”

Scarcely had I passed by them, when I found the one I love:

As soon as the Shulamite had passed by the watchmen, rejecting them and other means of help outside the Lord, she turned towards him and found Him.

Even though the Shulamite had been reunited with the Beloved, she had not been perfected, but had been deepened in her commitment to the degree that she had chosen to emerge from behind her wall to seek after him. The Beloved had broken the binding control of introspection and procrastination to the degree that the Shulamite was willing to rise and seek him. We will see that after some time procrastination will return, and will have to be dealt with more severely. She is still a fair way off from making a steadfast commitment to accept the full challenge of the path of the cross.

I held him and would not let him go:

The Shulamite found him, but her mind and emotions were still stayed on his abiding presence, and she clung to the experience of his presence.

At this stage in her pilgrimage to know the Lord and the power of His cross, the Shulamite, or bridal soul, is still immature, thinking that if she cannot sense the Lord's presence, He is not there, and so she now clings to Him with some determination. She is yet to know the walk of faith that knows the presence of the Lord apart from sensations or perception of any kind, and so she clings to her past experiences, not wanting yet to let them go.

...until I had brought him to the house of my mother:

In the flesh conceiving and giving birth is the role of the mother, but all Christians are not born of the flesh but of the Spirit, and as such are conceived by the Spirit and born of God. **“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”** John 1:12-13.

In coming to an understanding of **the house of my mother, and into the chamber of her who conceived me**, our preconceived ideas of physical gender, and the roles of mother and father may be a block. It is important that we look at this passage from a spiritual, rather than a physical point of view. Spiritually, God is complete in every area, and is not limited by gender in His relationship to us. In care and nurture He fulfils the roles of both mother and father, and so spiritually He may appear to us as both Mother and Father.

In the above reading, **mother...who conceived me**, is used in a metaphorical sense for God, by whom all Christians are conceived after receiving and accepting the truth of salvation.

... to the house...and into the chamber of her who conceived me:

The house speaks of the house of Israel, and **the chamber of her who conceived me**, the Church. After being renewed in awareness of Christ's presence after a period of seeming separation, the Shulamite has a desire to be strengthened by consolidating the truth of her spiritual foundations. The emblems representing Israel and the Church speak of her passage towards her eternal destiny in Christ in God, set on the foundation of the Old Testament, and the gospel truth of eternal salvation and growing up into the fullness of Christ in the New Testament.

The Beloved

Verse 5.

“I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or by the does of the field, do not stir up nor awaken love until it pleases.”

Again the Beloved warns the eager daughters of Jerusalem not to stir up love in the Shulamite. Any stirring up of her present clinging emotional state would precipitate a superficial love that would be displeasing to him. She is in his hands, and her spiritual progress is being carefully nurtured by him.

A Vision relating to King Solomon

In verses 6-11, the Shulamite is confronted by a new experience. She sees a vision that shows some aspects of the life of King Solomon, but because Solomon is a type of Jesus Christ, who is represented in Song of Songs by the Beloved, it sheds new light on her walk with the Beloved, and our walk with the Lord.

The reason that this passage is categorised as a vision is that King Solomon, the subject of the vision, reigned in Israel over nine centuries before the birth of Christ, who is in spiritual reality, the main character on Song of Songs.

We can assume that with the vision, the Shulamite has been shown that King Solomon is a representation of her Beloved, and that she has all of the blessings portrayed in the vision. Similarly, bridal souls reading this passage can be assured that because Solomon is a type of Jesus Christ, all of the blessings associated with Solomon in this vision, are theirs to claim in Jesus Christ. As well as shedding light on the pathway ahead, she will gain an assurance of the Lord's faithful and competent care of her.

The Shulimite

Verse 6.

“Who is this coming out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all the merchant's fragrant powders?”

The Shulamite relates her vision, which commences with a picture of Solomon coming out of the wilderness, the spiritual state she has been in until now. He is accompanied by pillars of smoke, reminiscent of God's presence going before the children of Israel, revealing the way before them, and obscuring the view of the pursuing Egyptians behind them. This gives her an assurance of God's guidance and protection on her spiritual journey.

Solomon, representing the Beloved/Jesus Christ, gives forth the aroma of precious perfumes. Myrrh speaks of unity with him in his death, and frankincense of intimacy in personal prayer. All the merchant's fragrant powders speak of the fullness of His presence being made known to her.

Verses 7.

“Behold, it is Solomon's couch (‘bed’ KJV), with sixty valiant men around it, of the valiant of Israel.”

The couch or bed signify times of spiritual ‘sleep,’ when our spiritual defences are down, and we are vulnerable to attacks by powers of darkness. Sixty valiant men, representing God's angels, form a wall of protection around us

Verse 8.

“They all hold swords, being expert in war. Every man has his sword on his thigh because of fear in the night.”

These two verses relate to spiritual warfare that a bridal soul often experiences, because she poses a threat to satanic powers of darkness. Satanic attacks often occur when we are spiritually asleep when our minds are drawn away from the Lord to other activities. The angels,

fully equipped and valiant in spiritual warfare, keep guard **“because of fear in the night,”** which symbolises the Shulamite’s separation from the Lord and the power of His inner strength and resources, leaving her vulnerable to attack. These verses tell us that in times of weakness and vulnerability, we are constantly surrounded and protected by God’s angels.

Verses 9.

“Of the wood of Lebanon Solomon the King made himself a palanquin:”

A palanquin is an enclosed portable carriage, with poles extending from its four corners to enable it to be carried. The palanquin showed the Shulamite that wherever she went, and whatever the circumstances, she would be carried by the Lord God, as He carried His children in the wilderness.

“...in the wilderness where you saw how the Lord your God carried you, as a man carries his son, in all the way that you went until you came to this place.” Deut 1:31.

Of the wood of Lebanon:

Cedar, **the wood of Lebanon**, symbolises the beauty and strength of the natural man. Here it represents the humanity of Jesus Christ, who was clothed in a human body, that He might understand our weaknesses, and be a compassionate High Priest in representing us before the throne of God.

“Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same... that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.”

Although clothed in a body of human weakness, the fullness of God was in Him so that He might meet the needs of those seeking ministry from Him. This was the nature of the palanquin - made of a body reflecting Christ’s compassion and understanding of our weaknesses, whilst within itself having the fullness of the attributes of God to meet our needs.

Verse 10.”

“He made its pillars of silver, its support of gold, its seat of purple, its interior paved with love by the daughters of Jerusalem.”

He made its pillars of silver:

Pillars symbolise strength, and silver the redemptive life of Jesus in us. In her pilgrimage the Shulamite will know inner spiritual strength from the life of Jesus within her.

...its support of gold:

Gold is a symbol of the divine power and nature of God, telling her that she will be supported and upheld by the divine power of God.

...its seat of purple:

The palanquin's seat is purple, which is the colour of royalty. Throughout her spiritual journey she will be upheld by Jesus Christ who is **"Lord of lords and King of kings."**

...its interior paved with love by the daughters of Jerusalem:

It is important to see that we cannot embark on the bridal path in isolation without the love and support of the daughters of Jerusalem, or members of the true church.

Verse 11.

"Go forth, O daughters of Zion (members of the Bride), **and see King Solomon** (Jesus Christ) **with the crown with which his mother** (Israel - looking ahead to Christ being crowned by Almighty God) **crowned him on the day of his wedding, the day of the gladness of his heart."**

The last portion of the vision figuratively pictures the marriage of Jesus Christ with "the bride of Christ," made up of members of the true church down through the ages, who have embarked on the path of the cross and reached the status of the bride. This celebration will take place with the commencement of our heavenly existence. To the Shulamite, and those on the bridal pathway, this is an encouraging picture, revealing to them the fulfilment of their spiritual journey.

CHAPTER 4

Before starting Chapter 4, we should remember that the Song of Solomon describes the Lord's dealings with the bridal soul occurring over the whole time of her spiritual pilgrimage. The period between one stage and the next may extend over months, years, and even decades.

In Chapter 3, the Shulamite had emerged from her wall of introspection, and had made a tentative step in embarking on the path of the cross. She still clung to the sensory experience of the Lord, and sought security by re-establishing her relationship with the church. To encourage the Shulamite, she was given a vision of the pathway ahead, and the certainty of the Lord's constant care and protection. Now in Chapter 4, the Beloved gives her further encouragement by outlining to her the beauty of the new creation being formed in her. **"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."** 2 Cor 5:17-18.

The Beloved

Verse 1.

"Behold, you are fair, my love! Behold, you are fair! You have dove's eyes behind your veil. Your hair is like a flock of goats, going down from Mount Gilead."

Behold, you are fair my love! Behold, you are fair:

Because the Shulamite has now, of her own free will, laid her carnal self-life on the cross, it is being slowly eliminated by the Holy Spirit and replaced by the life and nature of the Lord, who is being formed in her. Bringing this process about in his children was a major part of Paul's ministry. **"My little children, for whom I labour in birth again until Christ is formed in you..."** Gal 4:19.

When the Beloved, or Lord says that **you are fair**, it is the 'new creation' of the Lord formed in her that is fair in his eyes.

You have dove's eyes behind your veil

The dove is a symbol of the Holy Spirit, and so this is saying that she has spiritual discernment. Her eyes are hidden behind a veil, meaning that what she discerns spiritually is not spread abroad indiscriminately. Immature Christians have a tendency to pass on what they have been shown by the Spirit without His initiation. This may cause damage to those who are spiritually immature, who may think what the Spirit gave to one person automatically applied to them.

Your hair is like a flock of goats, going down from Mount Gilead:

As in the examples of the Nazarites and Samson, hair is a symbol of consecration, or being set apart to God. The goat's hair in the region of Mount Gilead was known for its

fineness, meaning that the Shulamite's consecration was unblemished. Nazarites and Sampson let their hair grow long as a testament to their consecration, and in Sampson's case we see that his consecration was the key to his strength. Mount Gilead was originally called the Mount of Testimony because it was there that Jacob and Laban made a covenant, or testimony of consecration towards each other.

Verse 2.

“Your teeth are like a flock of shorn sheep which have come up from the washing, every one of which bears twins and none is barren among them.”

Your teeth are like a flock of shorn sheep which have come up from the washing:

Teeth are used to masticate food to make it digestible. The Shulamite now has the capacity to closely examine all kinds of spiritual food, and only take in that which is unblemished by error. That is why the sheep are pictured clean and white from the washing.

...every one of which bears twins and none is barren among them:

To everyone who has received Him, and is receptive, the Holy Spirit imparts a love of the truth. In his second letter to the Thessalonians, Paul reproaches those who disdained this blessing, and thereby opened themselves to error.

“The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.” 2 Thess 2:9-10.

The Shulamite has received the love of the truth, and because of her openness, she is enabled to be fruitful in receiving and distributing truth to others. That is why it is said, **every one of which bears twins and none is barren among them.**

Verse 3.

“Your lips are like a strand of scarlet, and your mouth is lovely. Your temples behind your veil are like a piece of pomegranate.”

Your lips are like a strand of scarlet and your mouth is lovely:

It is by our lips that we converse with one another, and scarlet symbolises the power of the blood of Jesus to take away sin. For those to be used by the Lord to disseminate truth, their lips must undergo a special purifying refinement, illustrated by the preparation of Isaiah. When he saw a vision of God he was undone, and said, **“Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips...Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth with it, and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged.” Isa 6:5-7.**

The live coal symbolises refinement by the fire of discipline. The Beloved looks upon the Shulamite as a vessel whose lips and mouth have been refined by his discipline, and says, **Your lips are like a strand of scarlet and your mouth is lovely.**

Your temples behind your veil (within your locks KJV) are like a piece of pomegranate:

The temples are the one part of the face that does not show facial expression, and are hidden within her locks, aspects that signify to her modesty. The pomegranate symbolises her fruitfulness, which is known to the Lord, but hidden from others.

Verse 4.

“Your neck is like the tower of David, built for an armoury, on which hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men.”

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the neck symbolises the strength of the will, and this picture of the Shulamite’s neck pictures one of considerable willpower. A strong will would be a deterrent if it is set against the will of Christ, but on the other hand, a strong will in harmony with the will of Christ is a necessity when facing the warfare and hardships that confronts one on the bridal path. The Shulamite’s strong commitment to the Lord is likened to the tower of David, equipped with shields and bucklers of mighty men, strong to repel all of Satan’s attacks.

Verse 5.

“Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle, which feed among the lilies.”

Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle:

Figuratively speaking, as breasts receive milk to nurture offspring, so the Shulamite has the capacity to receive spiritual food to dispense to other Christians.

...like two fawns, twins of a gazelle.

Twins suggest that she has a double capacity, and the gazelle symbolises swiftness to meet the needs of others.

...feed among the lilies:

Lilies are a symbol of purity, and so the food the Shulamite receives and dispenses is pure spiritual truth.

The Shulamite

Verse 6.

“Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away, I will go my way to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense.”

Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away.

This is a picture of darkness before dawn, suggesting that the Shulamite is yet to experience the maturity symbolised by full daylight, and still experiences shadows of doubts and uncertainties.

I will go my way to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense:

Here mountains and hills are places of strength where the Shulamite may receive strengthening from the Lord. Myrrh is a symbol of death - in this case death of her carnal nature. The Shulamite has learned that the more of her self-centred nature is forsaken and put to death by the Spirit, the more Jesus Christ can reign in her and be her strength and capacity in all things.

Frankincense symbolises intimacy in prayer and relationship. Again, the more flesh is dealt with, the closer we are able to draw to the Lord and become one with Him, receiving His strength and capacity to stand in all circumstances.

The Beloved

Verse 7.

“You are all fair, my love and there is no spot in you.”

The Beloved declares that the Shulamite is ALL fair in her consecration to him. There is no spot of carnal desire being held back. In her spiritual heart her desire is for all of her carnal nature to be forsaken and put to death by the Spirit.

Verse 8.

“Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon. Look from the top of Amana, from the top of Senir and Hermon, from (or upon) the lions’ dens, from the mountains of the leopards.”

Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon:

Lebanon is a symbol of the natural man, with all of his capabilities. The Beloved is asking her to forsake reliance on her own strength, and to trust in him to meet all of her needs.

...my spouse:

This is the first time the Beloved refers to the Shulamite as his spouse. Some take this to mean that the Beloved and the Shulamite are already married. But the word ‘spouse’ has

indefinite meanings. It can mean actually married, or in this case, betrothed, or engaged. The marriage of Jesus Christ to his bride, takes place at the start of the heavenly age, when all members of the bride from all ages, **“being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb”** (Rev 14:4), are united together to celebrate their marriage to the Lamb. The Beloved calls the Shulamite his spouse now that he sees that she is irrevocably committed to him.

Look from the top of Amana, from the top of Senir and Hermon:

These mountain tops represent our spiritual position in ‘heavenly places.

“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,...” Eph 2:4-6.

Heavenly places is our spiritual position due to our redemption by the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. Not only is our ‘old man’ with its carnal nature crucified with Christ and buried in the waters of baptism, we are spiritually raised with Christ in His resurrection as new creations, and seated with Him in heavenly places.

Heavenly places is not a geographical location, or an imaginary place we aspire to. It is a spiritual position where the state of the minds and heart have been established by an act of our wills. We choose to live in union with Jesus Christ as partakers of all of the blessings He has obtained for us. This is our true spiritual position with Christ in heavenly places, where we have all of these spiritual blessings - all of our sins are forgiven; we are reconciled to God; we are eternally saved; our names are written in the ‘Book of Life;’ we have been transferred from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God; we have been adopted by God and are His children; we are **“the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ”** (2 Cor 5:21); every legal requirement against us is **“nailed to the cross”** (Col 2:14); Jesus bore the curse of the law for us on the cross so that we are not subject to cursing, but instead, the blessings of Abraham and recipients of the Holy Spirit (Gal 3:13); and we are seated **“together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”**

Our earthly position is as a work in progress - sinning, repenting, pleading the blood of Jesus over our sins, and slowly growing into the image of Jesus Christ. Satan continually tries to keep our minds and hearts stayed on our earthly position, because there we are vulnerable to his attacks. By contrast, our spiritual blessings are eternal, and our heavenly position is a stronghold that Satan finds difficult to penetrate.

The Shulamite is told to **Look from the top of Amana...**, or her position in heavenly places, safe **from** (or alternatively, ‘upon’) **the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards**, the weapons of satanic warfare directed at her. In spiritual warfare it is important that we adopt our spiritual position **“...in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion...”** (Eph 1:20-21).

Verse 9.

“You have ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; you have ravished my heart with one look of your eyes, with one link of your necklace.”

You have ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; you have ravished my heart with one look of your eyes:

The word translated here as ‘ravished’ has an obscure meaning. The essence of the meaning is “You have enhanced my love towards you with one look of your eyes”. The eyes are a mirror of the soul, revealing the state of the heart. With one glance from the Shulamite, the Beloved sees her heart’s consecration and devotion towards him, and his heart responds with his love reaching out to her.

...with one link of your necklace:

His heart responds with delight as he sees the gold link of her necklace, which reflects the nature of God being formed in her.

Verse 10.

“How fair is your love, my sister, my spouse! How much better than wine is your love, and the scent of your perfumes than all spices!”

How fair is your love, my sister, my spouse:

When the Beloved realises the Shulamite’s deep consecration towards him he calls her his sister, as the Lord does to those who have set themselves apart to Him. **“He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren...”** Heb 2:11-12.

How much better than wine is your love:

The love of the Lord being manifested through her is more satisfying than earthly pleasures like wine.

...the scent of your perfumes than all spices:

The **scent of your perfumes** speaks of the spiritual fragrance from the Lord’s indwelling Spirit, which exerts an attraction that has the capacity to draw others to the Lord.

Verse 11.

“Your lips, O my spouse, drip as the honeycomb; honey and milk are under your tongue; and the fragrance of your garments is like the fragrance of Lebanon.”

Your lips, O my spouse, drip as the honeycomb:

The Shulamite's lips communicate spiritual life from the Lord, dripping suggesting a quiet dependence on the Lord's initiation, rather than a rash outpouring from the flesh.

...honey and milk are under your tongue:

Honey and milk have the capacity to restore life and vitality to those who are physically and spiritually depleted. The Shulamite's lips and tongue have the capacity to speak words of life that lift up the spirits of those who are pressed down.

...the fragrance of your garments is like the fragrance of Lebanon:

Garments here speak of the outward manifestation of our inner nature. The apostle Peter expresses the connection between our garments, and our outward demeanour when he advised women, **“Do not let your adornment be merely outward — arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel — rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.”** 1 Peter 3:3-4.

The Beloved compares the Shulamites demeanour, a gentle and quiet spirit, with the natural beauty and ‘fragrance of Lebanon.’

Verse 12.

“A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.”

Verse 12 presents two metaphorical pictures, revealing two aspects of the Shulamite's consecration.

A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse:

The garden enclosed tells us that all that she is and has are his alone.

...a spring shut up, a fountain sealed:

The sealed fountain reveals that all of her spiritual knowledge and discernments are ‘sealed,’ and not revealed to anyone without his initiation and counsel.

Verse 13.

“Your plants are an orchard of pomegranates with pleasant fruits, fragrant henna with spikenard.”

Your plants are an orchard of pomegranates:

The Shulamite's garden is her field of ministry, and the plants in it are individual ministries to others. When cut in half, a pomegranate reveals hundreds of lustrous pink seeds, and so spiritually it symbolises fruitfulness. The pomegranates represent fruitfulness in her ministries.

...with pleasant fruits, fragrant henna with spikenard:

Spikenard symbolises humility, and henna the capacity to shelter, two traits of her humble and caring nature that bring forth **pleasant fruits**.

Verse 14.

“Spikenard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense, myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices.”

The Shulamite's garden or ministries, express the fullness of Christ's nature abiding in her, by which she was able to bear all kinds of fruit.

Verse 15.

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

A fountain of gardens:

Fountains, streams, and living waters, are frequently used as symbols of the Holy Spirit, indicating that all the ministries of the Shulamite have been empowered by the Holy Spirit.

The Shulamite

Verse 16.

“Awake, O north wind, and come, O south! Blow upon my garden, that its spices may flow out. Let my beloved come to his garden and eat its pleasant fruits.”

Awake, O north wind, and come, O south! Blow upon my garden, that its spices may flow out:

The wind represents the Holy Spirit. Ezekiel was directed by God to ask the Holy Spirit to breathe on the dry bones, but importantly, the word 'prophecy' meant 'to speak by inspiration' from the spirit rather than the flesh.

“Also He said to me, “Prophecy (‘speak by inspiration’ - not by the flesh) to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, “Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.” Ezek 37:9.

The Shulamite asked the Holy Spirit to direct His power on to the 'plants' in her 'garden,' so that the fruit of her ministries might be extended further abroad.

Let my beloved come to his garden and eat its pleasant fruits:

The Shulamite invites the Beloved to eat of the fruits of her ministries - an acknowledgement that without him she can do nothing, and that all glory associated with the fruit of her ministries must be his alone.

CHAPTER 5

At the end of Chapter 4, the Shulamite was well pleased with her ministry, asking the Holy Spirit to blow on her garden to spread its fruit abroad.

The Beloved

Verse 1.

“I have come to my garden, my sister, my spouse; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk. Eat, O friends! Drink, yes, drink deeply, O beloved ones!”

The Lord’s garden is the world-wide Church, but in this case He is referring to the garden of the Shulamite, or bridal soul, wishing to commend and encourage her. In the first part of the verse He tells her that He has ‘tasted’ the fruit of her ministries, and is well pleased.

The Beloved to Heavenly Hosts

Eat, O friends:

The literal meaning of the word translated here as friends is ‘close associates,’ which in this case refers to His heavenly hosts who have been associated with Him in blessing and guiding the ministry of the Shulamite.

Drink, yes, drink deeply, O beloved ones:

This invitation is issued to close associates of the Lord, or all those in heaven who have participated with the Shulamite in delivering sinners from the kingdom of Satan and transferring them into the kingdom of God. He is asking them to join with Him in celebrating in the fruit of her ministry. Jesus said there is much joy in heaven over souls gathered into His kingdom. **“I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons.”** Luke 15:7.

The Shulamite

Verse 2.

“I sleep, but my heart is awake; it is the voice of my beloved! He knocks, saying, “Open for me, my sister, my love, my dove, my perfect one; for my head is covered with dew, my locks with the drops of the night.”

The Shulamite falls unto a state of mind and heart that befalls many Christians, delaying their spiritual advancement for some time, even years. She has settled into a comfort zone of satisfaction and contentment in her ministry and spiritual state, and her relationship with her beloved. But now the Lord wants her to embark on a new phase towards spiritual maturity.

I sleep, but my heart is awake:

The flesh is warring against the spirit. Her spirit wants her to press on to spiritual maturity, but her flesh wants her to stay where she is bearing fruit and much admired by 'the daughters of Jerusalem.' In this conflict the flesh has obtained a temporary victory in staying her progress as she 'sleeps' in a comfort zone of spiritual contentment. However her spirit is not quenched, and she is awake to the Beloved's efforts to awakening her spiritual desire to resume her pilgrimage.

...it is the voice of my beloved! He knocks, saying, "Open for me, my sister, my love, my dove, my perfect one:

The Beloved entreats the Shulamite to open the door of her heart to him, enticing her with words that reflect his love for her.

...for my head is covered with dew, my locks with the drops of the night:

Now the Lord reveals Himself in a new light - as the man of sorrows and rejection. Night symbolises separation, and dew that blankets the landscape during the night, reflects the deprivation of the warmth and comfort of fellowship. We are reminded of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane when He was seemingly rejected and separated from God His Father, and great drops of perspiration like blood fell to the earth.

The fact was that Jesus had voluntarily taken upon Himself the mantle of the sin of mankind, that it might be judged and its power over man eliminated by His cross. His rejection at that time was because His Holy Father could not associate Himself with Jesus as the sin of mankind. **"For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."** 2 Cor 5:21.

At the door the Beloved represented rejection, and he was asking the Shulamite to deepen her consecration to him by sharing in his suffering and rejection. This is the challenge that eventually confronts all who embark on the path of the cross. **"For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake..."** Phil 1:29-30.

To the Shulamite this was an alarming turn of events, but all who proceed on the bridal pilgrimage must face the challenge of rejection, and not recoil from it. Presenting uncompromising truth, as in things like the path of the cross, refinement through suffering, and the moral liberality and worldliness pervading the Church, is bound to cause reaction and rejection from the majority of Christians. The Lord is asking His bridal soul to engage in His work in presenting uncompromising truth, and share with Him in His rejection.

Verse 3.

"I have taken off my robe; how can I put it on again? I have washed my feet; how can I defile them?"

I have taken off my robe; how can I put it on again:

The Spirit has given the Shulamite some understanding of what the trial of rejection from her fellow Christians will mean. She recoils and procrastinates, not yet willing to face the challenge. She offers excuses, saying, **I have taken off my robe** of rejection, and now I am accepted in the Beloved. **“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.”** Eph 1:3-6.

I have washed my feet; how can I defile them:

Her feet speak of her spiritual walk and its direction. She has washed her feet, or changed the state and direction of her spiritual walk. She had been walking in the world, drawn into its conflicts, rejections, and contaminations. Now she is walking in paths of righteousness and peace. She says that in taking off her shoes and washing her feet, she had been cleansed from that former pathway, and so asks how can she return to that contamination again?

Verse 4.

“My beloved put his hand by the latch of the door, and my heart yearned for him.”

The hand that she saw on the latch of the door was the pierced hand of the crucified Lord, and her former restraint melted. Her will was now set to accept the challenge of rejection, and her heart yearned to be one with him again on their pilgrimage.

It would be a mistake to think that the events described above take place as one happening in a brief moment in time. On the bridal pilgrimage it may take months, or even years, for a bridal soul to be willing to present uncompromising truth and share in the Lord’s rejection.

Verse 5.

“I arose to open for my beloved, and my hands dripped with myrrh, my fingers with liquid myrrh, on the handles of the lock.”

Having set her will to share in the Lord’s rejection, the Shulamite arose to release the lock of her will, her fingers, representing her future actions, dripping with myrrh, now willing to give up self-life to the death.

Verse 6.

“I opened for my beloved, but my beloved had turned away and was gone. My heart leaped up when he spoke. I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer.”

The Shulamite had opened the door of her heart to the Beloved, but he had turned away. Obviously the Beloved, or the Lord, knew the receptive state of her heart, but also knew that more work had to be done to fully prepare her for the trials ahead. The Shulamite’s intentions were good, but her former hesitation and procrastination showed that her resolve had to be strengthened until it became a firm unshakeable commitment. To accomplish this work the Beloved turned away from her to the degree that it would take a firm resolution to seek him out and find him.

Verse 7.

“The watchmen who went about the city found me. They struck me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took my veil away from me.”

To test her resolve, the Shulamite is confronted with her first taste of rejection. The watchmen, or keepers of the wall, are elders who have the responsibility of maintaining integrity and sound doctrinal truth in the Church. They found her, but because they were not familiar with her pathway in sharing in the Lord’s suffering and rejection, they ‘stripped off her veil’ to expose what they thought was doctrinal error. They wounded her with their harsh rejection and condemnation.

The Shulamite entreats the help of the Daughters of Jerusalem

Verse 8.

“I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved, that you tell him I am lovesick!”

The Shulamite was so devastated and humiliated by the harsh criticism and rejection of the elders, that she casts aside spiritual pride and entreats the **daughters of Jerusalem**, to for their help. She wanted them to intercede for her in their prayers to tell the Lord that she was lovesick. This was not the ‘lovesick’ spoken of earlier, which was caused by a depth of love, but a lovesickness caused by an apparent loss of the Beloved’s favour.

The Daughters of Jerusalem

Verse 9.

“What is your beloved more than another beloved, O fairest among women? What is your beloved more than another beloved, that you so charge us?”

The daughters of Jerusalem were so surprised that the one they so highly regarded was asking them for assistance that they asked, **What is your beloved more than another beloved, that you so charge us?** Her reply expresses her heart knowledge of her Lord, revealed to her by the Spirit. Her description may deepen our insight into the attributes of the Lord within us.

The Shulamite

Verse 10.

“My beloved is white and ruddy, chief among ten thousand.”

White declares his complete sinlessness, and ruddy the blood stained marks of His cross. Together they allude to “the spotless Lamb of God.” In Hebrew literature ten thousand indicates a limitless number, and He, in every respect, is the chief of them all.

Verse 11.

“His head is like the finest gold; his locks are wavy, and black as a raven.”

His head is like the finest gold:

His head, which dictates every thought and every action, is governed and upheld in every aspect by the presence of God.

...his locks are wavy, and black as a raven:

His locks, signifying strength and sanctification, are wavy, or not straightened or directed at a few, but covering the whole world, so that all who believed in Him should be saved.

“And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.” John 17:19.

“And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.” 1 John 2:2.

...black as a raven:

This suggests that His sanctification of us will never grow old or be outdated.

“In the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning, You have the dew of Your youth.” Ps 110:3.

Verse 12.

“His eyes are like doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set.”

His eyes are like doves by the rivers of waters:

The Beloved’s eyes are spiritually discerning. Jesus **“had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.”** John 2:25-3:1. His eyesight encompasses the earth, and His Spirit, as rivers of living waters, flows out to meet the needs of His children.

...washed with milk, and fitly set:

His eyes are fitly set on nurturing those who are suffering, **“...to heal the broken hearted...to proclaim liberty to the captives...and the opening of the prison to those who are bound...to comfort all who mourn...”** Isa 61:1-3.

Verse 13.

“His cheeks are like a bed of spices, banks of scented herbs. His lips are lilies, dripping liquid myrrh.”

His cheeks are like a bed of spices:

As in Chapter 1, cheeks reflect the Lord’s softness and gentleness towards His children. They are likened here to a bed of spices and banks of herbs, giving forth a pleasant fragrance of loving care.

His lips are lilies:

The lips, used in the Lord’s speaking, are likened to lilies, because they expressed a purity of truth that was in complete harmony with God’s truth outlined in the Scriptures.

...dripping liquid myrrh:

Here again myrrh speaks of death to self. The words the Lord spoke were not harsh or autocratic, but rather a selflessness and humility one would associate with a servant of mankind. **“...the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”** Matt 20:28.

Verse 14.

“His hands are rods of gold set with beryl. His body is carved ivory inlaid with sapphires.”

His hands are rods of gold set with beryl:

Hands are the implements through which the Lord works, and gold signifies the divine power of God. Jesus said, “...**the Father who dwells in Me does the works.**” John 14:10-11.

In other places in the bible **beryl** symbolises stability, and so this is saying that the works of Jesus will stand the test of time.

His body is carved ivory:

His body suggests our perception of his overall presence. Ivory is gathered out of death, and so carved ivory represents the beauty resulting from the death of the carnal man.

...inlaid with sapphires:

Sapphires symbolise heavenly purity. Putting these facts together, we see that the presence of the Lord radiates the heavenly beauty and purity of a self-sacrificial life.

Verse 15.

“His legs are pillars of marble set on bases of fine gold. His countenance is like Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.”

His legs are pillars of marble set on bases of fine gold:

Legs symbolise movement, and pillars strength and stability. Marble reflects splendour, and with the bases of fine gold, these symbols tell us that wherever he goes, the power and glory of his ministry manifests a steadfast splendour wrought by the indwelling presence of God.

His countenance is like Lebanon, excellent as the cedars:

Lebanon and cedars symbolise beauty and strength, but in the case of the Lord this does not refer to being handsome, for Isaiah prophesied, “**He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.**” Isa 53:2. The Lord’s countenance reflected an inner beauty and strength of character.

Verse 16.

“His mouth is most sweet, yes, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem!”

His mouth is most sweet, yes, he is altogether lovely:

His mouth, or the words he utters are full of grace, and pleasant to the ears.

This is my beloved, and this is my friend:

The Shulamite concludes her summation of the Beloved that as well as her loved one, he has become her friend, a relationship promised by the Lord to all those who obey His commands. “**You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.**” John 15:14.

CHAPTER 6

The Daughters of Jerusalem

Verse 1.

“Where has your beloved gone, O fairest among women? Where has your beloved turned aside, that we may seek him with you”?

In Chapter 5, when the Shulamite asked the Daughters of Jerusalem for help, they asked her, **What is your beloved more than another beloved, that you so charge us?** She replied with a heart-felt assessment of all of his qualities. Now they ask her, **Where has your beloved turned aside, that we may seek him with you?** Many Christians have seen in those on the bridal path something that they themselves lack, and seek, as did the Daughters of Jerusalem, to find what is behind it. However, very few are moved to the extent that they follow their example.

The Shulamite

Verse 2.

“My beloved has gone to his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed his flock in the gardens, and to gather lilies.”

The Shulamite replies that her **beloved has gone to his garden**, or his ministry to all Christians, to feed them and attend to their needs.

...to the beds of spices:

To receive and take pleasure in the fragrance of prayers of praise and worship.

...and to gather lilies:

Or to gather into his kingdom the pure in heart.

Verse 3.

“I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine. He feeds his flock among the lilies.”

This statement is the seal on the Shulamite's realisation of the Lord's love and favour, as He reveals the two way truth to her, **I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine.**

The repetition of the words, **He feeds his flock among the lilies**, is an assurance that the Lord never ceases to feed the pure in heart, or those who are not double minded in their desire to know Him.

The Beloved

The next few verses may be viewed as a reinstatement of the Shulamite's, relationship with the Lord. Even though he had never left her for one moment, the Beloved had taken away her perception of his presence as an act of correction, and it seemed to her that he had turned away from her. He now reassures her of his love and devotion.

Verse 4.

“O my love, you are as beautiful as Tirzah, lovely as Jerusalem, awesome as an army with banners!”

...you are as beautiful as Tirzah, lovely as Jerusalem:

Tirzah and Jerusalem are linked together because they were royal cities, greatly admired for their beauty. Referring to Jerusalem, Psalm 48 states, **“Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion (representing Jerusalem) on the sides of the north, the city of the great king.”** Ps 48:2.

...awesome as an army with banners:

Because she has overcome the powers of darkness in recent trials, the Beloved describes the Shulamite as **awesome as an army with banners!**

Verse 5.

“Turn your eyes away from me, for they have overcome me. Your hair is like a flock of goats going down from Gilead.”

Turn your eyes away from me, for they have overcome me:

Some Hebrew words in this sentence have archaic roots with alternative meanings and applications that we have to explore. For instance: ‘Turn your eyes away from me,’ has an alternative meaning, ‘to view.’ “Overcome” alternatively means to ‘strengthen’ or ‘embolden.’ Obviously the Lord cannot be overcome by anything, and there would be no need for the Beloved to ask the Shulamite to turn her eyes away from him. On the contrary, the essence of the reading is for the Shulamite to turn her eyes towards him, for in them he sees the beauty of her inner nature. It may also be translated, ‘Turn your eyes towards me so that I may be exalted as I see my nature being formed in you.’

The rest of Verse 5 to the end of Verse 7, is a repetition of the Beloved's description of the Shulamite in Chapter 4.

V.5. ...Your hair is like a flock of goats going down from Gilead.

Verse 6.

“Your teeth are like a flock of sheep which have come up from the washing; every one bears twins, and none is barren among them.”

Verse 7.

“Like a piece of pomegranate are your temples behind your veil.”

The Shulamite must have suffered recrimination as a result of the Lord’s discipline, and by using the same words that he had used before, the Beloved reassured her that his love for her had not altered or diminished. **“If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.”** 2 Tim 2:13

Verse 8.

“There are sixty queens and eighty concubines, and virgins without number,”

The **daughters, queens, and concubines, and virgins without number**, are used to represent members of the true Church who have commendable ministries, but have not embarked with her on the bridal pathway.

Verse 9.

“My dove, my perfect one, is the only one, the only one of her mother, the favourite of the one who bore her. The daughters saw her and called her blessed, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her.”

My dove, my perfect one, is the only one, the only one of her mother...who bore her:

In Chapter 3, we concluded that ‘mother’ was used as a symbol for God who gave birth to Israel and nurtured her in the wilderness. In the following reading from Revelation, we see that it is God who undertakes the work of forming and nurturing the Bride, and presenting her to His Son at the marriage of the Lamb. **“Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem [the bride of Christ], coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”** Rev 21:2-3.

The daughters saw her and called her blessed, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her:

Although the **daughters, queens, and concubines** are not one with her on her bridal pathway, they recognise the results of God’s refining hand, and they admire her and call her ‘blessed.’ The true Church has numerous souls who love the Lord, and have given up their all to engage in admirable works - world acclaimed teachers, evangelists, and many who have

devoted their lives ministering to people needing to know the Lord and His salvation. But although they have engaged themselves in such worthy works, few have stepped on the path of the cross where their fleshly carnal natures have been stripped away to allow the Lord's work to be accomplished through them without the interference of flesh.

Compared to the others with such admirable ministries, it is said that the bridal soul **is the only one, the only one of her mother, the favourite of the one who bore her**. She is the only one who has been prepared by God the Father, and consequently, she is His favourite one. God views bridal soles down through the ages with more favour than those who have been engaged solely in works.

An Unknown Witness

Verse 10.

“Who is she who looks forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, awesome as an army with banners”?

...who looks forth as the morning:

Although it is an onlooker who is asking this question, it is really the Holy Spirit using this person to highlight the Shulamite as ‘the morning,’ or a new creation, now reflecting the glory of Jesus Christ, and through Him God the Father.

The Shulamite **looks forth as the morning**, having passed through the shadows of night into the morning light. Although she has learned to walk in the light of Christ's blessings, she is still a way off from the perfected light of noon, or complete fulfilment in Christ.

...fair as the moon, clear as the sun:

She is said to be as **fair as the moon, clear as the sun...** She is fair as the moon, which gives off a clear reflection of the sun, which symbolises the glory of God.

...awesome as an army with banners:

In her growing maturity, the Shulamite has experienced a union with Christ in His work of casting down the works of Satan, and so to the powers of darkness, she is **“awesome as an army with banners.”** Roman armies unfurled their banners in victory parades.

The Shulamite

Verse 11.

“I went down to the garden of nuts to see the verdure of the valley, to see whether the vine had budded and the pomegranates had bloomed.”

The garden that the Shulamite viewed to gauge its fruitfulness, is her own garden. She has been drawn into introspection, looking within herself to gauge her spiritual growth by the fruit she has produced. This is a dangerous enterprise that unfortunately we are all prone to engage in.

When contemplating his own ministry, Paul declares that he dare not engage in introspection, and the only works that commended him are those that the Lord has been able to accomplish through him.

“For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise... But "he who glories, let him glory in the Lord." For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.” 2 Cor 10:12-13, 17-18.

Introspection looks for tangible fruit from our ministries, but this is a futile exercise, for the fruits of our ministries are often unseen, or may need further time for fulfilment. A surer way of assessing our growth in the Lord is to see how much our carnal nature has been dealt with, and the character traits that we have been delivered from.

As a result of her introspection, the Shulamite may have looked at her ministry negatively, seeing what seemed to be little fruit, and the lost opportunities.

Verse 12.

“Before I was even aware, my soul had made me as the chariots of my noble people.”

Engaging in introspection, and focusing on what seems to be lacking and what could have been, often opens the door to foolish fantasies and imaginings of lavish fruitfulness and recognition. This is the work of Satan and his demon spirits, who desire to take our thoughts captive, drawing them away from the Lord and His ministry, to worthless futility. The Shulamite says that before she was aware of it happening, the imagination of her soul had made her **as the chariots of my noble people**, or installed her in a position associated with royalty. These vain imaginings come on us unaware because they have been initiated by Satan. They may be entertaining at the time, but once realised they should be repudiated and rejected, because they directly oppose the work of the Holy Spirit in replacing our carnal minds with the mind of Christ. Putting off the carnal mind and putting on the mind of Christ is a constant work we must engage in, and one most opposed by Satan. Paul encourages us by saying, **“But we have the mind of Christ.”** 1 Cor 2:16

A Member of the Church

Verse 13.

“Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon you”! “What would you see in the Shulamite — as it were, the dance of the two camps?”

Return, return, O Shulamite...return, that we may look upon you:

Having prepared the ground, Satan now tries to draw the Shulamite back to where she came from, with enticing and flattering words from a member of the church, who entreats her to return to their midst: **Return, return, O Shulamite...return, that we may look upon you!** Members of the church realise that she is indeed a new creation, and want to draw her back into their midst to observe her, and perhaps if possible to be engaged with them in their works and their programs.

The Shulamite Replies

What would you see in the Shulamite — as it were, the dance of the two camps:

Here is a test of the allegiance of the Shulamite, but she shows that she has passed through the trials of introspections and vain imaginations by rejecting their invitation to return to them. She asks, ‘What do you think that you would see in me, **the dance of the two camps?** The dance of the two camps is a celebratory dance of two companies of people, in this case representing the tainted works of the church, and the works of the Lord, initiated by Him and executed through Him in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Shulamite is asking “how could you expect me to engage in the works of the Lord, at the same time with works compromised by the flesh and the world?”

CHAPTER 7

The main theme of the last chapter was the restoration of the Shulamite's perception of the Lord's abiding presence and His continual love for her. Towards the end she faced and overcame introspection and vain imaginings, attacks that Satan uses to divert our minds from the work of the Lord.

Of necessity we must conclude that a considerable time has elapsed before coming to this chapter, which depicts the Shulamite as a mature fully equipped servant of the Lord. The praise the Beloved bestows on the Shulamite reflects the glory of her fulfilled state. From a Christian's point of view, this chapter is a reflection of what one may become in the Lord.

The Beloved

Verse 1.

“How beautiful are your feet in sandals, O prince's daughter! The curves of your thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of a skilful workman.”

How beautiful are your feet in sandals, O prince's daughter:

Feet symbolise movement, in this case in the operation of her ministry. The fact that her feet are in sandals, tells us that they are not contaminated by the dust of the world, indicating that her ministry is free from worldliness.

O prince's daughter:

The Shulamite is given a royal title because it is God who has brought her forth, and it is He who is forming her in the image of Jesus Christ.

“...put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.” Eph 4:24

The curves of your thighs are like jewels:

Thighs symbolise strength or power in movement. Jewels speak of graces given to a person by God, as in gifts of the Spirit, and other ministerial abilities such as exhortation, hospitality, and administration, which enable a person to minister to the body of Christ in the graces and power of God.

...the work of the hands of a skilful workman:

We are said to be the work of a skilled workman. God, undertakes the work of stripping away our carnal nature and forms us into the image of Christ and empowers us to do the work

of the Lord. **“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works...”** Eph 2:10.

Verse 2.

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

Thy navel is like a round goblet, which wanteth not liquor:

In Strong's Concordance the Hebrew word *shorer*, for navel, is comparable to '*shor*,' - the umbilical cord.

The navel is the remnant of the umbilical cord that supplies nutrients from the mother to the baby in the mother's womb. Here, it is a representation of the Shulamite connected to God, and receiving continual nourishment from Him. The rounded goblet that 'lacks not liquor,' tells us that the Shulamite lacks no want from God's nurture.

...thy belly is like an heap of wheat: According to '*Strong's Concordance*,' the root meaning of the Hebrew word for 'belly' is 'to be hollow,' and can be translated, '*the belly, especially the womb.*'

The Shulamite has advanced to the stage of being in union with Christ in God, who meets every spiritual need in her ministry. In this state she is capable of bearing much fruit. Grain is a symbol for the word or truth, and the **heap of wheat** or grain, an abundance of truth, meaning that God directs truth to her by the Spirit to minister to all needs.

...set about with lilies:

The lilies symbolise purity, and so the truth she presents is without error. The Shulamite is now a vessel God can use to produce other bridal souls like herself, by presenting truth that leads them to embark on the bridal path.

Verse 3.

“Your two breasts are like two fawns, Twins of a gazelle.”

“Your two breasts are like two fawns:

In previous descriptions, her breasts were **like two fawns, twins of a gazelle, which feed among the lilies.** She no longer needs to feed among the lilies seeking for sources of pure truth, as Jesus as her way, her truth, and her life, (Jn 14:6), is her source of truth. As mentioned earlier breasts are used as a symbol for the capacity to receive and distribute truth to feed others, so that they may grow in the knowledge of the Lord.

...twins of a gazelle:

Twins of a gazelle represents an abundance and swiftness to minister.

Verse 4.

“Your neck is like an ivory tower, your eyes like the pools in Heshbon by the gate of Bath Rabbim. Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon which looks toward Damascus.”

Your neck is like an ivory tower:

Previously her neck, signifying her willpower, was likened to **the tower of David built for an armoury, on which hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men**, suggesting the strong will power necessary to stay on the path of the cross. Now her neck, or willpower is likened to an ivory tower, intimating that her strong will has been tempered as she has learned to rest in God’s love and graciousness.

...your eyes like the pools in Heshbon by the gate of Bath Rabbim:

Her eyes, that reflect the state of her inner life, are likened to pools of still water. In other words, her soul has been quietened from its ceaseless activity, and now accepts God’s inner working with quiet calmness.

Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon which looks toward Damascus:

This is the first time her nose has been mentioned. A function of the nose is to test the nature of all food that is to enter the body, whether it is agreeable, unhealthy, or dangerous to our wellbeing. The Shulamite has been given the spiritual capacity to intuitively discern truth from error. This faculty is likened to **the tower of Lebanon**, which means that she is a safe refuge for questioning souls to turn to when confronted with questionable facts or doctrines.

which looks toward Damascus:

Damascus is the capitol of Syria, and was the expected sources of attacks on Israel or in this case, attacks on truth.

Verse 5.

“Your head crowns you like Mount Carmel, and the hair of your head is like purple; a king is held captive by your tresses.”

Your head crowns you like Mount Carmel:

The head is a symbol of authority, and Mount Carmel was the place where Elijah withstood the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal installed by Jezebel. Elijah prevailed against them because he trusted God to honour his authority by sending down fire to consume his sacrifice.

The Shulamite has reached that state of maturity that enables her to be entrusted with Christ's authority to reign with Him on His throne. **"To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne."** Rev 3:21.

...the hair of your head is like purple:

Purple is the colour of royalty. Not only has the Shulamite been entrusted with the authority of the Lord, she has been empowered by the name of Jesus to reign as a king, foreshadowing the Lord's promise to make us **"...kings and priests to our God."** Rev 5:10.

...a king is held captive by your tresses:

As mentioned previously, hair symbolises consecration. When a person is totally consecrated to the Lord, his will is aligned with the will of the Lord, and his prayers are according to the will of the Lord. It follows that the Lord is obliged (or held captive) to answer his prayers. In the following reading, Paul makes it clear that reigning with Christ in casting down strongholds only takes place when our own obedience is fulfilled or established. **"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled."** 2 Cor 10:4-6.

Verse 6.

"How fair and how pleasant you are, O love, with your delights!"

After viewing the fullness of His life and nature now formed in her, the Beloved, or Lord exclaims, **How fair and how pleasant you are, O love, with your delights!** She is all fair and pleasant, without any guile or offending intrusion of the flesh, reminding us of the description of members of the bride in Revelation 14. **"And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God."** Rev 14:5.

Verse 7.

"This stature of yours is like a palm tree, and your breasts like its clusters."

This stature of yours is like a palm tree:

The spiritual stature of the bride is now likened to a palm tree, which is noted for its uprightness and strength in all circumstances. She is like **"a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more"** Rev 3:12, constant in her spiritual position in Christ in God.

...your breasts like its clusters:

The palm tree is able to produce clusters of dates in adverse environmental and climatic conditions, telling us that the Shulamite, or bride, is capable of nurturing those in need in all circumstances.

The Beloved

Verse 8.

“I said, “I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of its branches.” Let now your breasts be like clusters of the vine, the fragrance of your breath like apples,

I said, “I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of its branches”:

The branches and its leaves are responsible for turning the nutrients from the soil into fruit. The Lord is making a commitment to the bride to enhance her capacity to bear fruit by His presence in her. Jesus made this promise to all believers: **“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”** John 15:5-6.

Let now your breasts be like clusters of the vine:

The remainder of verses 8 and 9 feature wine, which is used as a symbol of the New Testament gospel. Jesus spoke this parable, to demonstrate that the new wine of the New Testament gospel cannot be encased in the old wineskins of Old Testament traditions.

“And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine will burst the wineskins and be spilled, and the wineskins will be ruined. But new wine must be put into new wineskins, and both are preserved. Luke 5:37-38.

The wine of the New Testament brings spiritual life and health to all who receive it, and so the Shulamite is encouraged to dispense this life by revealing the blessings of life in union with Christ.

...the fragrance of your breath like apples:

In Chapter 2, when highlighting the Beloved’s capacity to nourish others, the Shulamite compared him to an apple tree in the woods. Now he says, “Let your speech give forth the fragrance of my presence in you.”

Verse 9.

“...and the roof of your mouth like the best wine. The wine goes down smoothly for my beloved, moving gently the lips of sleepers.”

...and the roof of your mouth (or palate) like the best wine:

The palate savours all that we put in our mouths. The Beloved entreats the Shulamite to spiritually ‘taste’ the words of life her mouth presents, so that they may have the fullest capacity to impart life to others.

The Shulamite

The wine goes down smoothly for my beloved, moving gently the lips of sleepers:

The Beloved and Shulamite have been brought together as one, and this verse now expresses their unity in their combined ministry. **The wine**, which is the new wine of gospel truth of the salvation of mankind, goes down smoothly for the Beloved, because it expresses his heart’s desire that all men should be saved.

The sleepers are they who have been indifferent to the gospel truth of salvation. The truth, initiated by the Lord, and presented by the Shulamite in the power of the Holy Spirit, has the capacity to awaken **sleepers**, and to open their lips, as in a confession of salvation.

Verse 10.

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

This blessed revelation by the Spirit is the highlight of the Shulamite’s reinstatement in the knowledge of the Lord’s love and favour. It is a realisation of the two way commitment towards one another, ending with the statement, **his desire is toward me**, which banishes all doubts.

The Beloved

Verse 11.

“Come, my beloved, let us go forth to the field; let us lodge in the villages.”

Based on the words ‘come my beloved,’ many commentators ascribe the words of the next three verses to the Shulamite, but the word ‘beloved’ is not a title, but a term of endearment. The three verses are more applicable when they are ascribed to the Beloved, or the Lord Jesus Christ for the following reasons.

- It is the Lord who initiates direction and directs the path ahead. In the last chapter the Shulamite went astray when she went down to the garden on her own initiative to view its fruits. It is hardly likely that she would again take the initiative.

- The three verses 11 to 13 set the pattern for their joint ministry, which is the province of the Lord. They present a picture of ministry in union with Christ in God.

Because of the Shulamite's past indiscretion, the Lord now establishes His headship in their joint ministry by initiating the instructions. However the Lord's words, **let us**, set the tone of His headship. It is not autocratic or overriding her free will, but invites her to become one with Him in their joint ministry.

...let us go forth to the field; let us lodge in the villages:

The field is the area of world-wide ministry. The words, **let us lodge in the villages**, sets the pattern for ministry in union with the Lord. The field of our ministry in union with the Lord has no fixed address, or limiting boundaries. It is the Lord who decides where we **lodge in villages**, or where we minister from, or to where our ministry extends. The Lord had no fixed address when saying to His disciples, **"Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."** Matt 8:20.

Verse 12.

"Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine has budded, whether the grape blossoms are open, and the pomegranates are in bloom. There I will give you my love."

Let us get up early to the vineyards:

Our ministries should be conducted with diligence and without procrastination. We should endeavour to meet a need when it first presents itself, without waiting for further developments.

...see if the vine has budded, whether the grape blossoms are open, and the pomegranates are in bloom:

Buds and blooms are an indication that fruit will soon follow. A diligent gardener leaves nothing to chance, spraying fruit trees with an insecticide to avoid a possible infestation that would damage the emerging fruit. Likewise a diligent servant of the Lord covers emerging fruit with prayer, binding away attacks from spirits of Satan by the name of Jesus Christ.

There I will give you my love:

In any genuine ministry, it is the Lord who brings forth fruit, using us as His instruments, and any ministry of the Lord is borne out of His love for His brethren. It is His desire that His love is manifested through us when we minister in His name. When Jesus said, **there I will give you my love**, He was indicating that when ministering to others, He would impart His love to us, that through us it might be made known to others.

Verse 13.

"The mandrakes give off a fragrance, and at our gates are pleasant fruits, all manner, new and old, which I have laid up for you, my beloved."

The mandrakes give off a fragrance:

In ancient Israel mandrakes were said to be ‘the fruit of love.’ The fragrance of love is a forerunner of the pleasant fruits that follow.

...at our gates are pleasant fruits:

At our gates is the same as ‘at our door,’ or ready for us to be engaged in.

...new and old:

Fruit from new as well as the receiving and nurturing fruit from old ministries.

...which I have laid up for you:

We do not lay up fruit for the Lord, for God has prepared or laid up the works and fruit of our labours “**beforehand that we should walk in them.**” Eph 2:10.

CHAPTER 8

The last chapter pictured the Shulamite as a mature fully equipped servant of the Lord, and the final verses portrayed them united in the Lord's world-wide ministry. Now, at the start of Chapter 8, we are confronted with an unexpected development. The Shulamite seems to have regressed, again losing her composure, and her assurance of the Lord's love and favour.

Now she appears as if she is under some kind of attack, which has left her insecure and out of touch with her Lord. The Shulamite is at the threshold of entering into a full personal knowledge of abiding with Christ in God, and reigning with Him. This being a position most feared by Satan, we can be sure that it is strongly opposed. However God allows this to happen because He has some more to teach the Shulamite, and more refining work to accomplish.

The Shulamite

Verse 1.

“Oh, that you were like my brother, who nursed at my mother's breasts! If I should find you outside, I would kiss you; I would not be despised.”

The Shulamite's thoughts, **If I should find you outside, I would kiss you; I would not be despised**, show that she has lost her peace, security, and rest in God. She has lost her sense of purity and righteousness through the blood of Jesus, and she feels separated from the Lord, even to the degree of feeling rejected and despised. Her mind takes her back to the peace and rest she had experienced when she was first saved, and she wishes that the Beloved was as her brother, so that she could draw him near, and restore their intimate relationship.

Verse 2.

“I would lead you and bring you into the house of my mother, she who used to instruct me. I would cause you to drink of spiced wine, of the juice of my pomegranate.”

I would lead you and bring you into the house of my mother, she who used to instruct me:

In this present state of insecurity, the Shulamite wishes to relate to the Beloved in the place she first felt peace and security - **the house of my mother, she who used to instruct me**, or into the church where she was led into the gospel truth.

I would cause you to drink of spiced wine, of the juice of my pomegranate:

With her spiritual composure restored, she would be able to resume her life giving ministry.

The closer we draw near to God, the more we are likely to be confronted by accusations by Satan, who is endeavouring to halt our spiritual progress. Here, more than ever, we need to know the covering of the blood of Jesus, and its efficacy in overcoming the power of sin. The

Shulamite earnestly desires to enter into an intimate oneness with the Lord, but Satan combats this by exaggerating in her mind and conscience the seeming irreverence of every sin and indiscretion. Smallest indiscretions in things like impatience, a careless word, or unwarranted judgments, cause so much consternation that, in her case, she thinks that she has regressed, and has lost the Lord's favour, even giving her the sense that she is despised. Before proceeding further on her pilgrimage, the Shulamite has to know in her heart the full power of the blood of Jesus to not only provide forgiveness, but to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, and deliver our consciences from all guilt.

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9-10.

“Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus...let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.” Heb 10:19&22.

This latest attack shows us that we are never immune from satanic warfare, which may even intensify as we grow in maturity. Having reached that state, it is crucial that we bring to bear the power of the blood of the cross, through which we may find peace. **“For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.”** Col 1:19-20.

The Shulamite to the Daughters of Jerusalem

Verse 3.

“His left hand is under my head, and his right hand embraces me.”

After the bridal soul has been shown the truth concerning her previous circumstances, the Lord restores her knowledge of His abiding presence and unabated love. His left hand supports her head, establishing the truth in her mind. His right hand, or hand of His strength upholds her whole being.

The Beloved to the Daughters of Jerusalem

Verse 4.

“I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, do not stir up nor awaken love until it pleases.”

After restoring the Shulamite, and establishing her in his rest, the Beloved again warns the eager daughters of Jerusalem to leave her alone, and not interfere with what He is accomplishing in her.

Verse 5.

“Who is this coming up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved? I awakened you under the apple tree. There your mother brought you forth; there she who bore you brought you forth.”

An Onlooker

The Holy Spirit uses a witness of her spiritual growth to convey this next stage of her development.

Who is this coming up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved:

When she had been out of touch with the Lord in Verses 1&2, the Shulamite had been in the wilderness in a state of unrest. Now we see the result of God’s workmanship as she emerges **leaning upon her beloved**, or in a state of restful dependence on the Lord, who told us, **“without Me you can do nothing.”** John 15:5. To the immature Christian this may seem to be a sign of weakness, but it is in fact the seal of a perfected vessel of the Lord, one in whom the flesh has been laid aside so that all ministry may be of the Lord, and to His glory. In his address to the Philippians, Paul said, **“For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,”** Phil 3:3.

The Beloved

I awakened you under the apple tree:

In Chapter 2, the Lord is likened to an apple tree among the trees of the woods, and so this is a reminder that she was awakened to the presence of the Lord, whilst among other ‘trees’ in the church.

There your mother brought you forth; there she who bore you brought you forth:

At the start of this verse the Shulamite was pictured **coming up from the wilderness**. Earlier we concluded that ‘mother’ symbolised God who brought the bride forth and nurtured her, and here we see that it is in the wilderness that God is best able to do His work in forming His will in us, not when all is going well, but when we are troubled and searching for answers.

The Beloved to the Shulamite

Verse 6.

“Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is as strong as death, jealousy as cruel as the grave; its flames are flames of fire, a most vehement flame.”

Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm:

The seal is the seal of ownership, and so the Beloved (or the Lord) is asking the Shulamite to willingly surrender her heart, the centre of her will to him, so that he can establish his will in her heart, so that her life will be governed by his will.

Similarly, he asks her to place his seal on her arm, or on everything she does, so that all that she does will be of him.

...love is as strong as death:

The love of the Lord's jealousy for mankind was proven as strong as death when he willingly faced the death of the cross to procure the salvation of mankind.

...jealousy as cruel as the grave:

The Lord yearns for every part of us to belong to Him, whilst Satan endeavours to bring parts of our nature under his control with the intent to dominate us. When we willingly lay our carnal natures on the altar of the cross, the Holy Spirit undertakes the task of putting it to death, and replacing it with the nature of the Lord. The end result of His working is that every part of us will be possessed by the Lord.

...its flames are flames of fire, a most vehement flame?

The flames of fire are the refining flames of the Holy Spirit that will not be quenched until His work of refining is done.

Verse 7.

“Many waters cannot quench love, nor can the floods drown it. If a man would give for love all the wealth of his house, it would be utterly despised.”

Many waters cannot quench love, nor can the floods drown it:

No matter how much we are disappointing to the Lord, or our own love wanes, His love remains as strong as ever.

“For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Rom 8:38-39.

If a man would give for love all the wealth of his house, it would be utterly despised:

If a man tried to buy love with all the wealth at his disposal, his efforts would be utterly despised.

The Shulamite

Verse 8.

“We have a little sister, and she has no breasts. What shall we do for our sister in the day when she is spoken for?”

We have a little sister, and she has no breasts:

Now that the Shulamite’s heart relationship with the Lord has reached a perfected state, she can make such requests, knowing that they are in accordance with the will of the Lord.

The statement, **we have a little sister**, means that the little sister belongs to both of them. She is not the Shulamite’s sibling, but a spiritual sister in the Lord, in particular, a bridal soul who has not progressed to the degree of having breasts that would enable her to nourish others.

What shall we do for our sister in the day when she is spoken for:

The day that she is spoken for is the day that she is espoused to the Lord. In the Shulamite’s case this did not take place until Chapter 4 when He called her “my spouse.”

The Beloved Replies to the Shulamite

Verse 9.

“If she is a wall, we will build upon her a battlement of silver; and if she is a door, we will enclose her with boards of cedar.”

The Beloved’s response to the Shulamite’s request is that if the young pilgrim on the bridal path has any spiritual barriers like a wall of self-protection, or self-consciousness that closes a door to the flow of the life giving spirit of Jesus, together they will remove them. It should be understood that such spiritual barriers imposed on the young pilgrim, are usually the work of Satan, and have to be overcome by spiritual means.

If she is a wall, we will build upon her a battlement of silver.

Silver represents the Spirit of the risen Lord, which will be strengthened in the little sister to create a spiritual battlement that will be more than capable of overcoming any wall imposed by Satan

...if she is a door, we will enclose her with boards of cedar:

Cedar represents the perfection of the natural man, in this case, it is the beauty of Christ’s humanity as God residing in man, **“full of grace and truth.”** (Jn 1:14). The Beloved says that they will enclose the little sister with the beauty of Christ’s human nature, which will

overcome all of her self-consciousness, so that the love and grace of the Lord will flow out through her.

The Shulamite

Verse. 10

“I am a wall, and my breasts like towers; then I became in his eyes as one who found peace.”

I am a wall:

The Shulamite has been made like a wall that cannot be broken down by the powers of darkness. **“And I will make you to this people a fortified bronze wall; and they will fight against you, but they shall not prevail against you...”** Jer 15:20

...and my breasts like towers:

Her breasts, or capacity to nurture others have become as ‘towers’, as a refuge for people in need of strengthening by the word of truth.

...then I became in his eyes as one who found peace:

Unshakable peace of the Lord accompanies all those who are in perfect harmony with His will, so her peace is a sign of her maturity in the Lord. **“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”** John 16:33.

Verse 11.

“Solomon had a vineyard at Baal Hamon; he leased the vineyard to keepers; everyone was to bring for its fruit a thousand silver coins.”

This particular vineyard, or area of ministry, is used as an example to illustrate the Lord’s perfect will for those called to fulfil His purposes. The **thousand silver coins** are not a quantity of money, but represent a workers capacity in his ministry, as in the parable of talents. Ten symbolises completeness, and a thousand a perfect completeness, and so the Lord is expecting complete consecration and commitment by His appointed ministers.

The Shulamite

Verse 12.

“My own vineyard is before me. You, O Solomon, may have a thousand, and those who tend its fruit two hundred.”

My own vineyard is before me. You, O Solomon, may have a thousand:

The thousand tells us that the Shulamite has totally consecrated her own vineyard, or personal ministry, to the Lord, dedicating all that she is, has, and capable of to Him, so that she may be used by Him to bear fruit to His glory.

...and those who tend its fruit two hundred:

The fruit having been formed is relinquished into the care of tenderers. An illustration of this principle may be found in Moses' care of the children of Israel, described in Exodus chapter 18. The burden of judging so great a number was too hard to bear, and so he appointed able men (tenderers) to judge over the majority of matters, but the harder cases they referred to Moses. Moses had the responsibility to train and supervise the tenderers. His overall responsibility was to God (giving Him **a thousand**), and to the tenderers, **two hundred**.

The general lesson to observe is that those in charge of ministries have a responsibility to those aiding them in their work.

The Beloved

Verse 13.

“You who dwell in the gardens, the companions listen for your voice — Let me hear it!”

You who dwell in the gardens:

The gardens are the ministry areas of the Shulamite, who is now completed as a bride of Christ.

...the companions listen for your voice:

In the first chapter of Hebrews, angels are referred to as the Lord's companions, who minister to the children of God. **“... Your God, has anointed You [Jesus] with the oil of gladness more than Your companions... Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?”** Heb 1:9 &14.

The **companions** of the Lord, are His angels. He appoints them to watch over our ministries, and create conditions that bring forth fruit.

The Shulamite is now fully equipped to reign with the Lord by using the authority of His name to cast down strongholds, set the captives free, heal the sick, to send forth truth to those who sit in darkness - in short, to enable the Lord to fulfil His commission outlined in Isaiah 61. The angels cannot act independently, and cannot act until they hear the Shulamite's voice wielding the authority of the name of Jesus. Knowing this, the Lord, says **Let me hear it!**

The Shulamite

Verse 14.

“Make haste, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young stag on the mountains of spices.”

The essence of these words are echoed in the last verses of Revelation.

“And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.” Rev 22:17.

“He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming quickly.” Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.” Rev 22:20-21.