







# Song of Songs, also Canticles

- It's unique within the Hebrew bible.
- There's nothing spiritual in it all.
- No interest in Law or Covenant or Yahweh God.
- It doesn't teach Wisdom like Proverbs or Ecclesiastes.
- It celebrates sexual love, giving "the voices of two lovers, praising each other, yearning for each other, proffering invitations to enjoy".
- It is very sensual, touching all senses.
- The women of Jerusalem form a chorus to the lovers, functioning as an audience whose participation in the lovers' erotic encounters facilitates the participation of the reader.

## Song of Songs in religious tradition

- Jewish tradition reads it as an allegory of the relationship between God and Israel.
- Christian tradition sees it an allegory of Christ and his "bride", the Church.

# But it is neither and both at once.

# Neither because it is not allegory!

Allegories are fictional stories with hidden meanings; nothing is what it seems.

# Both because it is an analogy!

An analogy is a **fact** that is like another **fact**!

#### Two facts

- 1. Song of Songs is an **analogy** of the loving relationship between God and Israel.
- 2. Song of Songs is an **analogy** of the loving relationship between Christ and his "bride", the Church.

Remember Hebrew "pattern"; both are true.

#### Psalm 45

- Psalm 45 is a wedding song for Solomon which gives insight in the social dynamics of being a harem girl. It is written to the hundreds of women Solomon married. They are coached to cut off family ties: "In place of your fathers will be your sons; You shall make them princes in all the earth." (Psalm 45:16)
- The girls are promised power, fame, influence and money:
   "The daughter of Tyre will come with a gift; The rich among the people will seek your favor."
   "Her clothing is interwoven with gold."
   "I will cause Your name to be remembered in all generations"
- Abishag, (Shunammite) had to make the cost/benefit calculation highlighted in Psalm 45, weighing the loss of her family against the gain of fame, money, power, influence, luxury and fine clothing.

#### Was Shulamite Abishag?

- Was the Shulamite of Song of Songs David's Abishag of 1 Kings 1:2-3?
- Both were stunning beautiful.
- Both were from Shunem (or surrounds).
- Both were virgins and of marrying age at exactly the same time.
- The vineyard the Shulamite worked in is located at Baal-hamon, and "Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon" (SoS 8:11)
- Shulamite is only used once I the Bible (SoS 6:13).
  - People from Shuman were called "Shunamites".
  - Abishag the Shunamite (1 Kgs 1:3, 15; 2:17-22) was from Shunem.
  - "Shulamite" may be a feminized version of "Solomon".
  - The Israelites were fond of word-play.
- In fact, we don't know if David's Abishag was Solomon's Shulamite.

#### **Possible Plots**

#### **Biblical Love Story**

Farm girl slaves in vineyard

Girl meets shepherd boy

Both fall in love

Boy proposes

Boy must go to city

Girl waits with longing

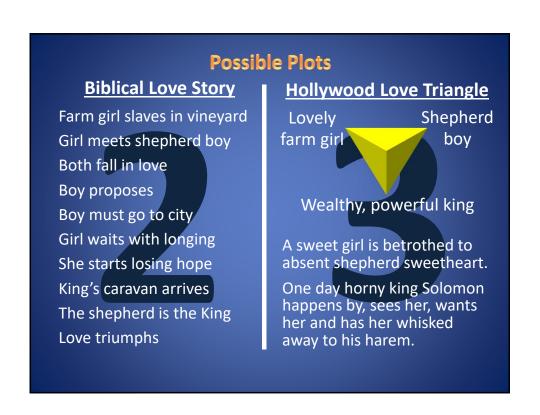
She starts losing hope

King's caravan arrives

The shepherd is the King

Love triumphs





#### **Possible Plots**

#### **Biblical Love Story**

Farm girl slaves in vineyard
Girl meets shepherd boy
Both fall in love
Boy proposes
Boy must go to city
Girl waits with longing
She starts losing hope
King's caravan arrives
The shepherd is the King
Love triumphs

# Hollywood Love Triangle Lovely Shepherd farm Wealthy, Swerful king weet girl is bet, Shed to at and shepherd sweether. One of horny king Sold on happen and has her whisked away to his harem.

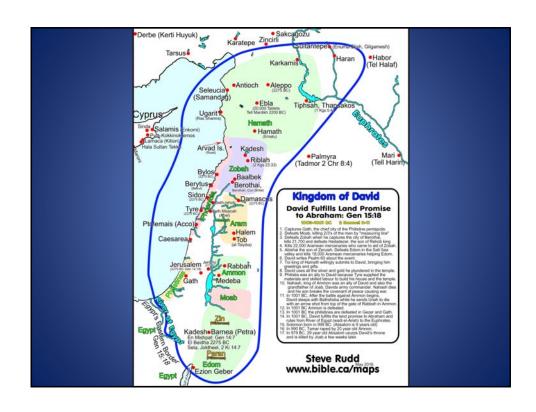
#### A few words to the wise



- The 3-character interpretation is popular today, and its teaching moral comes from her answer to the question on the left (i.e., will Israel choose G-d/Christ the shepherd or the rich king (the world)).
- It dates to Origen (father of allegorical interpretation) or earlier (2<sup>nd</sup> cent. AD).
- Many well-meaning Christians adopt it, as do non-Orthodox Jewish scholars.
- In this view, Solomon wrote it to bemoan that the only true love he witnessed was between the Shulamite and her shepherd.
- The traditional view is the 2-character view, which fosters analogy not allegory.

#### **King Solomon**

- Second son of David and Bathsheba.
- Reigned over United Kingdom from 971 to 930 during 40 years of peace (see 1 Kings 1-11, 1 Chronicles 22-29, 2 Chronicles 1-9) but as Assyria was again rising to power.
- Known for God-given wisdom but not its application.
- Wrote 3,000 proverbs and 1,005 songs (1 Kings 4:32)
- The story occurred when Solomon had 60 wives and 80 concubines, about 3-4 years after he became king.
- Lyric poem extolling marriage as God's design and virtues of spiritual, emotional and physical love between a husband and wife.



#### **Key verses**

- "Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires." (2:7; 3:5; 8:4)
- "My beloved is mine, and I am his." (2:16)
- "Eat, O friends, and drink; drink your fill, O lovers." (5:1)
- "Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm; for love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame. Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot wash it away. If one were to give all the wealth of his house for love, it would be utterly scorned." (8:6-7)

SACRED LOVE, AMOUR SACRÉ, SECULAR LOVE, AMOUR PROFANE, THE SONG OF SONGS LE CANTIQUE DES CANTIQUES from Jerusalem to Australia de Jérusalem à l'Australie



#### Ladies and Gentlemen,

U3A is a worldwide community of learning and what wonders we learn!

From the romantic nation of Australia comes production of an original new presentation focused on the theme of Love and the Song of Songs. This performance will be presented in prose and poetry, song and dance by class participants (actually, it may just be the same old, same old PowerPoints and DVD).

Our play "Sacred Love, Secular Love, the Song of Songs – From Jerusalem to Australia" offers an experience rich in emotion, meaning, intellectual endeavour, eschatology, hermeneutics, philosophy, and all forms of biblical love.

We hope you have a fascinating, illuminating, enlightening and very enjoyable time in this session.

**y** 

SACRED LOVE, SECULAR LOVE, THE SONG OF SONGS



#### **Guest** Programme Programme des invités

Act 1 - The Courtship

Scene 1 - Song of Songs 1:1–4 Preparing for the feast Scene 2 - Song of Songs 1:5–11 Lovesick but unworthy Scene 3 - Song of Songs 1:12–14 The wedding feast Scene 4 - Song of Songs 1:15–2:7 The bridal chamber Scene 5 - Song of Songs 2:8–17 A springtime visit Scene 6 - Song of Songs 3:1–5 I sought him in vain

Act 2 - The Wedding and Wedding Night

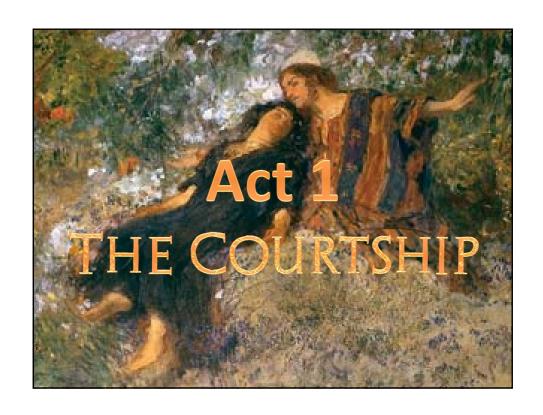
Scene 1 - Song of Songs 3:6–11 The wedding procession Scene 2 - Song of Songs 4:1–15 Ravishing the heart Scene 3 - Song of Songs 4:16–5:1 The consummation

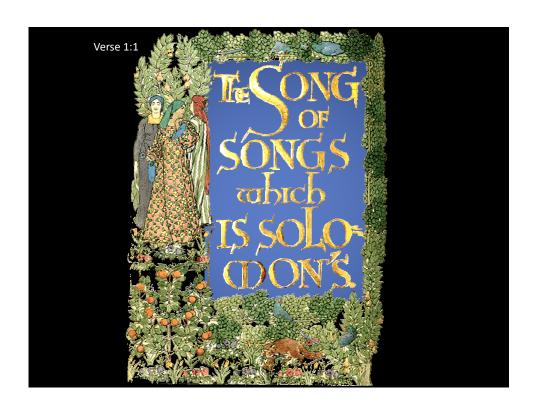
Act 3 - Maturing in Marriage

Scene 1 - Song of Songs 5:2–8 A troubled dream
Scene 2 - Song of Songs 5:9–6:13a Beautiful as Tirzah
Scene 3 - Song of Songs 6:13b–7:10 Mahanaim micholah
Scene 4 - Song of Songs 7:11–8:9 I long for home
Scene 5 - Song of Songs 8:10–14 Make haste to me



SACRED LOVE, SECULAR LOVE, THE SONG OF SONGS





#### Preparing for the feast

**The Shulamite** <sup>2</sup>Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth—

For your love is better than wine.

<sup>3</sup> Because of the fragrance of your good ointments,

Your name *is* ointment poured forth; Therefore the virgins love you.

<sup>4</sup> Draw me away!

The Daughters

We will run after you.

of Jerusalem

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

The Daughters

We will be glad and rejoice in you.

of Jerusalem

We will remember your love more than wine.

**The Shulamite** Rightly do they love you.

## Lovesick but unworthy

The Shulamite 51 am dark, but lovely,

O daughters of Jerusalem, Like the tents of Kedar, Like the curtains of Solomon.

<sup>6</sup> 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.

To Her Beloved 7 Tell r

<sup>7</sup> 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?

# Lovesick but unworthy

**The Beloved** 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.

<sup>9</sup>I have compared you, my love,
To my filly among Pharaoh's chariots.

<sup>10</sup> Your cheeks are lovely with ornaments,

Your neck with chains of gold.

The Daughters of Jerusalem

<sup>11</sup> We will make you ornaments of gold

With studs of silver.

# 1:12-14 The wedding feast

**The Shulamite** 

<sup>12</sup> While the king is at his table,

My spikenard sends forth its fragrance.

<sup>13</sup> A bundle of myrrh *is* my beloved to me,
That lies all night between my breasts.

<sup>14</sup> My beloved *is* to me a cluster of henna *blooms* 

In the vineyards of En Gedi.

#### 1:15-2:7 The bridal chamber

The Beloved <sup>15</sup> Behold, you *are* fair, my love!

> Behold, you *are* fair! You have dove's eyes.

**The Shulamite** <sup>16</sup> Behold, you are handsome, my beloved!

> Yes, pleasant! Also our bed is green. <sup>17</sup> The beams of our houses are cedar,

And our rafters of fir.

2 I am the rose of Sharon, And the lily of the valleys.

The Beloved <sup>2</sup> Like a lily among thorns,

So is my love among the daughters.

**The Shulamite** <sup>3</sup> 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.

#### 1:15-2:7 The bridal chamber

The Shulamite

<sup>4</sup>He brought me to the banqueting house,

to the Daughters And his banner over me was love. <sup>5</sup> Sustain me with cakes of raisins, of Jerusalem

Refresh me with apples,

For I am lovesick. ["sick with love"]

<sup>6</sup> His left hand *is* under my head, And his right hand embraces me.

<sup>7</sup>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.

# 2:8-17 A springtime visit

**The Shulamite** 

<sup>8</sup>The voice of my beloved! Behold, he comes

Leaping upon the mountains, Skipping upon the hills.

<sup>9</sup> 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.

<sup>10</sup> My beloved spoke, and said to me:

"Rise up, my love, my fair one,

And come away.

<sup>11</sup> For lo, the winter is past, The rain is over *and* gone.

<sup>12</sup> The flowers appear on the earth;

The time of singing has come, And the voice of the turtledove

Is heard in our land.

# 2:8-17 A springtime visit

The Shulamite

<sup>13</sup> 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!

<sup>14</sup> "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."

**Her Brothers** 

<sup>15</sup> Catch us the foxes,

The little foxes that spoil the vines, For our vines *have* tender grapes.



# 3:1-5 I sought him in vain

**The Shulamite** 

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

<sup>2</sup> "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.

<sup>3</sup>The watchmen who go about the city found me; *I said,* "Have you seen the one I love?"

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup>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.



# 3:6-11 The wedding procession

**The Shulamite** 

<sup>6</sup> Who *is* this coming out of the wilderness Like pillars of smoke,
Perfumed with myrrh and frankincense,
With all the merchant's fragrant powders?

<sup>7</sup> Behold, it *is* Solomon's couch,
With sixty valiant men around it,
Of the valiant of Israel.

<sup>8</sup> They all hold swords,
Being expert in war.
Every man has his sword on his thigh
Because of fear in the night.

# 3:6-11 The wedding procession

**The Shulamite** 

<sup>9</sup> Of the wood of Lebanon

Solomon the King

Made himself a palanquin: <sup>10</sup> He made its pillars of silver,

Its support of gold, Its seat of purple,

Its interior paved with love By the daughters of Jerusalem. <sup>11</sup> Go forth, O daughters of Zion, And see King Solomon with the crown With which his mother crowned him

On the day of his wedding,

The day of the gladness of his heart.

# 4:1-15 Ravishing the heart

**The Beloved** 

4 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> Your lips *are* like a strand of scarlet,

And your mouth is lovely.

Your temples behind your veil

Are like a piece of pomegranate. <sup>4</sup> Your neck is like the tower of David,

Built for an armory,

On which hang a thousand bucklers,

All shields of mighty men.

#### 4:1-15 Ravishing the heart

#### The Beloved

<sup>5</sup> Your two breasts *are* like two fawns,

Twins of a gazelle,

Which feed among the lilies.

<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> You *are* all fair, my love,

And *there is* no spot in you.

<sup>8</sup> Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse,

With me from Lebanon.

Look from the top of Amana,

From the top of Senir and Hermon,

From the lions' dens,

From the mountains of the leopards.

# 4:1-15 Ravishing the heart

#### **The Beloved**

<sup>9</sup> 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.

<sup>10</sup> 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!

<sup>11</sup> 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.

# 4:1-15 Ravishing the heart

The Beloved

A garden enclosed
Is my sister, my spouse,
A spring shut up,
A fountain sealed.

<sup>13</sup> Your plants *are* an orchard of pomegranates

With pleasant fruits,

Fragrant henna with spikenard, <sup>14</sup> Spikenard and saffron, Calamus and cinnamon,

With all trees of frankincense,

Myrrh and aloes,

With all the chief spices—

<sup>15</sup> A fountain of gardens,
A well of living waters,
And streams from Lebanon.

#### 4:16-5:1 The consummation

The Shulamite <sup>16</sup> 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.

**The Beloved** 5 I have come to my garden, my sister, my spouse;

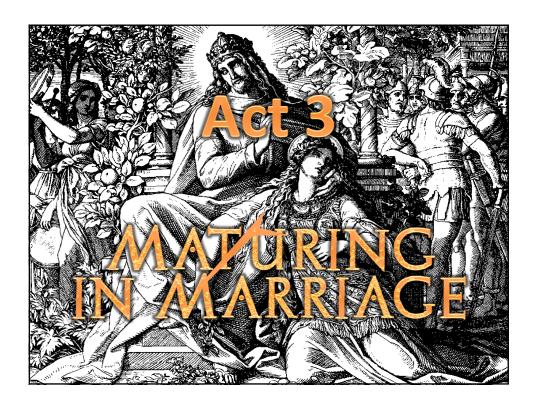
I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey;

I have drunk my wine with my milk.

**To His Guests** Eat, O friends!

Drink, yes, drink deeply,

O beloved ones!



# 5:2-8 A troubled dream

**The Shulamite** 

<sup>2</sup>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."

<sup>3</sup> I have taken off my robe; How can I put it on again? I have washed my feet; How can I defile them? <sup>4</sup> My beloved put his hand By the latch of the door, And my heart yearned for him.

#### 5:2-8 A troubled dream

**The Shulamite** 

<sup>5</sup>I arose to open for my beloved, And my hands dripped with myrrh, My fingers with liquid myrrh, On the handles of the lock.

<sup>6</sup>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.

<sup>7</sup>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.

<sup>8</sup>I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem,

If you find my beloved,

That you tell him I am lovesick!

#### 5:9-6:13a Beautiful as Tirzah

The Daughters of Jerusalem

<sup>9</sup> 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 Shulamite** 

My beloved is white and ruddy,
Chief among ten thousand.
His head is like the finest gold;

His locks *are* wavy,

And black as a raven.

<sup>12</sup> His eyes *are* like doves

By the rivers of waters,

Washed with milk,

And fitly set.

<sup>13</sup> His cheeks *are* like a bed of spices,

Banks of scented herbs.

#### 5:9-6:13a Beautiful as Tirzah

**The Shulamite** 

His lips are lilies, Dripping liquid myrrh.

<sup>14</sup> His hands *are* rods of gold

Set with beryl.

His body is carved ivory Inlaid with sapphires.

<sup>15</sup> His legs *are* pillars of marble Set on bases of fine gold.

His countenance is like Lebanon,

Excellent as the cedars. <sup>16</sup> His mouth is most sweet, Yes, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, And this is my friend,

O daughters of Jerusalem!

## 5:13-6:13a Beautiful as Tirzah

The Daughters of Jerusalem

6 Where has your beloved gone,

O fairest among women?

Where has your beloved turned aside, That we may seek him with you?

The Shulamite

<sup>2</sup> My beloved has gone to his garden,

To the beds of spices,

To feed *his flock* in the gardens,

And to gather lilies. <sup>3</sup>I am my beloved's, And my beloved is mine.

He feeds his flock among the lilies.

The Beloved

<sup>4</sup>O my love, you are as beautiful as Tirzah,

Lovely as Jerusalem,

Awesome as an army with banners! <sup>5</sup> Turn your eyes away from me, For they have overcome me.

#### 5:13-6:13a Beautiful as Tirzah

The Beloved

Your hair is like a flock of goats

Going down from Gilead.

<sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> Like a piece of pomegranate *Are* your temples behind your veil.

<sup>8</sup>There are sixty queens And eighty concubines,

And virgins without number.

<sup>9</sup> 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.

#### 5:13-6:13a Beautiful as Tirzah

**The Beloved** <sup>10</sup> Who is she who looks forth as the morning,

Fair as the moon, Clear as the sun,

Awesome as an army with banners?

The Shulamite <sup>11</sup>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.

<sup>12</sup> Before I was even aware, My soul had made me

As the chariots of my noble people.

The Beloved and his friends

<sup>13</sup> Return, return, O Shulamite;

Return, return,

that we may look upon you!

Your words of praise enraptured me.

Shulamite=feminine form of Solomon. She was from Shuman,

known for beautiful women.

Hence, Solomon's lady from Shunam

#### 6:13b-7:10 Mahanaim micholah

The Shulamite What would you see in the Shulamite—

As it were, the dance (micholah) of the

two camps (mahanaim)?

The Beloved 7 How beautiful are your feet in sandals,

O prince's daughter!

The curves of your thighs are like jewels, The work of the hands of a skillful workman.

<sup>2</sup> Your navel *is* a rounded goblet; It lacks no blended beverage.

Set about with lilies.

Your waist is a heap of wheat

<sup>3</sup> Your two breasts are like two fawns,

Twins of a gazelle.

<sup>4</sup> Your neck is like an ivory tower, Your eyes like the pools in Heshbon By the gate of Bath Rabbim.

Moving thighs shimmer like jewels

Describing her dance from feet upwards (Chap 4 from top down)

"Wheat" refers to colour

#### 6:13b-7:10 Mahanaim micholah

The Beloved Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon

Which looks toward Damascus.

<sup>5</sup> Your head *crowns* you like *Mount* Carmel, And the hair of your head is like purple; A king is held captive by your tresses.

<sup>6</sup> How fair and how pleasant you are,

O love, with your delights!

<sup>7</sup>This stature of yours is like a palm tree,

And your breasts like its clusters. <sup>8</sup>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,

<sup>9</sup> And the roof of your mouth like the best wine.

The Shulamite The wine goes down smoothly for my beloved,

Moving gently the lips of sleepers.

<sup>10</sup>I am my beloved's, And his desire is toward me.

Neck, head, nose are majestic!

**Preliminaries** are now over!

Children please leave the room.



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#### 7:11-8:9 I long for home

The Shulamite

<sup>11</sup> Come, my beloved, Let us go forth to the field; Let us lodge in the villages.

<sup>12</sup> 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.

<sup>13</sup> 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.

**8** 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.

# 7:11-8:9 I long for home

The Shulamite <sup>2</sup>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.

To Daughters of Jerusalem

<sup>3</sup> His left hand *is* under my head, And his right hand embraces me.

<sup>4</sup>I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, Do not stir up nor awaken *my* love

Until it pleases.

A Relative <sup>5</sup> Who is this coming up from the wilderness,

Leaning upon her beloved?

I raised you under the apple tree. There your mother brought you forth; There she *who* bore you brought *you* forth.

#### 7:11-8:9 I long for home

**The Shulamite** To Her Beloved

<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> 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.

**Her Brothers** 

<sup>8</sup> 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? <sup>9</sup> 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.

Elder brothers' duty:
1. Reward chastity
2. Guard against promiscuity

> Thanks, bros, for watching

after me.

# 8:10-14 Make haste to me

The Shulamite

<sup>10</sup> I *am* a wall, And my breasts like towers; Then I became in his eyes As one who found peace.

11 Solomon had a vineyard at Baal Hamon; He leased the vineyard to keepers;

Everyone was to bring for its fruit

A thousand silver coins.

To Solomon <sup>12</sup> My own vineyard *is* before me.

You, O Solomon, may have a thousand, And those who tend its fruit two hundred.

The Beloved

<sup>13</sup> You who dwell in the gardens, The companions listen for your voice—

Let me hear it!

The Shulamite <sup>14</sup> Make haste, my beloved,

And be like a gazelle Or a young stag

On the mountains of spices.

