

# Song of Solomon 3 Commentary

PREVIOUS

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## SONG OF SOLOMON 3 COMMENTARY NOTES

### SONG OF SOLOMON

Union and Communion

|  |  |   |   |
|--|--|---|---|
| <b>The Courtship</b><br>(Falling in Love)<br>Song 1:2-3:5  | <b>The Wedding</b><br>(United in Love)<br>Song 3:6-5:1 | <b>The Maturing Marriage</b><br>(Struggling and Growing in Love)<br>Song 5:2-8:14 |   |
| <b>Fostering of Love</b>   | <b>Fulfillment of Love</b>                             | <b>Frustration of Love</b>  | <b>Faithfulness of Love</b>                           |
| <b>Falling in Love</b>   | <b>United in Love</b>                                  | <b>Divided in Love</b>  | <b>Devoted in Love</b>                                |
| <b>Cultivating Love</b>  |  | <b>Acclaiming Love</b>  |   |
| Courtship Before the Marriage  | Procession for and Consummation of the Marriage        | The Honeymoon is Over!<br>Song 5:2-6:13   | The Marriage Deepens<br>Love Matures<br>Song 7:1-8:14 |
| Chief Speaker:<br>The Bride<br>("Darling")   | Chief Speaker:<br>The Groom<br>("Beloved")             | Chief Speaker:<br>Both  | Chief Speaker:<br>"Duet"                              |
| Theme - The joy and intimacy of love within a committed marriage covenant.   |  |   |   |
| Song of Solomon foreshadows Christ, the Bridegroom's relationship with His Bride, the Church.<br>(Eph 5:32-note, Rev 19:7-8-note)  |  |   |   |
| <b>Date</b> - Circa 950-965BC<br>Time Period estimated at about 1 year<br>Before Solomon plunged into gross immorality and idolatry<br>(Compare only 140 women in Song 6:8-note with 1Ki 11:1-4, 5-7, 8, 9-10) |  |   |   |
| Adapted from <a href="#">Charles Swindoll's book chart</a>   |  |   |   |

## SELECT RESOURCES

### Song of Solomon

See also main resource page for Song of Solomon

FOR RESOURCES ON CHAPTER 3 SEE LINK ABOVE - "Song of Solomon 3 Resources"

#### Shulamite...

**Song 3:1** "On my bed night after night I sought him whom my soul loves; I sought him but did not find him.

2 'I must arise now and go about the city; In the streets and in the squares I must seek him whom my soul loves.' I sought him but did not find him.

3 "The watchmen who make the rounds in the city found me, and I said, 'Have you seen him whom my soul loves?'

4 "Scarcely had I left them when I found him whom my soul loves; I held on to him and would not let him go, until I had brought him to my mother's house, and into the room of her who conceived me."|

#### Shulamite (young woman) speaks...

**Song 3:5** "I adjure (Lxx = orkizo = solemnly implore, give a command under oath) you, O daughters of Jerusalem([picture](#)), by the gazelles or by the hinds of the field, that you will not arouse or awaken my love, until she pleases."

#### Shulamite (young woman) speaks...

**Song 3:1** "On my bed night after night I sought him whom my soul loves; I sought him but did not find him (Ps 4:4, 6:6, 22:2, 63:6-8, 77:2-4 Isa 26:9) (Whom my soul loves - Song 1:7, 3:2-4, 5:8, cp Jn 21:17 1Pe 1:8)(But - Song 5:6 Job 23:8,9 Ps 130:1,2 Isa 55:6 Lk 13:24)

## THE YOUNG WOMAN'S TROUBLING DREAM

Song 3:1-4

**NET** - All night long on my bed I longed for my lover. I longed for him but he never appeared.

**NLT** - One night as I lay in bed, I yearned for my lover. I yearned for him, but he did not come.

Note that many but not all commentaries interpret this as a dream which seems to express the young woman's fear of losing her young man - some see it as something that literally happened, while others see it as symbolic descriptions. The fact that it begins with the location "on my bed night after night" would tend to support that this is a dream. Even in the context of this first verse, how could she be on her bed on one hand and seek him on the other hand? He could hardly be lost in or on her literal bed!

**POSB** on Song 3:1-5 - This passage provides another glimpse into the young woman's desire for her beloved as their marriage approached. And once again, after recognizing and expressing her passion for him, she clung tightly to the virtue of purity—abstaining from sexual relations until after they were married. ([Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible- Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon](#))

**HCSB** on Song 3:1-4: Shulamith and Solomon began the night apart but ended it together, aided by the watchmen of the walls. This is set in chiasmic balance with section C' where again they began the night apart but fell asleep together (Song 5:2-7:9; see Introduction), though hindered by the watchmen—one of many contrasts in the chiasm. The shorter length of this section as compared to the one corresponding to it is not uncommon in Hebrew chiasm. ([Holman Christian Standard Bible Study Bible](#) - Open in Reader > View in Reader > see Table of Contents at top of HCSB Study Bible)

Notice her intense love for the young man is emphasized by the fourfold repetition of "whom my soul loves." Clearly this repetition expresses the fact that he alone is the "apple of her eye!"

**MacArthur** - As the wedding time approaches, the Shulamite's expectations grew more intense. It's best to understand this as her dream, rather than a historical remembrance. ([MacArthur Study Bible](#))

**Ryrie** - This section relates a dream the bride-to-be had just before her wedding. Fearing the loss of her fiancé, she seeks him, finds him, and takes him to her mother's house. On waking (Song 3:5), she also counsels patience (as in Song 2:7). (Ryrie Study Bible)

**Glickman** says that Song 3:1-4 is what psychologists call a "fear-fulfillment dream." ([Solomon's Song of Love - Let a Song of Songs Inspire Your Own Romantic Story](#))

**POSB** - People commonly dream about losing the ones they love most. The Shulamite loved the young man with everything that she was, and feared that he would be taken from her. This dream was the fulfillment of that fear. She dreamed that she was looking for her beloved but could not find him (v.1). She panicked and scoured the city in search of her beloved (v.2). Frantically, she ran through every street and every block but still could not find him anywhere. It was both highly improper and unsafe for a woman to be out at night. Those who went into the streets at night were thought to be prostitutes. The fact that this modest, chaste young woman went out at night strongly indicates that she was describing a dream rather than an actual occurrence. ([Ibid](#))

**Henry Morris** - The experience described in Song 3:1-5 is evidently a dream, perhaps brought on by her concern over the "little foxes" which might eventually separate them ("Bether" in Song 2:17 means "separation"). ([Defender's Study Bible](#))

**Criswell** - A new movement in the song begins here. In a dream the Shulamite experiences anxiety and insecurity due to the absence of Solomon (cf. Song 5:6, 7). Only his presence and a secure place of dwelling would satisfy the heart of his lover (cf. Song 3:4). (Believer's Study Bible)

**NET Note** - Scholars debate whether Song 3:1–4 recounts a nightmare-like dream sequence or a real-life experience. There are striking parallels between Song 3:1–4 and Song 5:2–8 which also raises the possibility of a nightmare-like dream sequence. ([Song 3 NET Notes](#))

**Jack Deere** - **All night long on my bed** indicates that the experience she was describing took place in a dream. When a person loves another person deeply, it is natural to fear losing him or her. In her dream she lost her lover and sought to **find him**. (Bible Knowledge Commentary)

**Reformation Study Bible on "on my bed"** - The girl is not yet with her lover, but alone on her bed, imagining various encounters with him. A more explicit indication that she is dreaming is given in Song 5:2. It is not clear where the dream begins or ends, but it is certainly a major feature of the book....The parallel in Song 5:2–8 is a dream (Song 5:2). Both dreams have a nightmarish quality, the one in Song 5 more obviously than this one (see especially Song 5:7). ([Song 3:1](#))

**Bed (04904 - מִשְׁכָּב)** (mishkab) is the common word for bed including the marriage bed and is distinct from the word for 'couch' (eres) in Song 1:16. As noted in previous discussion, several uses of mishkab have overt sexual connotations (Gen 49:4; Lev 18:22; 20:13; Num 31:17, 35; Jdg 21:11, 12; Pr 7:17; Isa 57:7–8). The noun is used in the expression (mishkab dodim, = "love-bed") with obvious sexual connotations (Ezek 23:17). This is its only use in the Song.

**Gledhill on night after night** - The literal Hebrew, 'in the nights', could mean 'all throughout the long hours of the night', or, more probably, 'night after night'. ([The Message of the Song of Songs Bible Speaks Today- Tom Gledhill](#))

**NET Note on my soul** - Heb "the one whom my soul loves." The expression נַפְשִׁי (nafshi, "my soul") is a synecdoche of part for the whole (= the woman). The expression נַפְשִׁי ("my soul") is often used as independent personal pronoun. It often expresses personal preference, such as love or hatred (e.g., Ge 27:4, 25; Lev 26:11, 30; Jdg 5:24; Isa 1:14) (HALOT 712 s.v. נַפְשִׁי). The term נֶפֶשׁ (nefesh, "soul") is used over 150 times in OT to refer to the seat of a person's emotions and passions (e.g., Dt 12:15, 20, 21; 14:26; 18:6; 21:14; 24:15; 1Sa 3:21; 23:30; 2Sa 14:14; 1Ki 11:37; Isa 26:8; Jer 2:24; 22:27; 34:16; 44:14; Ezek 16:27; Hos 4:8; Mic 7:1; Ps 10:3; 24:4; 25:1; 35:25; 78:18; 86:4; 105:22; 143:8; Pr 13:4; 19:8; 21:10; Job 23:13; Song 5:6). It often refers to the seat of love (e.g., Ge 34:3, 8; Jer 12:7; Ps 63:9; Song 1:7; 3:1–4). The expression אֶת־שֵׁה'אַהַבָּה נַפְשִׁי ('et-she'ahavah nafshi, "the one whom I love"; Heb "the one whom my soul loves") is repeated four times in 3:1–4. The repetition emphasizes her intense love for her beloved. ([Song 3 NET Notes](#))

**NET Note on love** - The noun אַהַבָּה ('ahavah, "love") is often used in reference to the love between a man and woman, particularly in reference to emotional, romantic, or sexual love (2Sa 1:26; 13:15; Pr 5:19; 7:18; Song 2:4–5, 7; 3:5; 5:8; 8:4, 6–7; Jer 2:2, 33). Likewise, the verb אָהַב ('ahev, "to love") often refers to emotional, romantic, or sexual love between a man and woman (e.g., Gen 24:67; 29:20, 30, 32; 34:3; Deut 21:15, 16; Judg 14:16; 16:4, 15; 1 Sam 1:5; 18:20; 2 Sam 13:1, 4, 15; 1 Kgs 11:1; 2 Chr 11:21; Neh 13:26; Esth 2:17; Eccl 9:9; Song 1:3, 4, 7; 3:1–4; Jer 22:20, 22; Ezek 16:33, 36–37; 23:5, 9, 22; Hos 2:7–15; 3:1; Lam 1:19). ([Ibid](#))

**Sought (01245)(baqas)** describes an earnest seeking of something or someone which exists or is thought to exist. Baqas refers to a conscious act, and often suggests a great deal of effort (1Sa 10:14; Pr 2:4).

She repeats "**did not find him**" (Song 3:1,2) about which **Constable** remarks "Such fears are common during the courtship. Will the marriage finally take place? She dreams of consummation, but she wants the consummation to be proper." ([Song of Solomon Commentary](#))

### Shulamite (young woman) speaks.

Song 3:2 'I must arise now and go about the city; In the streets and in the squares I must seek him whom my soul loves.' I sought him but did not find him. (Song 5:5 Isa 64:7 Jn 1:6 Mt 26:40,41 Ro 13:11 1Co 15:34 Eph 5:14)(streets - Pr 1:20,21 8:2,3,34 Lu 14:21-23)(sought - Ps 22:1,2 42:7-9 43:2-5 77:7-10)

- **NET** - "I will arise and look all around throughout the town, and throughout the streets and squares; I will search for my beloved." I searched for him but I did not find him.
- **NLT** - So I said to myself, "I will get up and roam the city, searching in all its streets and squares. I will search for the one I love." So I searched everywhere but did not find him.

This passage supports the premise that Song 3:1-4 is a dream and not a literal event. It is highly unlikely that she would go about the city on her own (much less in the middle of the night!).

**Seek** ([01245](#))(**baqas**) again describes her earnestly seeking him and yet not finding him.

### Shulamite (young woman) speaks.

Song 3:3 "The watchmen who make the rounds in the city found me, and I said, 'Have you seen him whom my soul loves?' (Watchman - Song 5:7 Isa 21:6-8,11,12 56:10 62:6 Eze 3:17 33:2-9 Heb 13:17)

- **NET** - The night watchmen found me— the ones who guard the city walls. "Have you seen my beloved?"
- **NLT** - The watchmen stopped me as they made their rounds, and I asked, "Have you seen the one I love?"

**The watchman who make the rounds** - This indicates that she is referring to the night (even as she dreams in the night).

**NET Note** - Ironically, she failed to find her beloved as she went around in the city, but the city watchmen found her. Rather than finding the one she was looking for, she was found. ([Song 3 NET Notes](#))

### Solomon (young man) speaks.

Song 3:4 "Scarcely had I left them when I found him whom my soul loves; I held on to him and would not let him go, until I had brought him to my mother's house, and into the room of her who conceived me."

- **NET** - Scarcely had I passed them by when I found my beloved! I held onto him tightly and would not let him go until I brought him to my mother's house, to the bedroom chamber of the one who conceived me.
- **NLT** - Then scarcely had I left them when I found my love! I caught and held him tightly, then I brought him to my mother's house, into my mother's bed, where I had been conceived.

I agree with **Guzik's** comments that "Since this is likely another dream or daydream of the maiden, it doesn't matter if she recorded it as a married woman or yet-to-be-married maiden. She had the longings of a married woman (that her beloved would share her home and her bed), but did not act upon those longings until married. This connotation of the word for bed reminds us of Hebrews 13:4: Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge. The Bible consistently condemns sex outside of the marriage commitment (fornicators and adulterers God will judge). But the Bible celebrates sexual love within the commitment of marriage, as indicated in The Song of Solomon."

**NET Note on "held on to"** - Heb "I held him" (אֶחָזְקוּ, 'akhaztiv). The term אָחַז ('akhaz, "grasp") denotes to forcefully seize someone to avoid losing hold of him.....This pictures her determination to hold on to him so she would not lose him again. ([Song 3 NET Notes](#))

**Carr on held** - Immediately after leaving them she finds her lover. Held (NEB seized) is satisfactory (cf. Song 2:15 catch the foxes), but 'clutched and refused to slacken her embrace' catches the urgency and relief of the discovery better. Still clinging to him, she leads him gently but forcefully to her mother's house and into the maternal bedroom (cf. Song 1:4, and Song 8:2). The Song of Solomon - Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries - G. Lloyd Carr)

**NET Note** - There is debate about the reason why the woman brought her beloved to her mother's house. Campbell notes that the mother's house is sometimes referred to as the place where marital plans were made (Gen 24:28; Ruth 1:8). Some suggest, then, that the woman here was unusually bold and took the lead in proposing marriage plans with her beloved. This approach

emphasizes that the marriage plans in Song 3:4 are followed by the royal wedding procession (3:6–11) and the wedding night (Song 4:1–5:1). On the other hand, others suggest that the parallelism of “house of my mother” and “chamber of she who conceived me” focuses on the bedroom of her mother’s house. Fields suggests that her desire was to make love to her beloved in the very bedroom chambers where she herself was conceived, to complete the cycle of life/love. If this is the idea, it would provide a striking parallel to a similar picture in Song 8:5 in which the woman exults that they had made love in the very location where her beloved had been conceived: “Under the apple tree I aroused you; it was there your mother conceived you, there she who bore you conceived you.” ([Song 3 NET Notes](#))

**NET Note on "the room"** - The term חֶדֶר (kheder, “chamber”) literally means “dark room” (HALOT s.v. 293 חֶדֶר) and often refers to a bedroom (Gen 43:30; Exod 7:28; Judg 3:24; 15:1; 16:9, 12; 2 Sam 4:7; 13:10; 1Kgs 1:15; 2 Kgs 6:12; 9:2; Eccl 10:20; Isa 26:20; Joel 2:16; Prov 24:4; Song 1:4; 3:4). ([Ibid](#))

**POSB** - Where could they go to be alone, away from everyone? She could think of no place better than her mother’s home, the place where she had grown up and felt secure. She took him there, and then into her mother’s bedroom. Her description of it as the place of her conception implies what followed in her dream. The fact that the young woman took her beloved to her childhood home is additional evidence that she is recounting a dream rather than an actual event. Her mother’s house was not in the city, but was in the mountains of southern Lebanon, at least fifty miles from Jerusalem. It is unrealistic that she would have taken the king fifty miles away, and impossible in one night. ([Preacher’s Outline and Sermon Bible- Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon](#))

**Guzik** - In either interpreting or applying Song of Solomon 3:1–4 to the relationship between Jesus and His people, many commentators have noted that this is an example of how the believer, under some sense of separation from Jesus, must seek after Him.. “When, either in a dream, or in reality we lose our sense of His presence, let us search for Him; and then in the finding, with new devotion, let us hold Him, and refuse to let Him go.” (Morgan) ([Song of Solomon 3 Commentary](#))

**Guzik** goes on to add that "Spurgeon also made great application of the fact that the maiden held him and would not let him go. “Mark, that according to the text, it is very apparent that Jesus will go away if he is not held. ‘I held him and I would not let him go;’ as if he would have gone if he had not been firmly retained. When he met with Jacob that night at the Jabbok, he said, ‘Let me go.’ He would not go without Jacob’s letting him, but he would have gone if Jacob had loosed his hold. The patriarch replied, ‘I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.’ This is one of Christ’s ways and manners; it is one of the peculiarities of his character. When he walked to Emmaus with the two disciples, ‘he made as if he would have gone further:’ they might have known it was none other than the Angel of the Covenant by that very habit. He would have gone further, but they constrained him, saying, ‘Abide with us for the day is far spent.’ If you are willing to lose Christ’s company he is never intrusive, he will go away from you, and leave you till you know his value and begin to pine for him. ‘I will go,’ says he, ‘and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offense, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.’ He will go unless you hold him.” (Spurgeon)

- Jesus must be held; He will go unless you hold Him.
- Jesus is willing to be held; He is not trying to escape us.
- Jesus can be held; He we can grasp Him by faith.
- Jesus Himself must be held; not merely a creed, tradition, or a ceremony.

([Song of Solomon 3 Commentary](#))

### Shulamite (young woman)...

**Song 3:5** "I adjure (Lxx = orkizo = solemnly implore, give a command under oath) you, O daughters of Jerusalem ([picture](#)), by the gazelles or by the hinds of the field, that you will not arouse or awaken my love, until she pleases."

### THE REFRAIN

Song 2:7, 3:5, 8:4

- **NET** - I admonish you, O maidens of Jerusalem, by the gazelles and by the young does of the open fields: "Do not awake or arouse love until it pleases!"
- **NLT** - Promise me, O women of Jerusalem, by the gazelles and wild deer, not to awaken love until the time is right. Young Women of Jerusalem

**Jack Deere** - This refrain marks the end of the section on the courtship (1:2–3:5) and the beginning of the wedding section (3:6–

5:1).

**MacArthur** - As in Song 2:7, the beloved knows that the intensity of her love for Solomon cannot yet be experienced until the wedding, so she invites the daughters of Jerusalem to keep her accountable regarding sexual purity. Up to this point, the escalating desire of the Shulammitte for Solomon has been expressed in veiled and delicate ways as compared to the explicit and open expressions which follow, as would be totally appropriate for a married couple (cf. Song 4:1ff.). ([Ibid](#))

In many cultures there is an important distinction between the functions of right and left hands. hand used for eating, shaking hands, touching, caressing, while reserved “unclean” tasks. This probably applied biblical times, so it only logical that young man’s under woman’s head, his caresses her. (Ogden, G. S., & Zogbo, L. A Handbook on Song songs. UBS series. New York: United Bible Societies)

**I adjure you-** This phrase translates the Hebrew verb normally associated with making an oath and here calls upon the maidens to make a solemn promise. In the Old Testament the person swearing an oath does so by calling on a divine being or power, or even some part of the body (cf Amos 8.14; Mt 5.36) in this way the oath-takers indicating how serious they are about fulfilling what has been promised.[/FONT>

**POSB** presumes the young woman is addressing her friends - They must swear, make a commitment, to flee temptation swiftly, like the gazelle and doe flee from danger. They must never give in to their sexual passions until the time was right—when they are married. This great love story is used by God to teach a much-needed lesson. It shows us what is and is not acceptable to God with regard to sex and an engaged couple. The sexual desires of the young woman for her soon-to-be husband are expressed—she even dreams of being in bed with him—but they are never acted upon. **Craig Glickman (Ref)** observes that from this: "*An excellent principle can be drawn for courtship. A strong desire to express love physically should be present, but not until marriage should it be fulfilled. This restraint is healthy and beneficial to the couple. Psychologists tell us that repression is harmful because repression is the subconscious attempt to pretend that you don't have certain feelings. It would be wrong for this girl to pretend that she does not have a strong desire to make love to the man who would soon be her husband. But nothing is wrong with suppression—the conscious restraint of natural impulses. For example, you may have an impulse to hit someone in the nose, but it is good to suppress that impulse and restrain yourself. As they come closer to marriage, restraint becomes more necessary.*" God does not expect an engaged couple to refrain from having sexual desires for each other, but to restrain themselves from acting on those desires until they are married ([Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible- Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon](#))

**Ryrie** has a long note on Song 3:4,5) - Sex as God designed in proper place and time is good, powerful, living, unifying. Outside of God's design it becomes evil, cruel, perverted, divisive. Whereas humanism overemphasizes the flesh and denies the spiritual, asceticism overemphasizes the spirit and tends to ignore the importance of the physical. God, however, in His plan for Christian marriage unites both spirit and flesh in the "one-flesh" intimacy to unite two people totally (cf. Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:5). Though the Bible is not a book on sex, it does contain a complete theology of sexuality, i.e., purposes for sex, warnings against its misuse, and a beautiful picture of the ideal physical intimacy as set forth in the beautiful and holy Song. The "one-flesh" relationship (cf. Gen. 2:24) is a reference to the most intense physical intimacy and the deepest spiritual unity between husband and wife. God is always approving this relationship (cf. Prov. 5:21) in which husband and wife meet their physical needs in sexual intercourse (cf. Prov. 5:15, 18, 19). The author of Hebrews adds his sanction to the marriage bed (cf. Heb. 13:4). In fact, Paul indicates that sexual adjustment in marriage affects the Christian life, especially prayer (cf. 1 Cor. 7:5). Both husband and wife have definite and equal sexual needs which are to be met in marriage (1 Cor. 7:3), and each is to meet the needs of the other and not his own. The sexual instinct is given to man as a means of communication. To satisfy that instinct selfishly by oneself is to abuse the gift because it is the seeking of a satisfaction that is to be received in fellowship between the husband and wife. These purposes are assigned to physical intimacy: (1) knowledge (cf. Gen. 4:1), (2) unity (Gen. 2:24), (3) comfort (Gen. 24:67), (4) procreation (Gen. 1:28), (5) relaxation and play (2:8-17; 4:1-16), and (6) avoiding temptation (1 Cor. 7:2-5). A husband is commanded to find satisfaction (Prov. 5:19) and joy (Eccl. 9:9) in his wife, and to concern himself with meeting her unique needs (Deut. 24:5; 1 Pet. 3:7). A wife also has responsibilities: (1) availability (1 Cor. 7:3-5), (2) preparation and planning (Song 4:9ff.), (3) interest (Song 4:16; 5:2), (4) sensitivity to unique masculine needs (Gen. 24:67). The feeling of oneness experienced by husband and wife in the physical union should remind both partners of the even more remarkable oneness which the spirit of a man experiences with God in regeneration.

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**TODAY IN THE WORD** Song 3:1-5 How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? - Psalm 13:1 - Mother Teresa's work with the poor in Calcutta was widely publicized during her lifetime. Few, however, knew that she struggled for many years with spiritual doubt. Nearly a decade after the vivid spiritual experience that convinced Mother Teresa that God had called her to establish an organization to work with the poor, she recorded the following words in her journal: "I feel that God does not want me, that God is not God, and that God does not exist."

Sometimes referred to as the “dark night of the soul,” such experiences are common among believers. The Puritan writer Samuel



Rutherford used the term desertions to describe these feelings, saying of them, "I think they are like a lean and weak land lying fallow for some years, until it gathers sap for a better crop."

The psalmist also spoke of a similar experience when he asked in Psalm 13:1, "How long will you hide your face from me?" The answer to the psalmist's question is that although God may seem absent for a time, He will not "forget" forever.

Many commentators believe that the events in today's reading are actually a dream sequence. Its imagery reflects the bride's longing to consummate her love with the groom. After searching through the city streets, she finally finds him and clings to him in love. Those who go through the dark night of the soul are like her. They may spend many hours searching for God. This seems to be God's purpose for such trials. They are not meant to be a punishment but a blessing, intended to create spiritual hunger. God uses them to renew our longing for spiritual intimacy with Him (Isa. 26:9).

When we experience a dark night of the soul, it is tempting to search for a way to jump start our spiritual experience to regain a sense of God's presence. The best strategy is simply to wait. Waiting does not mean that we are inactive—we continue to serve God and to practice the basic disciplines of the Christian life. One lesson God teaches us during a time of spiritual desertion is the importance of faithfulness. If you feel deserted by God, follow the advice of the psalmist: "Wait for the Lord and keep his way" (Ps. 37:34).

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**Today in the Word** (Song 3:1) - Musician Charlie Hall wrote the worship song, "Chasing After You." The lyrics beautifully reflect the believer's relationship with God: "And I'm chasing after You / 'Cause You first chased after me / And You purchased me with blood / I am free I am complete / Now a child of my King / Leaving old I am made new / 'Cause You first chased after me / I am chasing after You."

The third chapter of Song of Songs describes a chase. The woman describes two things that seem to have nothing in common: lying on her bed and chasing after the one she loves. Some commentators think that instead of describing an actual activity, she is portraying the state of her mind and heart. Whenever she is separated from her love, she actively longs and searches for the man she loves. Their love, like a journey, now winds through the streets of the city.

True loving relationships never come easily. They require effort on the part of everyone involved. Whether it is in our marital relationships, love between a parent and child, or our love for God, we "run after" the ones we love. Passivity is not an option.

The good news of Scripture is that this is not a one-way chase. As we make an effort to love, God promises us that we will be loved in return. The woman is surprised in her search to encounter the grand carriage of the king approaching her (v. 7). Solomon approached wearing a wedding crown (v. 10). Her love has been immeasurably returned. What a beautiful illustration of the love of God for His children. Although we make an effort in our relationship with God, we know that our love will be rewarded. He has "chased after us" from the very start.

Apply the Word - Many of us spend a good portion of our lives chasing after something. We may chase after wealth or fame. Some of us chase after a particular desirable person. Chasing is not wrong. It implies effort, determination, and action. It is helpful, though, to evaluate the object of the chase. Is it worth it? Can it satisfy?

### Daughters of Jerusalem...

**Song 3:6** "What is this coming up from the wilderness like columns of smoke, Perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, With all scented powders of the merchant?"

**7** "Behold, it is the traveling couch of Solomon; Sixty mighty men around it, Of the mighty men of Israel.

**8** "All of them are wielders of the sword, Expert in war; Each man has his sword at his side, Guarding against the terrors of the night.

**9** "King Solomon has made for himself a sedan chair From the timber of Lebanon.

**10** "He made its posts of silver, Its back of gold And its seat of purple fabric, With its interior lovingly fitted out By the daughters of Jerusalem. [\(picture\)](#)

### Shulamite (young woman) speaks

**11** "**Go forth** (imperative = command), O daughters of Zion, And **gaze** (imperative = command) on King Solomon with the crown with which his mother has crowned him on the day of his wedding, and on the day of his gladness of heart."

### Daughters of Jerusalem...

**Song 3:6** "What is this coming up from the wilderness like columns of smoke, Perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, With all scented powders of the merchant?"

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## THE ROYAL WEDDING

Song 3:6-5:1

- **NET** - Who is this coming up from the desert like a column of smoke, like a fragrant billow of myrrh and frankincense, every kind of fragrant powder of the traveling merchants?
- **NLT** - Who is this sweeping in from the wilderness like a cloud of smoke? Who is it, fragrant with myrrh and frankincense and every kind of spice?

Song 3:6-5:1 introduces the couples' wedding day with the consummation and beginning of a godly marriage.

Some see this question as coming from the young man not the daughters. For example, **Hess** writes "The male begins his description with a question: Who? This hints that the key emphasis of the verses will be a person. Although the initial verse (Song 3:6) does not answer this question, it provides the background for an important figure with a dramatic entrance and an abundance of wealth." ([Ibid](#))

**Gledhill** observes that "The first cycle of poems ended at Song 2:7 with the adjuration to the daughters of Jerusalem not to awaken or arouse love prematurely. This same adjuration again brings down the curtain, as it were, on the second cycle, the scene of intimacy which ends at Song 3:5. A new cycle begins at Song 3:6 which continues through until the consummation of Song 5:1.....The cycle begins with 3:6, which I take to be an isolated independent verse, unconnected with what precedes and what follows; an exclamation of the breath-taking beauty of the girl, creating an atmosphere of ethereal beauty and fantasy. Song 3:7–11 is a description of Solomon's sedan chair used on the day of his wedding. Song 4:1–7 is the first of a number of descriptive praise poems detailing the charms of the lovers, culminating in the invitation (4:8) to come to (or is it from?) Lebanon. Song 4:9–11 depicts the lover absolutely smitten by the beauty of his girl. Song 4:12–5:1 move progressively towards a climax; in Song 4:12 he praises her virginity; in Song 4:13–15 she is a luscious spicy garden; Song 4:16 is the girl's eager invitation; 5:1 is the actual consummation of their love, closing with an affirmation of the fulfilment of their passion, possibly by the author. So from Song 4:12–5:1 we move from anticipation, to invitation, then to consummation and a final affirmation. 5:1 represents a high point of the poem, and is the exact centre of the Song, with 111 lines from Song 1:2 to Song 4:15 and 111 lines from Song 5:2 to Song 8:14. It acts as a kind of fulcrum or centre of gravity about which other counterbalancing scenarios are suspended." ([The Message of the Song of Songs Bible Speaks Today- Tom Gledhill](#))

**Carr** remarks that "This unit is in many ways the heart of the Song, and Song 4:16–5:1 the central pivot around which the rest of the Song revolves. The broad progression in the relationship which has been traced thus far now develops into the actual wedding sequence and the consummation of their love." *The Song of Solomon - Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries - G. Lloyd Carr*)

Regarding the identity of the one coming in the procession, it is interesting that the **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates "what/who" with two feminine pronouns "tis aute" = "**who is this?**" This would support the premise that it was the young woman who was coming up in the grand procession.

**What is this** (NAS, ESV, HCSB, RSV) (**Who is this** = KJV, NKJV, NIV, NLT, ASV) - Clearly the translations differ in whether they believe this refers to a person or a thing.

**Carr** observes that in Hebrew "The form (of "what" or "who") is feminine singular, and could refer either to the girl or to the 'bed' (v. 7, AV) which is also a feminine noun. In either case it cannot be Solomon (or the 'king') who is described. To decide between the two options is a little more difficult, but the use of *mî* presumes a person rather than a thing (which would normally be introduced by *mâ*). The procession is still at a distance, but the panoply and wealth of the entourage make it obvious that this is a noble, if not a royal, wedding-train that has appeared. Pope observes correctly that if there is any contextual continuity, the answer to the question must be obvious—that it is the bride herself. This same idiom appears in Song 6:10, again with no answer in the text, and in Song 8:5 where the second half of the colon demands the answer 'the girl' (bride)." ([Ibid](#))

**HCSB** on the word "this" - The word **this** is feminine in Hebrew, perhaps indicating Shulamith was in the procession coming to Solomon. **Coming up from the wilderness** (see Song 8:5) suggests two complimentary allusions: (1) Israel's emergence from the wilderness they had entered after deliverance from Egypt and (2) Adam and Eve's emergence from the wilderness they had entered after disobedience. The imagery of Shulamith as a garden paradise on the wedding night is evidence of the latter. The implicit comparisons of Shulamith to Israel are evidence of the former (see Introduction). Both allusions underscore the ideals of romantic love. Like Israel's new land, their love was the foundation of a new life together; like a new paradise, their love recovered what romantic love was meant to be. (HCSB on Song 8:5 - Who is this coming up from the wilderness begins a new section introduced with words identical to those that begin the wedding procession and with the same complimentary allusions (see note at 3:6). Solomon and Shulamith have left the wilderness created by Adam and Eve to experience a paradise, and their love is like



God's for His people, particularly when after the hardships of the wilderness they emerged trusting and "leaning" on Him.) ([Holman Christian Standard Bible Study Bible](#) - Open in Reader > View in Reader > see Table of Contents at top of HCSB Study Bible)

**POSB** - The question, "Who is this?" was likely said for impact, as these watchers would have been expecting the royal wedding procession. The use of the feminine singular (this) in the Hebrew indicates that the onlookers knew the passenger was a woman. They at least suspected she was the Shulamite; thus, their question may have been one of playful excitement. ([Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible- Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon](#))

**Coming up (05927 - עלה)** (**alah**) means to go up, to ascend, to climb. And so this describes an ascent which would be appropriate given that the ancient cities were built on hills. And if this is Jerusalem (cp "daughters of Zion" or "of Jerusalem" in Song 3:11), the procession would be seen ascending up the hill to the great city with Solomon taking in the panoramic view, a view that would create in him the great joy described in Song 3:11.. (Compare Ps 24:3) The Lxx translates **alah** with **anabaino** (in present tense = continually) moving upward, ascending, as was used especially of the road leading to Jerusalem (cf Mt 20:17 "about to **go up** to Jerusalem").

**From the wilderness** - The Hebrew word **midbar** (04057) can refer to open land, large tract of open country or steppe land suitable for grazing (Ps 65:12; Jer 23:10; Joel 1:19, 20) or to a wasteland, barren wilderness, large tract of sparsely inhabited land, or virtually empty of habitation, a place providing little or no sustenance (Isa 42:11; Job 24:5; Jer 2:31). **Midbar** can describe a variety of places throughout ancient Israel such as the hill country to the east and south of Jerusalem (Josh. 8:20, 24; 2Sa 15:23). The Lxx translates with the noun *eremos* which is generally an isolated or desolate place. In context **midbar** probably conveys the former meaning of an uninhabited land not a barren, sun-scorched plain, but one cannot be dogmatic.

Gesenius Definition of midbar

(1) an uninhabited plain country, fit for feeding flocks, not desert, a pasture, from the root מִדְּבַר No. 2, to lead to pasture, like the Germ. Trift from treiben (Syriac מִדְּבַר, מִדְּבַר id.). Joel 2:22, מִדְּבַר, "the pastures of the plain are flourishing;" Psalms 65:13, יִרְעֵפוּ מִדְּבַר, "the pastures of the plain drop (fatness or fertility)." And the contrary, Jeremiah 23:10, יִבְשׁוּ מִדְּבַר, "the pastures of the plain dry up," Joel 1:19. Isaiah 42:11, וְעָרְבֵי מִדְּבַר "the plain and its cities shall rejoice." More often it is

(2) a sterile, sandy country, Isaiah 32:15, 35:1 50:2 Jeremiah 4:11, etc. מִדְּבַר שְׁמֵמָה Joel 2:3, 4:19 with the art. הַמִּדְּבַר always the desert of Arabia, Genesis 14:6, 16:7 Exodus 3:1, 13:18 Deuteronomy 11:24 the particular parts of which are distinguished by their own peculiar names (see מִדְּבַר יְהוּדָה, מִדְּבַר שׁוּר, מִדְּבַר סִינַי, מִדְּבַר יְהוּדָה the plain or desert of Judah; [does not this mean the wilderness of Judah by the Dead Sea, in contrast to the plain in the western part of that tribe?], Judges 1:16; Psalms 63:1. Metaph. Hosea 2:5, שָׁמְתִיהָ כַּמִּדְּבַר, "I have made her as a desert," i.e. most bare, I have deprived her of every thing. Jerem. 2:31, הֲמִדְּבַר הֵייתִי, "was I a desert to Israel?" Have I commanded them to worship me for nothing? have I been barren to them? Also used of a country forcibly laid waste, Isaiah 14:17.

(3) poetically the instrument of speech (from דָּבַר to speak), the mouth. [Song of Solomon 4:3](#), מִדְּבַרְךָ נְאוּמָה, "thy mouth is pleasant" (parall. thy lips). LXX. ἀλογία. Jerome, eloquium, and so the Rabbins. But the context almost requires it to be some member, as was rightly observed by Alb. Schultens, although I do not with him understand it to be the tongue.

**Like columns of smoke** - Not literal smoke but like smoke such as might be seen by a traveling caravan. And so as the speaker surveys the landscape of the desert, perhaps to the east and south of Jerusalem, he observes columns of smoke rising. His attention is drawn to the source of this smoke, which forms the subject of the second half of v. 6.

**With all scented powders of the merchant** - This suggests they could pick up this scent from quite a distance implying there would have been an abundance of these expensive aromatic perfumes adding to the overall grandeur and pomp of this procession. The mention of merchant indicates this was purchased perfume as could only be done by one who had considerable largess (as did Solomon himself, another reason I think the young man in this book is Solomon).

**POSB** - Weddings were elaborate events in Hebrew culture. All grooms provided as best as they could for their brides, but the most extravagant ceremonies were naturally those of the wealthy. The wedding also demonstrated the groom's esteem for his bride. As king, Solomon's wedding was magnificent, elaborate beyond imagination. The description reveals his personal attention to the wedding preparations. As the wedding procession began, a fragrant cloud of smoke appeared on Palestine's horizon, and those looking to the distant north from the Holy City could not miss it (v.6). These onlookers may have been a group of friends or palace staff who were charged with identifying and announcing the approaching procession of the royal couple. Or, they may have been the city watchmen posted on the walls of Jerusalem. They described the smoke column as coming up or out of the wilderness or desert. Coming up does not refer to the direction they were traveling. It depicts their ascent into Jerusalem, a city perched on a mountain. All who journeyed into Zion were said to be coming up to Jerusalem. ([Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible- Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon](#))

**Constable** on wedding customs - Weddings in Israel took place before the local town elders rather than before the priests (e.g., Ruth 4:10–11). They transpired in homes rather than in the tabernacle or temple (or synagogue later). They were civil rather than religious ceremonies. There were three parts to a wedding in the ancient Near East. **First**, the groom's parents selected a bride for their son. This involved securing the permission of the bride's parents and the approval of both the bride and the groom themselves. Though the parents of the young people arranged the marriage, they usually obtained the consent of both the bride and the groom. **Second**, on the wedding day the groom proceeded to the bride's house accompanied by a group of his friends. He then escorted her to the site of the wedding ceremony and finally took her to their new residence accompanied by their friends. Physical union consummated the marriage the night after the wedding ceremony took place. **Third**, the couple feasted with their friends usually for seven days following the wedding ceremony. In the section before us (Song 3:6–5:1) the writer mentioned the wedding procession (Song 3:6–11) and the consummation (Song 4:1–5:1). ([Song of Solomon Commentary](#))

**Jack Deere** describes Hebrew wedding customs in the OT - Weddings took place not in the temple (or later in the synagogue), but rather in the couples' homes. A central feature of a wedding ceremony was a procession to the bride's home led by the groom, who then escorted her back to their new residence. Next a wedding feast was given which lasted up to a week or even longer. Though the feast was prolonged the couple consummated their marriage on the first night.

**Perfumed with myrrh and frankincense** - The word perfumed ([qatar 06999 - קטר - burn, burn incense, burn sacrifices, burned, burned](#)) means to cause to rise up in smoke or to turn into fragrance by fire (especially as act of worship) and so to burn incense. In context the subject is the "What" or preferably the "Who" who was coming up. The picture is that of one completely filled with fragrance of these precious spices. It was a quite an experience for the senses! Here **frankincense** was for the bride and in the NT frankincense was one of the gifts brought by the Magi to Jesus the true King (Mt. 2:11). Frankincense was one of the ingredients in the holy oil (Ex 30:34), and was extensively used as an incense for burning sacrifices (Lev 2:1-2, 15-16).

**NET Note on frankincense** (Song 3:6, 4:6, 4:14)- The term לבונה (lévonah, "frankincense" [03828 - לבונה - frankincense, incense](#)) refers to fragrant incense (Ex 30:34; Lev 2:1, 15; 5:11; 6:8; 24:7; Num 5:15; Isa 43:23; 66:3; Jer 6:20; 17:26; 41:5; Neh 13:5, 9; 1 Chr 9:29; Song 3:6; 4:6, 14). It is composed of the white (sometimes yellow) resin of *Boswellia Carteri* and *Freerea* from Hadramawt and Somaliland. ([Ibid](#))

**With all perfumed powders** - This emphasizes the costly nature of this procession.

**Deere** comments - The pomp and beauty of this procession were wholly appropriate in light of the event's significance. The Scriptures teach that marriage is one of the most important events in a person's life. Therefore it is fitting that the union of a couple be commemorated in a special way. The current practice of couples casually living together apart from the bonds of marriage demonstrates how unfashionable genuine commitment to another person has become in contemporary society. This violates the sanctity of marriage and is contrary to God's standards of purity.

**Hess** sums up this passage - The picture there suggested both the great value and pleasure that the female has in her lover and the sexual intimacy that they enjoy. The myrrh and the frankincense, called "whiteness" (lěbônâ) from its color, were imported spices used in incense for sacrifices, in medicines, and in cosmetics. Only kings and other wealthy classes would use these valuable commodities for their own deodorants and perfumes. Their burning produced a pleasant aroma that could be detected at a distance. The need to import them from traders and merchants who exchanged goods with distant Sheba (Saba) in southern Arabia would explain the final line. The male understands that what approaches is no ordinary group of people, but one whose opulence is signaled in advance by columns of smoke burning fine aromatics. Already in this first verse the male has addressed the senses of sight and smell. Whenever the senses go beyond what is seen and heard, the male directs his attention toward his lover or something wonderful that reminds him of her physical presence and lovemaking. ([Song of Songs - Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms](#))

### Daughters of Jerusalem...

**Song 3:7 "Behold, it is the traveling couch of Solomon; Sixty mighty men around it, Of the mighty men of Israel"**

## AN AWESOME, THRILLING SIGHT!

- **NET** - Look! It is Solomon's portable couch! It is surrounded by sixty warriors, some of Israel's mightiest warriors.
- **NLT** - Look, it is Solomon's carriage, surrounded by sixty heroic men, the best of Israel's soldiers.

**Song 3:7-11** describes the incredible sight of this magnificent wedding processional which would have stood out in even greater

contrast with the **wilderness**.

**Behold** (02009)(**hinneh**) is an interjection meaning behold, look, now; if. "It is used often and expresses strong feelings, surprise, hope, expectation, certainty, thus giving vividness depending on its surrounding context." (Baker) **Hinneh** generally directs our mind to the text, imploring the reader to give it special attention. In short, the Spirit is trying to arrest our attention! And so **hinneh** is used as an exclamation of vivid immediacy (e.g., read Ge 6:13)!

The Lxx translates **hinneh** with the interjection "**idou**" a command that means to behold or look and emphasizes the size, degree, amount, or importance of something! The point is that this wedding procession must have been a sight to behold (pun intended) as well as to smell (Song 3:6)!

As **Hess** observes "Look! (hinnēh). This signals the most important piece of information in this section, the identification of the key figure, the one for which Song 3:6 built its description. It is the king and the greatest of kings, Solomon. However, his name appears as a note of ownership. Solomon himself is not on the bed. The bed belongs to Solomon, but he is not the occupant. Instead, the male sees his lover. This scene portrays the most luxuriant method of travel, one that only the wealthy could afford. Yet, although the wealthy are indicted for their leisure and lack of social concern ("beds of ivory" in Amos 6:4), the term is almost never used in sexual contexts. Only in Esther 7:8, where the king mistakenly assumes that Haman is molesting Esther as he falls on her bed (or couch) to beg for mercy, is there any sexual connotation. This is true even though it is one of the most common nouns for a place of rest. The male's thoughts are not of sexual matters simply because he mentions the bed. Rather, he revels in the opulence and indulgence that the appearance of this object brings. ([Ibid](#))

**Carr** on **couch** says "The parallel with 'palanquin' (Song 3:9) suggests some elaborate portable couch is meant here." The Song of Solomon - Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries - G. Lloyd Carr)

**Solomon** - 7x/7v = Song 1:1, 5; 3:7, 9, 11; 8:11-12. **Carr** remarks that "A basic question would have to be why someone as notoriously lascivious as Solomon should appear in an account of pure holy love, or even of pure sexual love between a man and a woman. Some commentators merely excise the name." [Ibid](#))

**Sixty mighty men** (cp sixty queens in Song 6:8) - Sixty was twice the number of bodyguards usually employed by a king, for in (2 Sa. 23:18-19, 23) we see David had **thirty** mighty men. Assuming his bride is in the processional, this double guard would speak of the practical side of Solomon's love for his bride to be, his high value of her worth and his desire for her to feel safe and secure = a good model for all godly husbands! **Does your wife feel secure in your care?** One form this takes is providing economic security for her. Sixty is associated with Solomon's temple (1Ki 6:2; 2Chr 3:3), Solomon's provisions (1Ki 4:22), 666 talents as a tribute to Solomon (1Ki 10:14; 2Chr 9:13) and finally with 60 conscripted men are taken from Jerusalem as part of the Babylonian captivity (2Ki 25:19). So in some way or for some reason 60 is associated with Solomon and his wealth and power.

**Mighty...mighty** (01368)(**gibbor** cp related verb **gabar** = be strong, accomplish, excel, prevail) is from a root which is commonly associated with warfare and has to do with the strength and vitality of the successful warrior. And thus this adjective means powerful, strong, brave, mighty. Warrior. Hero. Mighty man (cp "mighty [**gibbor**] men of David" - 2Sa 23:8). The Lxx translates **gibbor** here with **dunatos** = powerful; strong; mighty. The repetition of **gibbor** in the description of these men emphasize their strength.

**Longman** calls us to "Notice that these are Solomon's soldiers and Solomon's carriage; soon the language will turn to talk of Solomon's wedding. Solomon himself, however, is never described and never speaks. Again, this is what leads to the question about who is actually in the carriage. Though the mystery persists, the passage turns to a description of the ornate carriage "

### Daughters of Jerusalem.

Song 3:8 "All of them are wielders of the sword, expert in war; each man has his sword at his side, guarding against the terrors of the night.

- **NET** - All of them are skilled with a sword, well-trained in the art of warfare. Each has his sword at his side, to guard against the terrors of the night.
- **NLT** - They are all skilled swordsmen, experienced warriors. Each wears a sword on his thigh, ready to defend the king against an attack in the night.

**Wielders of the sword, expert in war...sword at side** - They would have been the "special ops" of Solomon's day = trained and able to defend.

**Carr** on **terrors** - generally means some external, objective danger, here either roving bands of outlaws who would relish capturing

a wealthy bridal train, or perhaps some wild animals that would attack a lone traveler but not a large party. The Song of Solomon - Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries - G. Lloyd Carr)

**Hubbard** observes that "living in the era of electricity has made it hard to grasp the intensity with which the ancients feared the night."

**Guarding against the terrors of the night** (same phrase Ps 91:5 describing how one who trusts in God will not "be afraid of the terror by night") - This implies the procession was from a distance more than could be traversed in a single day, as these mighty men were there to protect from the "terrors of the night," such as robbers, packs of wild animals, etc.

### Daughters of Jerusalem.

**Song 3:9 "King Solomon has made for himself a sedan chair([palanquin](#)) from the timber of Lebanon.**

- **NET** - King Solomon made a sedan chair for himself of wood imported from Lebanon.
- **NLT** - King Solomon's carriage is built of wood imported from Lebanon.

**King Solomon** - Given this designation it is difficult to understand why some commentators do not believe that Solomon was the male character in this Song. Yes, he fell from grace in 1Kings 11:1-12, but this book could have been written when he was young and still uncompromised by the 300 foreign wives.

**Sedan chair** (KJV = [palanquin - see pictures](#)) (0668)(**appiryon**) is found only here in the OT. The Lxx translates it with the noun **phoreion** (from phero = to bear) which is a litter. It is interesting that this is the first word in both the Greek and Hebrew sentences which would give it emphasis, thus Young's Literal renders it "A palanquin king Solomon made for himself, Of the wood of Lebanon."

**Webster** defines a **palanquin** as "a conveyance formerly used especially in eastern Asia usually for one person that consists of an enclosed litter borne on the shoulders of men by means of poles." In West Africa especially in the [Ashanti Kingdom](#) the kings (e.g., [Otumfuo Nana Osei Tutu II](#) with net worth over \$2 Billion) and queens are carried about in palanquins especially on auspicious occasions.

It is interesting that it does not state Solomon was in the "vehicle" but that it was one of his personal litters. Perhaps this was the bride to be (as some commentators suggest - see comments above). In any event, whoever it was, was traveling in style!

**Timber of Lebanon** - Cedar from Lebanon was most prized in construction (1Ki 4:33; 5:6, 8-9, 1Ki 7:2; 10:17, 21)

### Daughters of Jerusalem.

**Song 3:10 "He made its posts of silver, its back of gold and its seat of purple fabric, with its interior lovingly fitted out by the daughters of Jerusalem. ([picture](#))**

- **NET** - Its posts were made of silver; its back was made of gold. Its seat was upholstered with purple wool; its interior was inlaid with leather by the maidens of Jerusalem.
- **NLT** - Its posts are silver, its canopy gold; its cushions are purple. It was decorated with love by the young women of Jerusalem. Young Woman

**Silver...gold...purple** - These all depict a "vehicle" of considerable expense and indicate the owner (presumably) Solomon had considerable wealth (even the timber from Lebanon in Song 3:9 was highly prized as emphasized by it being used for the interior of Solomon's Temple and his royal palace). [Purple dye](#) was tediously extracted from the [Murex](#), a shellfish found along the Phoenician coast of the Mediterranean Sea. It is estimated that over 10,000 shellfish were required in order to collect one ounce of dye!

**Hess** - Of the thirty-seven verses in which "columns/posts" (ammûdîm) appears with "silver" (kesep), thirty-five describe the construction of the tabernacle (e.g., Ex. 26:32; 27:10, 11, 17; 36:36; 38:10, 11, 12, 17, 19). The remaining occurrence is Esther 1:6, where the Persian king's garden is described in terms similar to those here.

**Gold** was the most prized of all metals and in the ancient Near East the country renowned for its gold was Egypt.

**Deere** - Solomon offered his bride the best he had. And his love for her brought out the best in him.

**POSB** on **interior lovingly fitted out by the daughters of Jerusalem** - Its interior was created by the bride's friends in Jerusalem. Paved or inlaid (ratsaph) appears only here in the Old Testament and means fit together, or embroidered with stones (**Ed**: The Lxx translates with the adjective **lithostrotos** from **lithos** = stone and means a **mosaic** or tessellated pavement {see [picture of tessellation](#)}). It is seen as an expression of the friends' affection in carefully crafting the interior. It was a gift of their love. Perhaps the young woman's friends embroidered expressions or sayings of love into the interior, or they might have laid mosaics in the surface in a pattern of erotic scenes. Whatever the case, it was undoubtedly tied in to the wedding and the wedding night. (**Ed**: As an aside, the **daughters of Jerusalem** would also support that the person being transported was Solomon's bride.) ([Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible- Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon](#))

### Shulamite (young woman) speaks

**Song 3:11 " Go forth (imperative = command) , O daughters of Zion, and gaze (imperative = command) on King Solomon with the crown with which his mother has crowned him on the day of his wedding, and on the day of his gladness of heart."**

- **NET** - Come out, O maidens of Zion, and gaze upon King Solomon! He is wearing the crown with which his mother crowned him on his wedding day, on the most joyous day of his life!
- **NLT** - Come out to see King Solomon, young women of Jerusalem. He wears the crown his mother gave him on his wedding day, his most joyous day. Young Man

**Longman** - The mood is ebullient; the talk is about a wedding. This is indicated by Song 3:11, which refers to Solomon's wedding day. Reading this reference back, the entire poem seems to be a happy remembrance of Solomon's wedding. The opulence and grandeur of the occasion reflect the honor and glory of the institution of marriage.

**RSB** on **crown** - This is not the king's crown, but the sort of crown worn by brides and grooms at Jewish weddings. The custom was abandoned by the Jews in their sorrow caused by the tragic war with Rome and the loss of Jerusalem (A.D. 70). A rabbinic proverb states that "a bridegroom resembles a king."

**Crown** ([05850 - עטרה](#)) ('**atara**) is a general term for crown, should be distinguished from nezer, the royal and priestly crown. 'Atara can designate the crown of the queen (Jer 13:18), the nobility (Est 8:15) or the bridegroom (Song 3:11). While the crown could be made of gold and silver (Ps 21:3 [H 4]; Zech 6:11), it could also be a garland of flowers (Ezek 23:42). It was also used metaphorically - "crown of beauty" (Pr 4:9), "capable wife is a husband's crown" (Pr 12:4), "the crown of the wise is their wealth" (Pr 14:24, "gray hair is a glorious crown" (Pr 16:31), "grandchildren are the crown of the elderly" (Pr 17:6). The Lxx translates '**atara** with **stephanos** from stepho = to encircle, twine or wreath) which describes a wreath made of foliage or designed to resemble foliage and worn by one of high status or held in high regard. Until the Fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., it was customary for Jewish brides and bridegrooms to wear such crowns at their weddings.

**Henry Morris** - Solomon's mother was Bathsheba, and the crown she prepared was a wedding crown. The procession described in Song 3:6-11 is apparently a formal wedding ceremony for official state recognition of the marriage consummated some time before.

**Day of his wedding...day of his gladness of heart** - The association of his wedding with his joy is clear. How wonderful would it be if **every marriage** might continue the way they began...with "**gladness of heart!**"

**POSB** - Solomon had taken off his kingly crown and for this day donned the crown of an ordinary man—a bridegroom savoring one of the happiest days of his life. He was king on this day, not because he was the descendant of David but because he was the descendant of Adam. And like that first groom, who stood in utter amazement when the Creator presented Eve to him, Solomon felt like royalty because he was receiving such a beautiful gift from God. ([Ibid](#))

**Ryrie** remarks that 'Bathsheba placed a wedding (not kingly) crown (perhaps a wreath) on Solomon. It was a day of shared gladness, though Solomon experienced too many such days and wore out too many crowns!

**Gladness** (joy, pleasure, delight) ([08057](#))(**simchah** from **samach** = to rejoice, be glad) is a feminine noun which means joy, gladness (with one's entire being as indicated by its association with the heart cf. Ex 4:14; Ps 19:8; 104:15; 105:3, soul Ps 86:4, cp verb samach in Pr 15:30 = "bright eyes gladden the heart") and refers to both the emotion and the manifestation of the emotion (Ezra 3:12, 13). Simchah refers to the reality, the experience and manifestation of joy and gladness. Joy is happiness over an unanticipated or present good. The Lxx translates simchah with the noun euphrosune which describes a state of happiness, cheerfulness, joy, festivity (Acts 2:28, Ps 16:11)

**Richard Hess** writes that "The entire section has been building to this climax, the announcement of a wedding. This is what brings

joy to the heart of the king, rather than wealth or power or anything else. So significant is this happiness that the term **simchah** [gladness] occurs only here in the whole of the Song, despite its frequency elsewhere in the Bible (some 95 appearances) and the joyous tone of the Song. Contrary to some commentators, the Song does not portray sex as the great and final goal in order to experience true joy. Nor does it suggest that mutual admiration of the lovers, their physical bodies and sensuality, is the source of joy. Rather, the Song directly associates the joy of the heart with the final commitment of marriage. It is only within this commitment that all the joys of the male and female lovers come together." (He then sums up this section) "For the lover, the object of his or her love is one who exceeds everyone and everything else. We gaze upon the object of our love in desire, admiration, and ultimately joy because we want to do so, because we see there the fulfillment of all that we long for. In the Song it is the male and female lovers, the bridegroom and bride. For interpreters throughout history, it has been God and his people, and for Christians, Christ and the church." ([Song of Songs - Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms](#))

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**TODAY IN THE WORD** - In his essay entitled, "The Weight of Glory," C. S. Lewis notes that the concept of glory is very prominent in the New Testament and is often associated with things like palms, crowns, white robes, thrones, and splendor like the sun and stars. "All this," Lewis observes, "makes no immediate appeal to me at all, and in that respect I fancy that I am a typical modern."

Nearly a century before Lewis wrote these words, Mark Twain made a similar observation about the biblical imagery of glory, when he wrote of harps and robes, "That sort of thing wouldn't make a heaven—at least not a heaven that a sane man could stand a week and remain sane."

Twain, of course, was no theologian; in fact, it seems that he wasn't a believer. Yet the problem he identifies is the same one that Lewis mentions. In this world of earthly glitter and tangible reality, who can get excited about what seems on the surface to be a promise of some vague notion of glory? What good is a crown in heaven to someone who doesn't wear a hat on earth?

According to Lewis, glory is a matter of being "noticed" by God, "Glory means good report with God, acceptance by God, response, acknowledgement, and welcome into the heart of things. The door on which we have been knocking all our lives will open at last."

The appearance of the king and his retinue in today's reading is described in terms that are best summarized with the word glory. Those who accompany the king share in his glory. What was true on an earthly level in this description will be true on spiritual level with those who accompany Christ when He returns. They will "appear with him in glory" (Col. 3:4).

The hope of glory helps us to live a holy life. The knowledge that we will one day return with Christ in glory motivates us to say "no" to the powerful impulses of our earthly nature and "yes" to God.

**GO TO...**

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