

THE MYSTERY OF LOVE

THE SONG OF SONGS

Dedicated to my wife,
lover and friend,
Dana A. Krow

**The greatest of Solomon's 1,005
musical works**

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THE MYSTERY OF LOVE

THE SONG OF SOLOMON

In some ways love is a mystery (something not fully understood). We all want it, we all desire it and we all crave it. The writer of the book of Proverbs said, “¹⁸ There are three things that are too wonderful for me, four that I do not understand: ¹⁹ the way of an eagle in the sky, the way of a snake on a rock, the way of a ship in the sea, and the way of a man with a woman” (Prov. 30:18-19). God uses many different Hebrew and Greek words to describe love. It has many expressions including sexuality within a context of covenant and marriage. Often the same words that are used to describe love in a non-sexual context will again be used in a sexual context to describe love. True love is a “knowing”

experience, not just informational. Love is possessive, “My lover is mine and I am his” (Song 2:16), it insists on spontaneity, “Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires” (Song 2:7), it is stronger than death, “Love is as powerful as death. Love’s jealousy is as strong as the grave” (Song 8:6), it is unquenchable even by the ocean depths, “No amount of water can put it out. Rivers can’t drown it” (Song 8:7a). “All of man’s possessions cannot purchase it, nor should they be exchanged for it” (Song 8:7b). God intends that such love – grossly distorted and abused by both ancient and modern people – be a normal part of the Christian life, for its true source will only be found in Him (see 1 Jn. 4:8).

THE SONG OF SOLOMON

SONG 1: [1] The song of songs, which is Solomon's. (KJV)

¹ Solomon's Most Excellent Love Song. [1 Kings 4:32]. (NET)

Additional Information: The Greek Septuagint (LXX) and the Latin Vulgate versions follow the Hebrew (Masoretic Text) with literal translations of the first two words in Song 1:1 – “**Song of Songs**.” Several English versions read “The Song of Solomon,” thus giving the fuller sense of Song 1:1. The “Song of Songs” indicates that this song is the best among Solomon’s 1,005 musical works (1 Ki. 4:32). The word translated “song” frequently refers to music that honors the Lord (cf. 1 Chr. 6:31-32; Psa. 33:3; 40:3; 144:9). (MSB p. 940)

In ancient Israel everything human came to expression in words. Many pass by the Song of Solomon confused or embarrassed by the simple beauty of its words. This ought not to be, for all Scripture is authored by the blessed Holy Spirit; and this song is no exception. Whether Solomon himself understood the

import of his writing we do not know. It is clear to all who read the book that the Holy Spirit intends it as a testimony to the true nature of love. ^(LBC p. 1284)

The Song is read annually at the Feast of the Passover, as Ruth is read at Pentecost; Lamentations on 9th of Ab; Ecclesiastes at the Feast of Tabernacles; and Esther at the Feast of Purim. From the most ancient times it has formed part of the Hebrew Canonical Scriptures. ^(TCB p. 922)

The Song of Solomon parallels and enhances other portions of Scripture which portray God's plan for marriage, including the beauty and sanctity of sexual intimacy between husband and wife (Gen. 2:23-25; Prov. 5:15-23; 1 Cor. 7:1-5; 1 Cor. 13:4-8; Eph. 5:22-33; Col. 3:18-19; 1 Pet. 3:1-7). Hebrews 13:4 captures the heart of this song when it states, "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." ^(MSB p. 940)

The Song furnishes Christians of all ages with the language of holy love and challenges the believers of every age to an ardent devotion and fidelity to God and spouse. Such loyalty and devotion to God and mate are aptly illustrated by the "Song of Songs." ^(LBC p. 1284)

Interpretation: Approaches to the interpretation of the book have varied.

1. ***Allegorical.*** This method of interpretation looks beyond the literal meaning of the words and constructs new and more spiritual meanings. Jewish scholars who followed this approach saw in the Song a message relating the special union between Jehovah and Israel (Ezek. 16:8; Hosea 2:19-20; Psa. 45:11; Isa. 54:5). Many of the early Church fathers employed this approach and found in the Song a message of God's love for the Church (Eph. 5:31-32).

2. ***Typical.*** This view sees in the Song a portrayal of the love between Christ, the Bridegroom, and the Church, His bride or between Christ and the soul (Eph. 5:25-32; Rom. 7:4; 2 Cor. 11:2).

3. ***Literal.*** This view sees the book as a collection of love songs or poems that is designed to extol human marital love (Prov. 5:15-19). ^(LBC p. 1284)

1. **Read 1 Kings 4:32.** The phrase "Song of Songs" means this was: a. a very good song. b. Solomon's greatest song. c. a good poem to put into print.

2. **Read Psalm 40:3; Psalm 144:9.** The word “song” frequently refers to music that honors and worships the Lord. True or False.

Young Woman

SONG 1: [2] Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine. (KJV)

² Kiss me and kiss me again, for your love is more delightful than wine. (NLT; KJV; NET)

Additional Information: The Song begins with the woman’s expression of desire for intimate union with the man she loves. **“Let him kiss me.”** The “kiss” is a token of love and affection (Gen. 29:11; 1 Sam. 10:1; Psa. 2:12). In the Greek language **“worship”** *proskuneo* comes from two words *pros*, and *kuneo*, to kiss. In Hebrew the word “kiss” is *nashag*, a primitive root that has the idea of fastening up (used to attach one thing to another firmly). The “kiss” brings an emotional attachment.

“For thy love is better than wine.” The Latin Vulgate translates this phrase as “for thy breasts are

better than wine.” The word “breasts” is used figurative of the seat of thoughts, feelings, affection and love. The Hebrew word for “love” here literally means “to boil.” **“Better than wine.”** In comparing love with wine, the heart of the comparison is that it is intoxicating.

3. **Read Song 1:3.** Caution: Kissing can bring an emotional attachment that could be good or could be bad (depending on the circumstances). True or False

4. **Read Song 1:3.** God’s will is that marital lovemaking should be delightful and intoxicating. True or False

SONG 1: [3] Because of the savour of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee. (KJV)

³ The fragrance of your colognes is delightful; your name is like the finest perfume. No wonder the young women adore you! ^(NET)

Additional Information: Four features of Solomon attracted the young woman: 1. His lips (v. 2), 2. His love (v. 2), 3. His lotion (v. 3), and 4. His pure lifestyle (v. 3). Later Solomon noticed these same features in her (Song 4:9-11).

5. **Read Song 1:3.** Love is not in finding the right person but its key is in becoming the right person. True or False

SONG 1: [4] Draw me, we will run after thee: the king hath brought me into his chambers: *Young Women of Jerusalem* we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine: *Young Woman* the upright love thee. (KJV)

⁴ Take me away with you! Let's run off together! An elopement with my King-Lover! We'll celebrate, we'll sing, we'll make great music. Yes! For your love is better than vintage wine. Everyone loves you — of course! And why not? ^(TM)

Additional Information: “**Draw me, we will run after thee.**” The two lovers are very active throughout the Song, traveling through the hills, to the city, and out to the country. This time the woman invites the man to take her away with him, and urgently expresses her desire. “**The king hath brought me into his chambers.**” A common interpretation of this clause is that the woman is anticipating an intimate relationship with her lover and king. The word “**chamber**” means *room* or *bedchamber*. “**We will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine: the upright love thee.**” This part of the verse is believed to be a chorus of the young women of Jerusalem. The Shulamite woman frequently addresses the young women of Jerusalem (Song 2:7; 3:5). They are portrayed as close, trusted friends who are fond of the woman and responsive to her requests. She often confides in them about her lover, and they commend the couple from their outside perspective (Song 5:1, 9).
(NLTSB p. 1090)

6. **Read Song 1:4.** In this part of the story the woman openly expresses her desires to her lover-king. True or False

Young Woman

SONG 1: [5] I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.

[6] Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me: my mother's children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept. (KJV)

⁵ Women of Jerusalem, I am dark but beautiful, dark as the desert tents of Kedar, but beautiful as the draperies in Solomon's palace. ⁶ Don't look down on me because of my color, because the sun has tanned me. My brothers were angry with me and made me work in the vineyard. I had no time to care for myself. ^(TEV)

Additional Information: (Verses 5-6) The Shulammitte girl is darkened by exposure to the sun, indicating a life of manual labor. Though weathered by

hard work, she is beautiful in the eyes of her bridegroom (Ruth 2:2-13).

7. **Read Ruth 2:2-13.** Faithfulness and integrity can make one beautiful and desired by others. True or False

SONG 1: [7] Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions? *Young Man* [8] If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents. (KJV)

⁷ Tell me, you whom I love, where do you feed your sheep? Where do you let them rest at noon? Why should I look for you near your friend's sheep, like a woman who wears a veil? ⁸ If you do not know, O most beautiful of women, simply follow the tracks of my flock,

and pasture your little lambs beside the tents of the shepherds. (NCV; NET)

Additional Information: (Verse 7) The girl felt insecure at being alone while her lover was away (v. 7). She longed for the security of his presence. **(Verse 8)** **“If thou know not.”** the court ladies, hearing the maiden’s plea, bid her to depart and search for the shepherd. Keeping near the **“kids beside the shepherds tents”** she would undoubtedly find her lover.

8. **Read Song 1:7-8.** The Shulammite maiden wants to find the one she loves (privately during the resting period at noon) so they can enjoy the time together. True or False

SONG 1: [9] I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots. [10] Thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels, thy neck with chains of gold. [11] We will make thee borders of gold with studs of silver. (KJV)

⁹ You move as gracefully as the pony that leads the chariot of the king. ¹⁰ Earrings add to your beauty, and you wear a necklace of precious stones. ¹¹ Let's make you some jewelry of gold, woven with silver. ^(CEV)

Additional Information: (Song 1:9-11) The man compares the woman's beauty to the rich adornment of the royal chariot of Pharaoh. She is indeed beautiful, but with the expensive adornments which he will give her she will have an unsurpassable beauty.

9. **Read Song 1:10-11.** The man's love leads him to give the Shulammite maid: a. a gift card at Wal-Mart. b. a weekly allowance. c. jewelry of gold, woven with silver.

Young Woman

SONG 1: [12] While the king sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof. [13] A bundle of myrrh is my

wellbeloved unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts. [14] My beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of En-gedi. (KJV)

¹² The smell of my perfume spreads out to the king on his couch. ¹³ My lover is like a bag of myrrh that lies all night between my breasts. ¹⁴ My lover is like a bunch of flowers from the vineyards at En Gedi. (NCV)

Additional Information: (Verse 12) “While the king sitteth at his table.” The context up to now has been pastoral: flocks, herds, shepherds, and vineyards. Now it is of a table (or possible couch), expensive and exotic perfumes, spices from faraway places, and a king. The context is royal. This may be confusing to us because we do not usually associate shepherds and kings. But the Hebrew term for the rulers is "shepherds." (NIV^{BC}) **“My spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.” “Spikenard”** is a costly perfume. This is a possible metaphor for the woman herself. She is a pleasing aroma to her bridegroom.

(Verse 13) “A bundle of myrrh is my wellbeloved unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts.” A **“bundle of myrrh”** is a scent bag or sachet worn in the bosom and suspended from the neck on a silk thread. The Shulammite confesses that her beloved is to her what this delightful perfume is to others. ^(LBC p.1287) **“He shall lie all night betwixt my breasts.”** The **“breasts”** is often used fig. to refer to the seat of thoughts, feelings, love, and affection (see Prov. 5:19). ^(ZBC p. 652)

(Verse 14) “My beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire.” **“Camphire”** is a plant that bears white scented flowers. **“In the vineyards of En-gedi.”** A Judean desert oasis overlooking the Dead Sea.

10. **Read Song 1:12-14.** The Shulammite bride’s anticipation of her husband is rich with sensory appeal. She is a pleasing aroma to her bridegroom. True or False

Young Man

SONG 1: [15] Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes.

Young Woman [16] **Behold, thou art fair, my beloved, yea, pleasant: also our bed is green. [17] The beams of our house are cedar, and our rafters of fir. (KJV)**

¹⁵ My darling, you are lovely, so very lovely- your eyes are those of a dove. *She Speaks:* ¹⁶ My love, you are handsome, truly handsome- the fresh green grass will be our wedding bed ¹⁷ in the shade of cedar and cypress trees. ^(CEV)

Additional Information: (Verse 15) “Behold, thou art fair, my love.” The words of the young man begins, **“Thou art fair.”** The word **“fair”** *yapeh* in Hebrew literally means beautiful, pleasing in appearance, attractive. It’s use here indicates the young man’s love for the beautiful maiden. **“Thou hast doves’ eyes.”** The dove is symbolic of gentleness (Matt. 10:16). They are also known for fidelity, having only one mate for life.

(Verse 16-17) Verses 16-17 contain the reply of the Shulamite. She replies that he, too, is comely. More

than that, he is “**pleasant**,” that is, luxuriant; and their place of meeting was also luxuriant. Their couch did not have the artificial beauty of a palace. Their couch was the green carpet of the fields, and their palace consisted of the beautiful “**cedar, and our rafters of fir.**” (LBC p. 1287)

In a number of the poems the countryside is the place of happy intimacy. The man and the woman make their bed in the great outdoors and enjoy each other’s company. (NLTSB p. 1092)

11. **Read Song 1:15-17.** In a number of ancient poems the countryside is a place of happy intimacy. True or False

Young Woman

SONG 2: [1] I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys. (KJV)

¹ I am merely a rose from the land of Sharon, a lily from the valley. (CEV)

Additional Information: The Plain of Sharon was famous for its flowers and pasture lands. The maiden is saying, I am merely a flower of the plain. I am

only one among a host of others. Why, she is asking, would you choose me? (LBC p.1287)

12. **Read Song 2:1.** The Hebrew shows the woman's modesty and humility, as she claims to be but one flower among many in Sharon and in the expansive valleys of Israel. True or False

Young Man

SONG 2: [2] As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters. (KJV)

² "My love, among the young women you are like a lily among thorns." (NIVrV)

Additional Information: The man and the woman exchange compliments. Using metaphors of flowers and trees, they describe the nature of their loving relationship. The man affirms her comparison to a lily, but says that her beauty is far from common; she is a lily among thistles (thorns). (NLTSB p. 1092)

13. **Read Song 2:2.** The man replies, you are not ordinary. You are as the beautiful lily among a bouquet of thorns. True or False

Young Woman

SONG 2: [3] As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. (KJV)

³ “My love, among the young men you are like an apple tree among the trees of the forest. I’m happy to sit in your shade. Your fruit tastes so sweet to me. ^(NIVrV)

Additional Information: The maiden now responds with a longer speech. Her senses are being stirred by his presence and the affirmations of his love. She finds herself feasting on it all. It is as if he is a tree that provides relief from the sun and delicious fruit for her hunger. Her satisfaction lies in him. ^(NIVBC)

14. **Read Song 2:3.** The Shulamite receives refreshment from being in the presence of her love. True or False

SONG 2: [4] He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love. (KJV)

⁴ He escorts me to the banquet hall; it's obvious how much he loves me. (NLT)

Additional Information: “He brought me to the banqueting house” (Literally “house of wine”). Dropping the image of the apple tree, the woman now speaks of the man as her provider at a feast. **“His banner over me was love.”** Literally His banner over me is “love.” He likes to tell others how much he loves her. (NLTSB p. 1092)

15. **Read Song 2:4.** Solomon likes to tell others how much he loves the Shulamite woman. True or False

SONG 2: [5] Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples: for I am sick of love.

[6] His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me. (KJV)

⁵ Strengthen me with raisins, and refresh me with apples, because I am weak with love. ⁶ My lover's left hand is under my head, and his right arm holds me tight. ^(NCV)

Additional Information: (Song 2:5-6) The woman's love is intense, his love overwhelming. If the Song is a collection of literary pieces, the couple can be seen as married, and lovemaking is seen as so physically exhausting that she grows faint and calls for the sustenance of raisin cakes and apples. These foods were considered aphrodisiacs (a substance that excites sexual desire) in the ancient Near East. **“Stay me.”** She now depends on him to revive her with the fruit of the earlier image – he is the apple tree, so he can provide apples for her renewed strength. **“His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace**

me.” He tenderly supports her with his embrace as they lie together (see also Song 8:3). ^(NLT SB p. 1092)

16. **Read Hebrews 13:4.** The marriage bed is: a. evil. b. pure. c. undefiled. d. unsoiled.

SONG 2: [7] I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please. (KJV)

⁷ Promise me, O women of Jerusalem, by the gazelles and wild deer, not to awaken love until the time is right. ^(NLT)

Additional Information: “I charge you ... by the roes, and by the hinds of the field.” This plea is obviously important to the Song; it is repeated in Song 3:5 and Song 8:4, and a promise is requested. When a promise was made, witnesses were needed, and the wild animals were the only witnesses present. These graceful animals suggest a romantic pastoral setting. **“Stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please.”** Or

not to awaken love until it is ready. As in Song 8:8-9, virginity is praised. The woman warns the women of Jerusalem to be cautious and not to hurry love. (NLT^{SB} p. 1092)

In holy matrimony, husband and wife may enjoy a God-pleasing arousal and fulfillment of love, each one pleasing the other. (LSB p. 1069) Despite the romantic images and fantasies in this book, there is realism in it. The author knows about erotic desire, meddling relatives, and the struggle to establish a relationship in the face of separation and hostility. He understands that we no longer live in the Garden of Eden, but in a fallen world, where love, too, has its pain. But there remains also idealism. The overwhelming impression that the book leaves with the reader is that love is beautiful, and can provide deep satisfaction and contentment. (NGSB p. 1004)

17. **Read Song 2:7.** Many feel that this verse encourages us not to force romance lest the feelings of love grow faster than the commitment needed to make love last. True or False

**SONG 2: [8] The voice of my beloved!
behold, he cometh leaping upon the
mountains, skipping upon the hills.**

**[9] My beloved is like a roe or a young hart:
behold, he standeth behind our wall, he
looketh forth at the windows, shewing
himself through the lattice. (KJV)**

⁸ Listen! My lover is approaching!
Look! Here he comes, leaping over the
mountains, bounding over the hills!

⁹ My lover is like a gazelle or a young stag.
Look! There he stands behind our wall,
gazing through the window, peering through
the lattice. ^(NET)

**Additional Information: (Verses 8-9) “The
voice of my beloved!”** The speaker in these verses is
the Shulamite woman. She informs the court ladies of
the coming of her beloved as the surefooted stag or
gazelle, covering difficult mountain terrain. No obstacle
could keep him from his love. Soon he is behind the

wall; he looketh forth at the windows. He approaches the wall of the village, and from there he moves to the windows where she beholds him peering through the lattice. In Eastern lands windows are unglazed and of latticework so closely set together that a person outside cannot see what is taking place within, yet anyone inside can see all that goes on outside. (LBC p. 1288)

18. **Read Song 2:8-9.** The eager lover tries to catch sight of his beloved while she is still preparing for their meeting. True or False

SONG 2: [10] My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. [11] For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; [12] The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; (KJV)

¹⁰ My lover spoke and said to me, "Get up, my darling; let's go away, my beautiful one. ¹¹ Look, the winter is past; the rains are

over and gone.¹² Blossoms appear through all the land. The time has come to sing; the cooing of doves is heard in our land. (NCV)

Additional Information: (Verses 10-11) “Rise up, my love.” The Shulamite here records the words of her lover. He urges her to come with him to enjoy the charm of the fields, for winter and the rains have ceased. (LBC p. 1288)

(Verse 12) “The voice of the turtle is heard in our land.” The time of singing has arrived. The voices of the bulbul (nightingale) abounded in the wooded valleys, filling the air in early spring with the rich cadence of their notes. (Tristrans Nat. His. of the Bible, p. 160) The turtle (Heb. *tor*) is the turtledove. It is a migrating bird, and its advent marks the return of spring (Jer. 8:7). (Ibid., 1288)

19. **Read Song 2:10-12.** The stimulating and invigorating sights, sounds, and smells of spring energize romantic feelings. True or False

SONG 2: [13] The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender

grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away. (KJV)

13 Fig trees are bearing fruit, while blossoms on grapevines fill the air with perfume. My darling, I love you! Let's go away together. ^(CEV)

Additional Information: “The fig tree putteth forth her green figs.” In Palestine the first crop of ripe figs appears in the early spring and ripens in early June. Literally, the line might read, the fig tree sweetens her green figs and the vines are in blossom ^(Ginsburg p. 146)

20. **Read Song 2:13.** The lovers celebrated their joy in the creation and in their love. God created the world, the beauty we see, the joy of love, sex, and marriage, and gave us senses to enjoy them. True or False

Young Man

SONG 2: [14] O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me

hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely. (KJV)

¹⁴ Come, my shy and modest dove —
leave your seclusion, come out in the open.
Let me see your face, let me hear your voice.
For your voice is soothing and your face is
ravishing. ^(TM)

Additional Information: “O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock.” The maiden cloistered in her house is as unapproachable as the dove who selects the lofty clefts and the deep ravine for its roosting place. In poetic language, her lover seeks to overcome her timidity. He appeals to her to put aside her shyness and let him see her countenance and hear her voice. ^(LBC p. 1288)

21. **Read Song 2:14.** “The clefts of the rock” is a metaphor for separation that the man wants to overcome to be with her. True or False

Young Women of Jerusalem

SONG 2: [15] Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes. (KJV)

¹⁵ Catch all the foxes, those little foxes, before they ruin the vineyard of love, for the grapevines are blossoming! ^(NLT)

Additional Information: The young foxes were especially injurious to the vineyard. Both young foxes and jackals are known to work havoc in Palestinian vineyards. They play among the vines, dig holes, and spoil fences. Although carnivorous, they are also fond of young shoots and grapes; so they need to be trapped or driven away before the fruit begins to ripen. ^(Clarke, p. 52)

22. **Read Song 2:15.** The “foxes” may represent threats to the relationship. These threats are not identified; they could be the normal ups and downs of love, rival suitors, or anything else that might keep the couple from enjoying one another. True or False

Young Woman

SONG 2: [16] My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the lilies. [17] Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether. (KJV)

¹⁶ "My beloved is mine and I am his. He is feeding among the lilies! ¹⁷ Before the dawn comes and the shadows flee away, come to me, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young stag on the mountains of spices." ^(LB)

Additional Information: (Verses 16-17) The lover, in the guise of a gazelle, grazes "**among the lilies**" that possibly represent the woman, suggesting the intimate association of the couple. The woman is often likened to a garden (see Song 4:12, 15-16; 5:1; 6:2). ^(NLTSB p. 1093) Husband and wife belong to each other in the bonds of God's marriage covenant, where two become one flesh (Gen. 2:18-25; Matt. 19:4-6). There is

a mutual and cooperative interchange of favors and privileges in marriage (see 1 Cor. 7:3-5; Eph. 5:28), reflecting, however imperfectly, love created by God. (LSB p. 1070)

(Verse 17) The image of the lover as a gazelle or a young stag on the hills introduces and concludes this section. (NGSB p. 1007) **“The mountains of Bether.”** **“Bether”** means separation or division. (LBC p. 1288)

23. Read Song 2:16-17; Song 6:2-3. **“Feedeth”** (verse 16) is a metaphor for the lover’s intimate enjoyment of her charms. True or False

Young Woman

SONG 3: [1] By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not. [2] I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not. [3] The watchmen that go about the city found me: to whom I said, Saw ye him

whom my soul loveth? [4] It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him, and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me. [5] I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please. (KJV)

¹ All night long on my bed I longed for my lover. I longed for him but he never appeared. ² "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. ³ The night watchmen found me - the ones who guard the city walls. "Have you seen my beloved?" ⁴ 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.

⁵ 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!" (NET)

Additional Information: (Song 3:1-5) “By night on my bed.” This passage and Song 5:2-7 are usually interpreted as dream sequences. These nightly dreams, which are born in the midst of her longing for his return, soon turn to nightmares. His delay awakened in her the apprehension that some disaster may have befallen him. She decided to **“seek him who my soul loveth.”** While on the search, she met the watchmen and immediately inquired of them if they had seen him. Shortly after her encounter with the watchmen, she found her lover and held him tightly, fearing that she might lose him again. She desired that he accompany her to her mother’s house and into the chamber where she was conceived. Having expressed her deep love she once again pleads with the ladies of the court **“not to awaken love until the time is right.”** (LBC p. 1288)

24. **Read Song 3:1-5.** When you love someone, you will do all you can to ensure the safety of that person and care for his or her needs. True or False

Young Women of Jerusalem

SONG 3: [6] Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant? (KJV)

⁶ Who is this coming out of the desert like a cloud of smoke? Who is this that smells like myrrh, incense, and other spices? ^(NCV)

Additional Information: “What is this commotion?” asks the spectator as he views the caravan moving out of the open country toward the cultivated areas which surround the city. In the countryside the caravan comes to the maiden. The “**pillars of smoke**” were the incense that was customarily burned at the head of important processions. ^(LBC p. 1289)

If the Song is an anthology, this poem describes what appears to be Solomon’s wedding procession. People

are amazed by the wealth and affluence of his carriage and the power represented by his attendants and associates. All of this reflects on the significance of marriage in the same way that expensive and beautiful wedding dresses and tuxedos do in modern marriages. (NLTSB p. 1093)

25. **Read Song 3:6-11.** This may be an independent poem. In context it portrays the lover as King Solomon, escorted by sixty armed men, coming in royal procession to meet a bride. True or False

SONG 3: [7] Behold his bed, which is Solomon's; threescore valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Israel. [8] They all hold swords, being expert in war: every man hath his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night. [9] King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon. [10] He made the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom thereof of gold, the covering of it of purple, the midst thereof being paved

**with love, for the daughters of Jerusalem.
(KJV)**

⁷ Look, it is Solomon's carriage, surrounded by sixty heroic men, the best of Israel's soldiers. ⁸ 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. ⁹ King Solomon's carriage is built of wood imported from Lebanon. ¹⁰ Its posts are silver, its canopy gold; its cushions are purple. It was decorated with love by the young women of Jerusalem.
(NLT)

Additional Information: (Song 3:7-10)

“**Behold his bed,**” the litter (an enclosed or curtained couch mounted on shafts and used to carry passengers) or the palanquin (a covered litter carried on poles on the shoulders of four or more bearers). Another spectator, recognizing at a distance the litter with the king's bodyguard surrounding it, exclaims that Solomon's

cortege (a train of attendants, as of a distinguished person) is approaching. Sixty men chosen especially for their skill with weapons have been chosen to protect the cortege from night attack. A brief description of the palanquin is given in verses 9-10. It was constructed of the woods of Lebanon: cedar, cypress, fir, and pine. The oak rest (bottom), against which the occupant leaned, was covered with gold and the royal crimson colors. The pillars that supported the weight of the litter were generally painted with flowers, and short sentences were written on the walls which expressed the power of the king. The middle of the litter was paved with expressions of love by the daughters of Jerusalem. (Ibid., p. 1289)

26. **Read Song 3:7-10.** Solomon's men would form a bodyguard for protection from robbers, especially as weddings were celebrated at nightfall. True or False

Young Woman

SONG 3: [11] Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the

crowns wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart. (KJV)

¹¹ Women of Zion, come out.

Look at King Solomon wearing his crown.

His mother placed it on him. She did it on his wedding day. His heart was full of joy.” (NIVrV)

Additional Information: As the cortege draws near to the city, the young woman calls the daughters of Zion to come out to view the monarch and his crown. The crown here is not the crown of royalty, but the nuptial chaplet worn by a bridegroom. He is wearing the crown his mother gave him. (LBC p. 1289)

27. **Read Song 3:11.** The crown here is not the royal crown, but the crown that relates to marriage or the wedding ceremony. True or False

Young Man

SONG 4: [1] Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes

within thy locks: thy hair is as a flock of goats, that appear from mount Gilead. (KJV)

¹ My darling, you are lovely, so very lovely- as you look through your veil, your eyes are those of a dove. Your hair tosses about as gracefully as goats coming down from Gilead. (CEV)

Additional Information: (Song 4:1) This section (vv. 1-7) begins a *wasf*, a traditional poetic form describing the physical attributes on one's partner in terms of the natural world (cf. Song 5:10-16; 6:5b-7; 7:1-7) (Cath., p. 755) Solomon is expressing his undiminished affection for the young woman. Using striking poetic language, he enumerates her charms. The perfect proportion of her body is mentioned. It is well to remind ourselves that such a description of a female's physical attractions is not to be judged by our Western standards. (Clarke, p. 60) Easterners were far less inhibited in this area. (LBC p. 1289) **"Thy hair is as a flock of goats."** Her locks (*tsamah*) are as beautiful as Mount Gilead covered with the shaggy goat herd. The hair of Oriental goats is

exceedingly delicate, soft (Gen. 27:16), long, and black (1 Sam. 19:13); and when the sun shines upon it, it reflects such a glare that the eye can hardly bear the luster. (Ginsburg, p. 154)

28. **Read Song 4:1.** We feel like awkward onlookers when we read this intensely private and intimate exchange. Song 4:1 begins to rehearse the wedding and their love life that followed in the holy bonds of matrimony. Communicating love and expressing admiration in both words and actions can enhance every marriage. True or False

SONG 4: [2] Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which came up from the washing; whereof every one bear twins, and none is barren among them. [3] Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech is comely: thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate within thy locks. [4] Thy neck is like the tower of David builded for an armoury, whereon there hang

a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men. [5] Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins, which feed among the lilies. (KJV)

² Your teeth are as white as sheep that have just been shorn and washed. Not one of them is missing; they are all perfectly matched. ³ Your lips are like a scarlet ribbon; how lovely they are when you speak. Your cheeks glow behind your veil. ⁴ Your neck is like the tower of David, round and smooth, with a necklace like a thousand shields hung around it. ⁵ Your breasts are like gazelles, twin deer feeding among lilies. ^(TEV)

Additional Information (Song 4:2) “Thy teeth.” Her teeth are as white as newly washed sheep. **“Bear twins.”** The Hebrew word literally means to double or to occur in pairs. The perfect and regular rows of her teeth are exactly paired, and not one tooth is missing. **(Song 4:3) “Thy lips are like a thread of**

scarlet.” Her lips are not unduly thick, and they have a natural red tone which signifies good health. “**Thy temples**” or the upper part of her cheeks resemble the interior of a pomegranate; they have a rosy hue. This also symbolizes health and attractiveness. **(Song 4:4) “Thy neck is like the tower of David.”** The tower of David (Neh. 3:25-27) was at the summit of Zion and was made of white marble. The interior of the tower was embellished with an innumerable store of weapons and trophies from David’s many victories (cf. Ezek. 27:10-11). **(Song 4:5) “Thy two breasts.”** Among Orientals there is a greater freedom to discuss the female bosom, and it was often bared in public for the feeding of infants. The beauty of her breasts suggests to him that she has reached womanhood and is eligible for marriage. (LBC p. 1290)

29. **Read Song 4:2-5.** Solomon has described the seven-fold beauty of his bride (her eyes, hair, teeth, mouth, temples, neck, and breasts). True or False

SONG 4: [6] Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the

mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense. (KJV)

⁶ The sweet, fragrant curves of your body, the soft, spiced contours of your flesh
Invite me, and I come. I stay until dawn
breathes its light and night slips away. ^(TM)

Additional Information: (Song 4:6) After mention of the breasts in the previous verse, the man's exclamation that he wants to hurry to the "**mountain of myrrh**" and "**hill of frankincense**" is easily understood as his desire to be intimately close to this beautiful woman. ^(NLTSB p. 1094)

30. **Read Song 4:6.** The "mountain of myrrh" and the "hill of incense" are metaphors for lovers' intimacy. True or False

SONG 4: [7] Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee. [8] Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon: look from the top of Amana, from

the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards. [9] Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck. (KJV)

⁷ My darling, you are lovely in every way. ⁸ My bride, together we will leave Lebanon! We will say good-bye to the peaks of Mount Amana, Senir, and Hermon, where lions and leopards live in the caves. ⁹ My bride, my very own, you have stolen my heart! With one glance from your eyes and the glow of your necklace, you have stolen my heart. ^(CEV)

Additional Information: (Song 4:7) “Thou art all fair, my love.” Once again the mouth is filled with praise for the woman’s impeccable beauty. **(Song 4:8) “Come with me.”** He desires an exit to the beauty of the mountains of Lebanon. **“My spouse.”** This is the first time the word “spouse” is used in this book. The

Hebrew word means “bride” or “young wife.” The Hebrew word refers to one who has reached the goal of her womanly calling, that of becoming a partner to her husband, thus perfectly completing herself and him. In the company of her bridegroom, the Shulammitte will be safe, even amidst such wild creatures as lions and leopards. ^(LSB p. 1072) **(Song 4:9) “Thou hast ravished my heart.”** To ravish the heart means to *encourage* or *make the heart beat faster*. The great courage that he feels is due to the knowledge of her continued love for him. One look into her eyes and the renewed sight of her beautiful neck has incarcerated him as with a mighty chain. **“My sister”** is a term that implies the intimacy of the bride and her husband, as though they were of one blood and one flesh (Gen. 2:24; Eph. 5:31).

31. **Read Song 4:9.** The man calls the woman his sister to emphasize their relationship as loving companions and his role as her protector. True or False

SONG 4: [10] How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of thine ointments

than all spices! [11] Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honeycomb: honey and milk are under thy tongue; and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon. [12] A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed. [13] Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard, [14] Spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices: [15] A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon. *Young Woman*: [16] Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits. (KJV)

¹⁰ Your love delights me, my treasure, my bride. Your love is better than wine, your

perfume more fragrant than spices. ¹¹ Your lips are as sweet as nectar, my bride. Honey and milk are under your tongue. Your clothes are scented like the cedars of Lebanon. ¹² You are my private garden, my treasure, my bride, a secluded spring, a hidden fountain. ¹³ Your thighs shelter a paradise of pomegranates with rare spices— henna with nard, ¹⁴ nard and saffron, fragrant calamus and cinnamon, with all the trees of frankincense, myrrh, and aloes, and every other lovely spice. ¹⁵ You are a garden fountain, a well of fresh water streaming down from Lebanon's mountains. *Young Woman* ¹⁶ Awake, north wind! Rise up, south wind! Blow on my garden and spread its fragrance all around. Come into your garden, my love; taste its finest fruits. ^(NLT)

Additional Information: (Song 4:10-16) “My sister, my spouse!” “Love” in this verse is in the

plural (Heb. *dodim*). **“Sister”** speaks of blood relationship. It does not imply that she was related to him, but only that he felt an endearment for her that was broader than sexual desire. **“My spouse,”** speaks of the covenant of love into which they each have freely entered. She has indicated to him, you are my right man and I will forsake all others for you. He has said to her, you are my bride and for you I forsake all others and covenant to cleave unto you all the days of my life.

His ravished heart continues on in praise of her beauty. **“Thy lips”** are like the **“honeycomb”** (Heb. *nopet*, that is, virgin honey). Her speech was as sweet as honey and as wholesome as milk. **“The smell of thy garments.”** Everything about her smells good to him. Garments in Scripture often symbolize the conduct of the person (cf. Psa. 45:8).

“A garden inclosed.” Her heart belongs only to him. She has told him so, and his heart can safely trust in her word (Prov. 31:11). Note the frequent occurrence of **“my”** in verses 12, 16, and 5:1. **“Shut up ... sealed”** (vs. 12). In the East, gardens are frequently barred to the public, not only to secure the desired privacy but to conserve the water supply and preserve it from pollution. Water is scarce and therefore precious

(Clarke, p. 69). Equally precious to Solomon is this virtuous woman who has voluntarily sealed herself off for him alone.

“Thy plants.” She is a garden to Solomon, but not just an ordinary garden. She is an orchard filled with the most costly trees and producing the most pleasant of fruits. **“Orchard”** is from the Persian word *paradis* and means, literally, *paradise*. The pomegranate was the chosen symbol of fruitfulness. **“Saffron”** appears only here in the Old Testament. It was esteemed for its fragrance and its flavoring and medicinal properties. **“Calamus”** was an aromatic cane coming from Arabia and India. **“Cinnamon”** was also used as a perfume. **“With all trees”** which served in the making of incense she is to be likened. **“Frankincense”** was a whitish resin and was used with cinnamon and calamus in the production of the holy incense (Ex. 30:24). It was also added to the meal offering and seems to symbolize personal righteousness (Lev. 2:1-2). **“Myrrh”** is the gum resin which came from an incision in a tree of the terebinth order. The substance hardens into a brown, translucent substance. It had a bitter taste, but a pleasant odor. **“Aloe”** was a resinous oil extracted from the trunk of certain trees.

Having described the maiden's physical charms in verses 1-7, Solomon turned to consider the graces of her character in verses 8-16. The most pleasant things he can think of do not serve to fully express the beauty of his faithful Shulamite. **"All the chief spices"** only serve to begin to recount her fairness.

To finish the picture of this charming garden, he introduces streams, wells, and a cooling wind to waft abroad the delightful scent of his lovely sister bride. (LBC., p. 1290)

(Song 4:16) The Shulamite then portrays herself as an open garden, whereas before she was closed (Song. 4:12). She describes herself as **"his garden"** signifying voluntary sexual surrender (cf. 1 Cor. 7:3-5). (MSB Study Bible, p. 946) The woman invites the man to enter her and experience her now-unlocked body in all its sensual perfection. The man had poetically affirmed the woman's chastity (Song 4:12). However, she is totally and exclusively committed to him, so she reveals her treasures and invites him into the garden. (NLT SB p. 1095)

Man's deepest need is to experience the oneness of authentic love in a dependable relationship. The endearing terms **"sister"** and **"spouse,"** used of the Shulamite, depict an enduring mutuality and permanent

oneness. She is not a “**garden enclosed**” locking him out, but a private protected garden for royal use into which she invites her “**beloved**” to enter. The Shulamite, along with all her choice products, is now his. (SFLB p. 952)

32. **Read Song 4:12.** “Enclosed, shut up, and sealed” are metaphors for the beloved’s virginity – or perhaps for the fact that she keeps herself exclusively for her husband. True or False

Young Man **SONG 5: [1] I am come into 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, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved. (KJV)**

My bride, my very own, I come to my garden and enjoy its spices. I eat my honeycomb and honey; I drink my wine and

milk. Eat and drink until you are drunk with love. ^(CEV)

Additional Information: (Song 5:1) “I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse.” While the guests feasted, the couple consummated their marriage (cf. Gen. 29:23; Deut. 22:13-21) and Solomon announced the blessing (cf. Gen. 2:25). **“Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly.”** Given the intimate and private nature of sexual union, it seems difficult to understand anyone but God speaking these words (cf. Prov. 5:21). This is the divine affirmation of sexual love between husband and wife as holy and beautiful. ^(MSB p. 947)

33. **Read Song 5:1.** God encouraged the couple to enjoy their sexual union to the fullest; there can be no guilt or shame in the deepest pleasure between husband and wife. True or False

Young Woman

SONG 5: [2] I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh,

saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night. (KJV)

² "One night as I was sleeping, my heart awakened in a dream. I heard the voice of my beloved; he was knocking at my bedroom door. 'Open to me, my darling, my lover, my lovely dove,' he said, 'for I have been out in the night and am covered with dew.'^(LB)

Additional Information: (Song 5:2) Most are agreed that the second main division of the Song commences at this point. The Shulamite relates to the court ladies the fear of losing her beloved. The sympathies extended by the ladies of the court have encouraged her to share more deeply her love for Solomon. Solomon knocks at her door, and she hears him asking for admittance: **“Open to me.”** His language is suggestive of the moral purity he assigns to her; she is **“my love”** (Song 1:15), **“my dove”** (Song 2:14), **“my undefiled”** (Song 5:2). **“My head is filled with dew.”**

He appears at her door drenched with dew. The dew falls heavily in the East and saturates the clothes. (LBC p. 1291)

34. **Read Song 5:2. “Open to me.”** Opening doors is a metaphor for sexual activity in the ancient Near East (Song 8:9). By describing the man as knocking at the door and requesting entry, the poem suggests that the man is requesting sexual union. He awaits permission; he does not presume. The word for “**love**” is *dod*, pointing to sexual love. In these words Solomon approaches Shulamit asking her to open herself to him. This is Solomon’s sexual advance to her. True or False

SONG 5: [3] I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them? (KJV)

³ "I have already taken off my robe - must I put it on again? I have already washed my feet - must I soil them again?" (NET)

Additional Information: (Song 5:3) Shulamit is already lying in bed. Her undergarment is off, which was quite customary in the ancient world. Furthermore, her feet are washed. In the Middle East people wore sandals, and in the course of the day the feet became soiled with dust and dirt. So prior to bedtime, the feet would be washed. She is quite unwilling to get up. To do so would mean that she would soil again that which had been washed and have to put on again that which had been taken off. Even for Solomon's sake, she is unwilling to do that which is disagreeable to her. (Study of the S. of S., p. 75)

35. **Read Song 5:3; Matt. 7:12.** Conflicts and pressures may creep in a marriage causing one to lose tenderness toward their spouse. External stress often works against marriage. Spouses can learn to be havens for each other and renew and regenerate intimacy and passion. True or False.

SONG 5: [4] My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him. [5] I rose up to open to my

beloved; and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock. [6] I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone: my soul failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer. (KJV)

⁴ My lover put his hand to the door, and I was thrilled that he was near. ⁵ I was ready to let him come in. My hands were covered with myrrh, my fingers with liquid myrrh, as I grasped the handle of the door.

⁶ I opened the door for my lover, but he had already gone. How I wanted to hear his voice! I looked for him, but couldn't find him; I called to him, but heard no answer. ^(TEV)

Additional Information: (Song 5:4-6) “My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and

my bowels were moved for him.” The man persists in his attempts to arouse the woman, and she eventually responds positively to his overtures. However, by the time she responds, he has given up. This is a powerful poetic picture of the struggles of two lovers to be sexually intimate with each other in a fallen world. (NLT SB p. 1095)

36. **Read Song 5:4-6; 1 Cor. 7:3-5.** Take time to remember the commitment you made in marriage. When you focus on positives, reconciliation and renewal can result. True or False

SONG 5: [7] The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me. (KJV)

⁷ The watchmen found me as they patrolled the city. They hit me and hurt me; the guards on the wall took away my veil. (NCV)

Additional Information: (Song 5:7) In the city she meets with ill treatment at the hands of the watchmen. The veil (Heb. *redid*) is a type of shawl that Eastern women placed over their shoulders and head when going out doors. The face was also covered, hence the translation veil. These guardians of the city wrench it from her and treat her as a wanton woman. (LBC p. 1292)

37. **Read Song 5:7.** The girl was alone outside during the night. In Old Testament times, she would have been looked upon as a criminal or a prostitute and treated as such. This image symbolizes the pain she felt at being separated from her lover. True or False

SONG 5: [8] I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him, that I am sick of love. (KJV)

8 I beg you, sisters in Jerusalem —
if you find my lover, Please tell him I want him,
that I'm heartsick with love for him. (TM)

Additional Information: (Song 5:8) The woman enlists the young women of Jerusalem to help her find her lover. They ask her to describe him, and this leads into the second descriptive poem of the Song. (NLTSB p. 1096)

38. **Read Song 5:8.** Having informed the ladies of the court of the seeming callousness with which she had treated Solomon, she is anxious to impress upon them the genuine quality of her feelings. You tell him that I am sick with love if you see him, is her admonition. True or False

Young Women of Jerusalem

SONG 5: [9] What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? what is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us? (KJV)

⁹ Why is your lover better than all others, O woman of rare beauty? What makes your

lover so special that we must promise this?
(NLT)

Additional Information: (Song 5:9) The wise daughters of Jerusalem twice ask a question that prompts this bride to recall the superlative features of her new husband in verses 10-16. ^(MSB p. 947)

39. **Read Song 5:9.** The friends' question provides an opportunity for the beloved to describe the beauty of her lover – which she does. True or False

Young Woman

SONG 5: [10] My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand. (KJV)

¹⁰ My dear lover glows with health — red-blooded, radiant! He's one in a million. There's no one quite like him! ^(TM)

Additional Information: (Song 5:10) “My beloved is white and ruddy.” His countenance is a perfect mixture of white and red. He is clear of skin and

rosy red. He is also “**chiefest**” (a standard-bearer) among ten thousand. He stands out from the multitudes, even as the standard-bearer stands out from the multitude of regular soldiers. ^(LBC p. 1292)

40. **Read Song 5:10.** “Ruddy” means red, full of life and vigor.” Solomon’s father, David, is described as ruddy and handsome in 1 Sam. 16:12. True or False

SONG 5: [11] His head is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy, and black as a raven. [12] His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set. [13] His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers: his lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh. [14] His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl: his belly is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires. [15] His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold: his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as

the cedars. [16] His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem. (KJV)

¹¹ His head is like the finest gold; his hair is wavy and black like a raven. ¹² His eyes are like doves by springs of water. They seem to be bathed in cream and are set like jewels. ¹³ His cheeks are like beds of spices; they smell like mounds of perfume. His lips are like lilies flowing with myrrh. ¹⁴ His hands are like gold hinges, filled with jewels. His body is like shiny ivory covered with sapphires. ¹⁵ His legs are like large marble posts, standing on bases of fine gold. He is like a cedar of Lebanon, like the finest of the trees. ¹⁶ His mouth is sweet to kiss, and I desire him very much. Yes, daughters of Jerusalem, this is my lover and my friend. ^(NCV)

Additional Information: (Song 5:11-16) The woman describes the man as a statue made of god, ivory, lapis lazuli, and marble pillars, suggesting that he is god-like in appearance, since statues of deities were composed of such precious metals in antiquity (Ex. 32:1-4; 1 Ki. 12:28; Dan. 2:32-33; 3:1). ^(NLT SB p. 1096)

(Song 5:16) “This is my beloved, and this is my friend.” Emphatically and with joy, she concludes, “This is my beloved! This is my friend!” Friend is used for the first time here by the Shulamite. These symbols of companionship, that is, sister and friend, are important contributions to the biblical doctrine of love. The man or woman is not merely a sexual object, but in every sense a companion as well. ^(LBC p. 1292)

41. **Read Song 5:16.** The girl calls Solomon her “friend.” In a healthy marriage, lovers are also good friends. This involves listening, sharing, and sowing understanding for one another. True or False

Young Women of Jerusalem

SONG 6:[1] Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? whither is thy

beloved turned aside? that we may seek him with thee. *Young Woman* [2] My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies. [3] I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine: he feedeth among the lilies. (KJV)

¹ So where has this love of yours gone, fair one? Where on earth can he be? Can we help you look for him? ² Never mind. My lover is already on his way to his garden, to browse among the flowers, touching the colors and forms. ³ I am my lover's and my lover is mine. He caresses the sweet-smelling flowers. ^(TM)

Additional Information: (Song 6:1-3) The young women of Jerusalem ask the woman where her man has gone. The woman tells them not to concern themselves with finding him – he is back in bed with her, enjoying his garden with its spice beds and lilies, a description of sexual intimacy. ^(NLT SB p. 1096)

42. **Read Song 6:3.** The girl said that she and her lover belonged to each other – they had given themselves to each other unreservedly. No matter how close we may be to our parents or our best friends, it is only in marriage that we should realize complete union of mind, heart, and body. True or False

Young Man

SONG 6: [4] Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners. [5] Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me: thy hair is as a flock of goats that appear from Gilead. [6] Thy teeth are as a flock of sheep which go up from the washing, whereof every one beareth twins, and there is not one barren among them. [7] As a piece of a pomegranate are thy temples within thy locks. (KJV)

⁴ My love, you are as beautiful as Jerusalem, as lovely as the city of Tirzah,

as breathtaking as these great cities. ⁵ Turn your eyes away from me; they are holding me captive. Your hair dances like a flock of goats bounding down the hills of Gilead. ⁶ Your teeth are as white as a flock of sheep that have just been washed. Not one of them is missing; they are all perfectly matched. ⁷ Your cheeks glow behind your veil. ^(TEV)

Additional Information: (Song 6:4-7) Tirzah was a city about 35 miles northeast of Jerusalem. Its name means “pleasure” or “beauty.” Jeroboam made Tirzah the first capital of the divided northern kingdom (1 Ki. 14:17). “Majestic as troops with banners” means that the beloved must have had awe-inspiring beauty, like a mighty army readying for battle (v. 4). ^(LAB)

The man again describes the physical beauty of the woman. He repeats parts of the description from Song chapter 4 almost verbatim. ^(NLT SB)

43. **Read Song 6:4.** Comparison of the beloved’s beauty to that of cities was perhaps not so unusual in the

ancient Near East, since cities were regularly depicted as women. True or False

SONG 6: [8] There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number. [9] My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her. The daughters saw her, and blessed her; yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her. [10] Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners? (KJV)

⁸ There may be sixty queens and eighty slave women and so many girls you cannot count them, ⁹ but there is only one like my dove, my perfect one. She is her mother's only daughter, the brightest of the one who gave her birth. The young women saw her and

called her happy; the queens and the slave women also praised her. ¹⁰ Who is that young woman that shines out like the dawn? She is as pretty as the moon, as bright as the sun, as wonderful as an army flying flags. ^(NCV)

Additional Information: (Song 6:8-10) (v. 8)

The numerical progression from 60 to 80 to “without number” tells us that the Shulamite stands above all women. She is one of the greatest beauties of God’s creation.

44. **Read Song 6:8-10.** The reference to queens and concubines simply means that the woman herself is more desirable than all other women. True or False

Young Woman

SONG 6: [11] I went down into the garden of nuts to see the fruits of the valley, and to see whether the vine flourished, and the pomegranates budded. [12] Or ever I was

aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadib. *Young Women of Jerusalem*
[13] Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon thee. *Young Man* What will ye see in the Shulamite? As it were the company of two armies. (KJV)

¹¹ I went down into the orchard of nut trees to see the blossoms of the valley, to look for buds on the vines, to see if the pomegranate trees had bloomed. ¹² Before I realized it, my desire for you made me feel like a prince in a chariot. ¹³ Come back, come back, woman of Shulam. Come back, come back, so we may look at you! Why do you want to look at the woman of Shulam as you would at the dance of two armies? (NCV)

Additional Information: (Song 6:11-13) This represents the most difficult portion to interpret in the entire song. (MSB)

(verse 13) This probably refers to some form of marital dance associated with the city of Mahanaim

which would be inappropriate for anyone other than Solomon to witness. ^(MSB)

45. **Read Song 6:13.** “Shulamite” might be a wordplay on the name Solomon (Hebrew *shelomoh*). It would then be equivalent to saying “Solomon’s maiden or girl.”
True or False

SONG 7: [1] How beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O prince's daughter! the joints of thy thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of a cunning workman. [2] Thy navel is like a round goblet, which wanteth not liquor: thy belly is like an heap of wheat set about with lilies. [3] Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins. [4] Thy neck is as a tower of ivory; thine eyes like the fishpools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim: thy nose is as the tower of Lebanon which looketh toward Damascus. [5] Thine head upon thee is like Carmel, and the hair

of thine head like purple; the king is held in the galleries. (KJV)

¹ How beautiful are your sandaled feet, O queenly maiden. Your rounded thighs are like jewels, the work of a skilled craftsman. ² Your navel is perfectly formed like a goblet filled with mixed wine. Between your thighs lies a mound of wheat bordered with lilies. ³ Your breasts are like two fawns, twin fawns of a gazelle. ⁴ Your neck is as beautiful as an ivory tower. Your eyes are like the sparkling pools in Heshbon by the gate of Bath-rabbim. Your nose is as fine as the tower of Lebanon overlooking Damascus. ⁵ Your head is as majestic as Mount Carmel, and the sheen of your hair radiates royalty. The king is held captive by its tresses. ^(NLT)

Additional Information: (Song 7:1) “How beautiful are they feet.” Solomon first expresses

appreciation for her feet and thighs. When she walked, she seemed as one of magnificent bearing whose thighs had been molded by a master craftsman. ^(LBC)

(Song 7:2) “Thy navel is like a round goblet.” Navel may denote the lower abdomen, and in Arabic the word was frequently translated secret part. Liquor (lit., mixed wine) was wine mixed with spice to improve on its ability to excite. Solomon’s interest in her is sexual, and he describes that interest in the most seductive terms. **“Thy belly is like a heap of wheat.”** The appearance of heaps of wheat, which one might see in long parallel lines on the threshing floors in any village, was a sight that was well pleasing to every child in Israel. The color of wheat was regarded as a most pleasing color for the human body. The mixing of flowers with the harvested crop was a testimony to joy. ^(LBC)

“Thy two breasts.” Among Orientals there is a greater freedom to discuss the female bosom, and it was often bared in public for the feeding of infants. The beauty of her breasts suggests to him that she has reached womanhood. ^(LBC)

(Song 7:4) “Thy neck,” A slender neck held high is a sign of confidence and dignity as well as

beauty. ^(NLT SB) **“Thy eyes like the fishpools.”** These were reportedly pools of unusual beauty. ^(LBC) **“Thy nose.”** The tower of Lebanon must have contained a projection that was famous for its beauty. ^(LBC)

(Song 7:5) “Thine head upon thee is like Carmel.” Her flowing tresses and beautiful colored head are a source of great delight. The king is literally captivated by them. ^(LBC)

46. **Read Song 7:1-5.** Solomon begins to detail the beauties of his wife. True or False

SONG 7: [6] How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights! [7] This thy stature is like to a palm tree, and thy breasts to clusters of grapes. [8] I said, I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof: now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine, and the smell of thy nose like apples; [9] And the roof of thy mouth like the best wine for my beloved, that goeth down sweetly, causing

**the lips of those that are asleep to speak.
(KJV)**

⁶ Oh, how beautiful you are! How pleasing, my love, how full of delights! ⁷ You are slender like a palm tree, and your breasts are like its clusters of fruit. ⁸ I said, "I will climb the palm tree and take hold of its fruit." May your breasts be like grape clusters, and the fragrance of your breath like apples. ⁹ May your kisses be as exciting as the best wine, flowing gently over lips and teeth. ^(NLT)

Additional Information: (Song 7:7) Shulamit is standing before Solomon, and he surveys her from head to foot, comparing her to a palm tree. The Hebrew word translated "palm tree" refers to the female flower out of which develops large clusters of juicy sweet fruit. Shulamit's breasts are compared to such clusters. The Hebrew word translated "clusters" refers to the dark brown or golden yellow cluster which grows at the summit of the branches and beautifies the appearance of the palm tree. So as Shulamit stands tall and straight

before Solomon, Solomon compares her to a palm tree and notes that her body is further beautified by her breasts.

(Song 7:8) Solomon is viewed as climbing the palm tree as he and Shulamit unite in sexual enjoyment. The picture is that of making love to her.

(Song 7:9) Shulamit interrupts Solomon's statement about the wine. Bad-tasting wine sticks to the palate. Good tasting wine goes down smoothly. The wine is a figure of love in its various forms, like good wine that has been sipped in the course of an evening; the pleasing satisfaction still hovers long after they have gone to sleep. ^(BL)

47. **Read Song 7:9.** The beloved offers the wine of her love to her lover. True or False

Young Woman

SONG 7: [10] I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me. (KJV)

10 I belong to my lover, and he desires me. ^(TEV)

Additional Information: (Song 7:10) The Shulamite here verbalizes, **“I am my beloved’s. and his desire is toward me.”** She loves because she realizes the deep love for her (See 1 John 4:19).

48. **Read Song 7:10.** Shulamite declares herself to belong to Solomon alone, just as Solomon’s desire is only for her. True or False

SONG 7: [11] Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages. [12] Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth: there will I give thee my loves. [13] The mandrakes give a smell, and at our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved. (KJV)

¹¹ Come, my love, let us go out to the fields and spend the night among the

wildflowers. ¹² Let us get up early and go to the vineyards to see if the grapevines have budded, if the blossoms have opened, and if the pomegranates have bloomed. There I will give you my love. ¹³ There the mandrakes give off their fragrance, and the finest fruits are at our door, new delights as well as old, which I have saved for you, my lover. ^(NLT)

Additional Information: (Song 7:11-13)
(verse 11) “Come, my beloved.” The maiden, overjoyed at his presence, urges a hasty request to go forth into the field. **“Let us.”** The open air of the fields would be deeply appreciated. The villages are much to be preferred to the noise and business of Jerusalem. ^(LBC)

(verse 12) “Let us.” Togetherness is the theme of this verse. Let us together visit those places upon which my thought’s have centered. She longs for the vineyards and the blossoms. Once returned to the security and beauty of this natural sanctuary, she promises him suitable token of her love. ^(Ibid.) There she promises to give *my loves* to him. The Hebrew word is

dod, (and it is in the plural number), it's root literally means "to boil." This is referring to sexual loves, delights old and new.

(verse 13) "The mandrakes." Another reason for hastening to that beautiful place is the *duda'im*, or love apples. Many luscious fruits that have delighted their taste buds await them once again . This may refer in poetic language to her longing to be united.

"Mandrakes" has the same root as that of sexual love and are known as the "lover's flower" (love apples).

49. **Read Song 7:11-13.** In the Song of Songs, sexual intimacy takes place in the countryside, a place of pleasant fragrances and secluded meeting places. The garden, vineyard, and orchard create intimate and pleasant settings and evoke a romantic mood. True or False

Young Woman

SONG 8: [1] O that thou wert as my brother, that sucked the breasts of my mother! when I should find thee without, I would kiss thee; yea, I should not be despised. [2] I would lead thee, and bring thee into my mother's

house, who would instruct me: I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate. [3] His left hand should be under my head, and his right hand should embrace me. (KJV)

¹ I wish you were like my brother who fed at my mother's breasts. If I found you outside, I would kiss you, and no one would look down on me. ² I would lead you and bring you to my mother's house; she is the one who taught me. I would give you a drink of spiced wine from my pomegranates. ³ My lover's left hand is under my head, and his right arm holds me tight. ^(NCV)

Additional Information: (Song 8:1-3) (verse 1) In the ancient Near East, it was improper to show public affection except between family members. The girl is wishing that she could freely show affection to her lover, even in public. ^(LAB)

(Song 8:2) “Who would instruct me.” The Shulammitte’s mother doubtlessly trained her from youth in the way she should live (Prov. 22:6). Mature women are to continue to instruct and set examples for younger women (Titus 2:3-4). ^(LSB) The Hebrew can also mean “you (the man) would teach me,” and the context seems to require this translation. The man would lead the woman in the art of lovemaking. ^(GSB) **“I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate.”** She would offer her lover the delights of her love. The Hebrew word for juice refers to intoxicating juices. ^(NIVSB)

(Song 8:3) This verse is identical to Song 2:6. In both cases the girl is dreaming of being in her beloved’s embrace. ^(GSB)

50. **Read Song 8:1.** Shulamit wishes Solomon could be to her like a brother upon whom she could show affection outdoors without worrying about what other may think. True or False

SONG 8: [4] I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, until he please. (KJV)

⁴ Oh, let me warn you, sisters in Jerusalem: Don't excite love, don't stir it up, until the time is ripe — and you're ready. ^(TM)

Additional Information: (Song 8:4) For the third time, the woman encourages the young women of Jerusalem not to awaken love until the time is right.
(NLTSB)

51. **Read Song 8:4.** This time restraint involves waiting for lovemaking until they are in private circumstances rather than public. True or False

Young Women of Jerusalem

SONG 8: [5] Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved? *Young Woman* I raised thee up under the apple tree: there thy mother

brought thee forth: there she brought thee forth that bare thee. (KJV)

⁵ Who is this young woman coming in from the desert and leaning on the shoulder of the one she loves? I stirred up your passions under the apple tree where you were born. ^(CEV)

Additional Information: (Song 8:5) “leaning upon her beloved.” The couple come, not dependently leaning, but clinging, joined equally. Love has worked its awakening power. ^(SFLB) **“I raised thee up under the apple tree: there thy mother brought thee forth.”** Consummation of their marital love occurs at the place where the bridegroom was conceived, namely, beneath the apple tree. ^(LSB) In the ancient world, sexual union and birth were often associated with fruit trees. ^(NIVSB)

52. **Read Song 8:5.** The apple tree is a symbol of fertility because it is fruit-bearing. True or False

SONG 8: [6] Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame. [7] Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned. (KJV)

⁶ Close your heart to every love but mine; hold no one in your arms but me. Love is as powerful as death; passion is as strong as death itself. It bursts into flame and burns like a raging fire. ⁷ Water cannot put it out; no flood can drown it. But if anyone tried to buy love with his wealth, contempt is all he would get. ^(TEV)

Additional Information: (Song 8:6-7) (Song 8:6) Shulamit wishes to renew their love covenant. She

asks Solomon to possess her as he would possess a valuable signet ring from which he would never wish to depart. She wants to be his most prized possession, so that he would never separate himself from her. The energy of love is comparable to the energy of death and *Sheol*. He whom death assails must die, and he whom love assails must love. Love is strong as death, and so Shulamit gives herself up to this love on the condition that Solomon will love only her and that he will be dead to all others. Jealousy is as inexorable as *Sheol*, and Shulamit takes shelter in the jealousy of this love against any infidelity.

This kind of love, the right kind of love, is of God. He alone is the source of this love (Song 8:6).^(BL) **“A most vehement flame,”** lit. “the flame of Yah,” where “Yah” is a shortened form of the divine name Yahweh. The use of the expression confirms that there is an implicit comparison with divine love.^(GSB)

(Song 8:7) This kind of love cannot be destroyed by adverse circumstances nor can this kind of love be bought with money. So neither circumstances nor money can separate her from her love for the king^(BL)

53. **Read Song 8:6; Exodus 34:14; Jas. 4:5.** In ancient Israel a seal was used for identification or to show ownership by pressing the face of a ring into soft wax. The wife wants her husband to mark her with his identity, privately upon her heart, and publicly upon her arm as well. The energy of jealousy move to protect an exclusive relationship such as that of husband and wife or between God and his people. True or False

The Young Woman's Brothers

SONG 8: [8] We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts: what shall we do for our sister in the day when she shall be spoken for? [9] If she be a wall, we will build upon her a palace of silver: and if she be a door, we will inclose her with boards of cedar.

Young Woman **[10] I am a wall, and my breasts like towers: then was I in his eyes as one that found favour. (KJV)**

⁸ My brothers used to worry about me:

"Our little sister has no breasts. What shall we do with our little sister when men come asking for her? ⁹ She's a virgin and vulnerable, and we'll protect her. If they think she's a wall, we'll top it with barbed wire. If they think she's a door, we'll barricade it." ¹⁰ Dear brothers, I'm a walled-in virgin still, but my breasts are full — And when my lover sees me, he knows he'll soon be satisfied. ^(TM)

Additional Information: (Song 8:8-10) (verse 8-9) “We have a little sister.” Here she remembers a day when she was not yet of marriageable age. Her brothers are heard to express their desire to protect her. **“If she be a wall”** (that is, a careful and godly woman they will give her a worthy dowry). **“If she be a door”** (that is, giving ready access to lovers they will restrict her liberty). He brothers were filled with a cautious spirit as they fulfilled the role of her deceased father. Now she would no longer need their protection, for the strong arm of her beloved bore upon it the seal of her love; and he would protect her all the days of her life. ^(LBC)

(Song 8:10) “I am a wall.” She has kept herself chaste. She had resisted all advances. Her breasts had grown to beautiful proportions, but she had grown in moral understanding as well; so she never took lightly Jehovah’s gift of femininity. Now there is one in whose eyes she has found favor. As history is recounted, the time of her marriage is at hand; and, based upon her continuous chastity and compliance with the wishes of her brothers, she now desires them to fulfill their promise of a dowry. ^(LBC)

54. **Read Song 8:8-10.** The girl was reflecting on the days when she was younger and under the care of her brothers, who wondered how to help her prepare for marriage. They decided that if she was like a wall standing firm against sexual temptation, they would praise her. But if she was like a door, open to immorality, they would take steps to guard her from doing something foolish. She reaffirmed that she lived a premarital life of a wall, successfully rebuffing all attempts on her honor. Thus her husband took great delight and contentment in her moral purity. True or False

SONG 8: [11] Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon; he let out the vineyard unto keepers; every one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand pieces of silver.

[12] My vineyard, which is mine, is before me: thou, O Solomon, must have a thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred. (KJV)

¹¹ Solomon has a vineyard at Baal-Hamon, which he rents to others for a thousand pieces of silver each. ¹² My vineyard is mine alone! Solomon can keep his silver and the others can keep their share of the profits. ^(CEV)

Additional Information: (Song 8:11-12)

Solomon could demand rent from the tenants for his vineyard, but the girl had her own vineyard and it was her right to assign it. But she willingly gave Solomon its fruit. In a good marriage, there is no private property, for everything is shared between the partners. ^(LAB)

55. **Read Song 8:11-12.** While Solomon might have leased out his real vineyard for profit, she gave the vineyard of her love to Solomon. True or False

Young Man

SONG 8: [13] Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice: cause me to hear it. *Young Woman* [14] Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices. (KJV)

¹³ You who have your resting-place in the gardens, the friends give ear to your voice; make me give ear to it. ¹⁴ Come quickly, my loved one, and be like a roe on the mountains of spice. ^(BBE)

Additional Information: (Song 8:13-14) The love between Solomon and his bride did not diminish in intensity after their wedding night. The lovers relied on each other and kept no secrets from each other.

Devotion and commitment were the keys to their relationship, just as they are in our relationships to our spouses and to God. The faithfulness of our marital love should reflect God's perfect faithfulness to us.

Paul shows how marriage represents Christ's relationship to his church (Eph. 5:22-33), and John pictures the second coming as a great marriage feast for Christ and his bride, his faithful followers (Rev. 19:7-8; 21:1-2). Many theologians have thought that Song of Songs is an allegory showing Christ's love for his church. It makes even better sense to say that it is a love poem about a real human love relationship, and that all loving, committed marriages reflect God's love. ^(LAB)

56. **Read Song 8:13-14.** The Song ends with an unparalleled testimony to the heights of joy that can be achieved by both male and female through the practice of absolute fidelity to the commands of Yahweh and the seal of marital love. True or False

Translations & Abbreviations

KJV	King James Version
NCV	New Century Version
NLT	New Living Translation

CEV	Contemporary English Version
TEV	Today's English Version
TM	The Message
NET	New English Translation Bible
NIVrV	New International Reader's Version
MSB	The MacArthur Study Bible
LBC	Liberty Bible Commentary, Vol. 1
TCB	The Companion Bible
NLTSB	NLT Study Bible
NIVBC	NIV Bible Commentary
ZBE	The Zondervan Bible Encyclopedia
LSB	Lutheran Study Bible
NGSB	New Geneva Study Bible
CATH	The New Catholic Answer Bible
SFLB	Spirit Filled Life Bible
Study of the S. of S.	Dr. Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum
LAB	Life Application Bible
LSB	Lutheran Study Bible
NIVSB	NIV Study Bible

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the celebration of God's love.

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