

THE SHULAMITE'S FIRST DREAM

TEXT: SONG OF SOLOMON 3:1-5

Introduction:

1. There are two dreams in the Song of Solomon (3:1-5; 5:2-7).
2. The second dream probably took place shortly after the first dream.
3. "The mountains of Bether" (2:17) separated the Shulamite from her beloved shepherd. "Bether" means "separation."
4. HA Ironside said the opening verse of chapter 3 "depicts the restlessness of one who has lost the sense of the Lord's presence" (*Addresses on the Song of Solomon*).
5. Ecclesiastes 5:3 says, "For a dream cometh through the multitude of business."
6. You may recall that Pontius Pilate's wife was disturbed by a dream about Christ, and she said to her husband, "Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him" (Matt. 27:19).

I. A TROUBLESOME DREAM (3:1; cf. Psalm 30:7)

1. "But flowers need night's cool darkness, The moonlight and the dew;
So Christ, from one who loved him, His presence oft withdrew;
And then for cause of absence, My troubled soul I scann'd—
But glory, shadeless, shineth in Immanuel's land." – from a poem inspired by the letters and last words of Samuel Rutherford, by Mrs. A. R. Cousin
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" (3:2).
3. In chapter 3 the Shulamite woman is speaking again to the court ladies (cf. 3:5).
4. She is recalling this troublesome dream in which she was out in the streets looking for her beloved shepherd (3:1, 2).
5. Some Bible teachers think that the Shulamite actually awoke from her dream and then went out looking for her shepherd (3:2). But it seems more likely that the first five verses of chapter 3 are all referring to her dream.
6. "The Shulamite's dreams symbolize interruptions in communion with the Beloved bringing an unsettled state of heart and a deeper longing to seek His presence. Any loss of enjoyment with Christ must lie with the believer himself. The failure is not on the Lord's side" (Arthur G. Clarke, *The Song of Songs*).

II. A FRANTIC SEARCH (3:3)

1. It was a frantic search. The Shulamite could not be happy until she was back in the presence of her beloved. Notice the repetition – “whom my soul loveth” (3:1, 2, 3, 4).
2. Christians cannot experience true peace and joy apart from the presence of the Lord.
3. In Exodus 33:15, Moses prayed to God, “If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.”
4. The apostle Paul prayed, “And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God” (Eph. 3:19).
5. I think it is unlikely that this young Shulamite woman would go walking around the streets at night by herself (3:2-4).
6. The Shulamite was dreaming, and in her dream she was frantically searching for her beloved shepherd (3:1, 2).
7. And it is unlikely that she would find the shepherd in the city (3:3, 4). More likely the shepherd would be out in the fields with his flocks.
8. Therefore, I think 3:1-5 all refer to the Shulamite’s dream. In her dream she says to the night watchmen, “Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?” (3:3).
9. Notice she does not tell them her lover’s name. This would be rather unusual in real life but not in a dream. The night watchmen had no answer for her. Merrill Unger says that is because “the language of love is incomprehensible to nonlovers” (*Unger’s Commentary on the Old Testament, Volume I*).
10. “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” (3:4).
11. Leaving the night watchmen, the distraught Shulamite found him whom her soul loveth. The Shulamite was so happy she held him and would not let him go, bringing him with her to her mother’s house.
12. Reference to her mother’s house signifies she was a chaste maiden. It also indicates her father had died.
13. Matthew Henry said, “Disappointments must not drive us away from gracious pursuits. Hold out, faith and patience; *the vision is for an appointed time*, and, though the watchman

can give us no account of it, *at the end* it shall itself *speak and not lie*; and the comfort that comes in after long waiting, in the use of means, will be so much the sweeter at last.”

III. A REPEATED REQUEST (3:5).

When the Shulamite awakes and realizes all is well she repeats the identical request she gave back in 2:7 (cf. 8:4).

CONCLUSION: In Song of Solomon 5:2-8, we see the Shulamite’s second dream.