

THE SHULAMITE'S VIRTUES

TEXT: SONG OF SOLOMON 6:10⁻—7:9

Introduction:

1. Last week I mentioned that from 6:2 till the end of the Song of Solomon, there is “unbroken communion” between the Shulamite and the shepherd.
2. The *Scofield Study Bible* states this in a note above 6:4.
3. From verses 4 through 10, and then again in chapter 7, the shepherd extols the virtues of his beautiful Shulamite.

I. SHE WAS FAIR AS THE MOON (6:10)

1. The Shulamite was “fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners” (6:10). The Shulamite represents the church, and our Lord said, “the gates of hell shall not prevail against” His church (Matt. 16:18).
2. “When the church preserves her purity she secures her honour and victory; when she is *fair as the moon*, and *clear as the sun*, she is truly great and formidable” (Matthew Henry).
3. The Shulamite said back in 6:2 that her beloved had gone down into his garden, and then in 6:11 the shepherd confirms this by saying, “I went down into the garden.”
4. J. Vernon McGee said, “The Word of God is a garden, a whole garden of unopened nuts. There are innumerable kernels in the Word of God waiting to be opened and enjoyed by the bride of Christ” (*Thru the Bible*).
5. “Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadib” (6:12). This is the only reference to “Amminadib” in the Bible. The meaning is obscure and interpretations vary widely.
6. Spurgeon said, “We cannot be quite sure at this date what these chariots of Amminadib were to which the inspired poet here refers. Some suppose that he may have alluded to a person of that name, who was renowned, like Jehu of old, for his furious driving. Hence it might have been familiar at the time, and afterwards have become proverbial to speak in metaphor of the chariots of Amminadib. The conjecture seems harmless, still it is

only a conjecture, and cannot be verified” (*The Most Holy Place*).

II. THE SHULAMITE’S NAME

1. The Shulamite does speak in 6:13, where in her customary modesty she asks, “What will ye see in the Shulamite?”
2. In chapter 7 the shepherd answers that question in beautiful picturesque language. This is the only place in the Song of Solomon where the young maiden is named.
3. The Hebrew word is *Shulamith*, and is said to be a feminine form of Solomon’s name. Shunem (or Shulam) is located on the southwestern slope of Mt. Hermon, overlooking the plain of Jezreel. It is mentioned several times in the Old Testament, the first time in Joshua 19:18).
4. “And the Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in Shunem” (I Sam. 28:4a).
5. “So they sought for a fair damsel throughout all the coasts of Israel, and found Abishag a Shunammite, and brought her to the king” (I Kings 1:3).
6. “And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread. And so it was, that as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread” (II Kings 4:8).

III. THE SHULAMITE WAS BEAUTIFUL FROM HER HEAD TO HER FEET (7:1-9).

1. In chapter 6, the shepherd speaks of the Shulamite’s beautiful appearance – her eyes, her hair, and her teeth (6:4-7; cf. 4:1-7). Now in chapter 7, the shepherd continues to extol the Shulamite’s virtues, starting with her beautiful feet (7:1).
- Three times in the Bible it says, “How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” (Romans 10:15; Isaiah 52:7; Nahum 1:15).

- “And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace” (Eph. 6:15).
2. “O prince’s daughter!” (7:1). Matthew Henry said, “She has a princely disposition, something in her truly noble and generous.”
 3. “The king’s daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold” (Psalm 45:13).
 4. From her beautiful feet, the shepherd moves up to her thighs (7:1b). In the Bible, the thigh is associated with strength.
 - “And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh...And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and swore to him concerning that matter.” (Gen. 24:2, 9).
 - Later, Jacob made the same request to his son Joseph (Gen. 47:29).
 - When Jacob wrestled with the angel, the angel “touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob’s thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him” (Gen. 32:25).
 - This signifies that God broke Jacob. God cannot really use a man until he is broken. “The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. (Ps. 34:18).
 - “Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty” (Ps. 45:3). “And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS” (Rev. 19:16).
 5. “Thy navel is like a round goblet, which wanteth not liquor: thy belly is like an heap of wheat set about with lilies. Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins” (7:2, 3).
 6. The Shulamite’s breasts are referred to eight times in the Song of Solomon (1:13; 4:5; 7:3, 7, 8; 8:1, 8, 10).
 7. Arthur G. Clarke said, “Such Oriental freedom of speech seems indelicate to western ears.” (*The Song of Songs*).
 8. The navel is considered the center of the body. In his commentary, Delitzsch refers to a Jewish marriage custom of throwing over the newlyweds a vessel wreathed with flowers, and filled with wheat or corn, accompanied with the cry, “Be fruitful and multiply.”
 9. In verse 4, the shepherd says, “Thy neck is as a tower of ivory.” In a woman a tall, slender neck is considered very attractive.

10. Her eyes were clear “like the fishpools in Heshbon,” indicating her depth of intelligence. “Heshbon” means “intelligence” (Clarke, *The Song of Songs*).
11. Heshbon was originally the royal city of Sihon, the king of the Amorites until it was conquered by Moses (Num. 21:25-31).
12. “It is the sight of an excellent spring which made it an extremely desirable location” (*Unger’s Bible Dictionary*).
13. This is the only reference to Bathrabbim (7:4) in the Bible. The word means “daughter of many.”
14. “Thine head upon thee is like Carmel, and the hair of thine head like purple” (7:5).
15. The shepherd tells his Shulamite that her head is like Carmel – “eminent and pleasant to the eye” (John Wesley).
16. Carmel is the beautifully wooded mountain range on the coast of Palestine, by the Mediterranean Sea. Its greatest peak is 1,742 feet.
17. The name “Carmel” means “fruit garden” (W. Ewing, *ISBE*), and it is covered with almond trees, vineyards, olive groves, and orchards.
18. The *ISBE* says, “In the figurative language of Scripture it appears as the symbol of beauty (Cant. 7:5)” (W. Ewing).
19. The Shulamite’s long black hair had a purple sheen. Purple was considered a royal color (cf. 3:10). The shepherd could not take his eyes off his betrothed Shulamite.
20. “The king is held in the galleries” (7:5b). The Hebrew word, *rahat*, translated “galleries” can also be translated “tresses.” The New King James Version says, “A king is held captive by your tresses.”
21. The shepherd knows King Solomon is captivated by the Shulamite’s beauty, but he also knows her heart belongs to her beloved shepherd. She is his only “love” (7:6), and he is hers (cf. 7:10).
22. “How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights!” (7:6). The shepherd tells the Shulamite she is fair and pleasant – beautiful and delightful. The shepherd is saying to his beloved Shulamite, “You are beautiful from the bottom of your feet to the top of your head.”
23. “This thy stature is like to a palm tree, and thy breasts to clusters of grapes” (7:7).
24. The Shulamite was tall and graceful like a palm tree, “often used in the East as a type of feminine beauty...an emblem of stateliness, fruitfulness, and victory” (Clarke, *The Song of Songs*).
25. “The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree” (Psalm 92:12a).

26. The shepherd was attracted by her sweet smell (fragrance), which was like apples (7:8b).
27. The Shulamite's charms were like sparkling, stimulating wine (7:9). The shepherd felt exhilarated being in her presence.

CONCLUSION:

1. Song of Solomon 7:8 is a poetic and figurative way to describe the physical union of a husband and wife. The shepherd was eager to quickly marry his beloved Shulamite.
2. To attribute these sweet and tender words of true love to a sensual polygamist such as King Solomon seems somewhat profane. But coming from the lips of a humble and true shepherd, who is betrothed to the beautiful young maiden, the words are pure, majestic, and altogether lovely.