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### **The Most Beautiful Bride**

Definitions in **bold letters** are from **Strong's** Exhaustive Concordance  
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or Roget's Thesaurus – **January 10, 2016**

## **Song of Solomon 6:4-12**

**Introduction:** Our previous lesson gave insights into the overpowering influence of the **love** between a man and a woman. **Marital love**, properly perceived and practiced, is the strongest **human bond**, for it is not only a physical union of bodies, but also a spiritual communion of personalities. When God created Eve from Adam's rib, Adam immediately acknowledged His intent. He exclaimed "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh" (Gen. 2:23). She was created in such a way that they complemented each other perfectly.

The Song of Solomon **celebrates** the **beauty** of **marital love**. Its vivid imagery has sometimes made readers from the Western culture uncomfortable, resulting in typological and allegorical interpretations. However, it may picture a spiritual relationship between Christ and his church, it is primarily a poem of love between a man and a woman. This week's text consists of a **husband's praise** for the **beauty** of his **bride**.

(Source: *The Bible Expositor and Illuminator, Union Press Publication-Christian Life Series*)

**Song of Solomon 6:1-3**, *Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou **fairest** among women? whither is thy beloved turned aside? that we may seek him with thee. My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to **FEED (tend a flock; i.e. pasture it, pastor, shepherd)** in the gardens, and to gather lilies. I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine: he **FEEDETH (tend a flock; i.e. pasture it, pastor, shepherd)** among the lilies.*

**NOTE:** What we have here is: (1) a question and (2) the answer. The question is from "the daughters of **Jerusalem**," whether understood as God's people generally, or as the members of Solomon's harem.

**The question:** Where is your lover that we also may seek him? The lover described by the maiden was so glorious that the "daughters of Jerusalem" desired also to find him. This clearly **denies** any possibility that "**the beloved**" in this passage was **Solomon**. Nobody had to hunt him. The whole world knew exactly where he was.

Now, what is the **answer** to their question? He has gone to his garden to gather lilies and to **pasture** his FLOCK.

Can any stretch of imagination behold Solomon in this reply? Ridiculous! Solomon a gardener? Who could believe it? Or Solomon a shepherd pasturing his flock? A million times NO. The maiden's **lover** is clearly a **shepherd, the Shepherd**.

(Source: <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/view.cgi?bk=so&ch=6#1>)

**Song of Solomon 6:4**, *Thou art **beautiful**, O my love, as Tirzah, **comely** as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners.*

**NOTE:** **Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah**,.... These are the words of Christ, who

had been absent for some time, and till now silent; but, like another Joseph, could not refrain any longer, but makes himself known to his church, and bursts out in strong expressions of love to her, and in high commendations of her; for, notwithstanding her behavior toward him, she was **his love** still, and as **"beautiful"** and as **comely** in his sight as ever: and for which he compares her here to Tirzah; which is either the name of some **beautiful woman**, well known in those times; so one of the daughters of Zelophehad is called by this name, Numbers 27:1; but whether from her beauty is nowhere said: or rather a city of this name is here meant, since, in the next clause, the church is compared to the city of Jerusalem for the same reason. There was a city in the land of Canaan, called **Tirzah**, formerly the seat of one of the ancient kings of Canaan, and, in later times, of Jeroboam and some of his successors; and which, no doubt, was a very pleasant and delightful place, as its name imports, either from its situation or buildings, Joshua 12:24. Adrichomius Theatrum Terrae Sanctae, p. 74. says, it was an heroic city, situated on a high mountain.

**comely as Jerusalem;** the metropolis of Judea, and **seat** of the **kings** of it; and, as Pliny<sup>F</sup>Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 14. says, was far the most famous of any of the cities of the east; it was a city well built and compact together, **beautiful** for situation, **very rich** in **Solomon's time**, the place of **divine worship**, and was strongly fortified by nature and art: and hence the church of God often bears this name, both in the Old and New Testament, Isaiah 40:2, being the city of the **great King**, built on Christ, the Rock; consisting of saints, fitly and closely united together; rich with the unsearchable riches of Christ; where the several parts of spiritual and evangelic worship are performed; possessed of many privileges, and well secured by the power and salvation of God. Yet

**terrible as an army with banners;** to **her enemies**, though **so lovely to Christ**. This shows that not a single person is meant all along, who could not with propriety be compared to an army; but a collective body, as the church is: and that the church on earth is **militant** (engaged in warfare; fighting), and, like a well disciplined army, in good order, and provided with proper officers and suitable armour, and in a posture of defence, and ready to fight when attacked; and so "terrible" to her enemies, Satan and his principalities, wicked men and false teachers; who are terrified by their having such a General at the **head of them as Christ**, and being under such banners as his, and provided with such good weapons of warfare, as are **mighty through God...**

(Source: <http://www.study-light.org/commentaries/geb/view.cgi?bk=so&ch=6#1>)

**Song of Solomon 6:5**, Turn away thine **eyes** from me, for they have **overcome (capture) me**: thy **hair** is as a flock of **goats** that appear from Gilead.

**NOTE:** Turn away thine eyes from me,.... Her **eyes** of **faith** and **love**; not through **dislike** of them, but as ravished with them; his passions were so struck by them, and his heart pierced with them, that he could stand it out no longer against her; see Song of Solomon 4:9. Some render the words, "turn about thine eyes over against me" Sept. "ex adverso mei"; Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Marckius; so Montanus and Ainsworth. ; this being the first time of meeting, after her ungrateful treatment of him, she might be filled with shame and confusion for it, and therefore hung down her head, or looked on one side; wherefore he encourages her to look him full in the face, with a **holy confidence**; for such looks of **faith** are very agreeable to Christ; see Song of Solomon 2:14...

**for they have overcome me;** that is, her eyes, they had made a conquest of his heart; which does not imply weakness in Christ, but condescending (yielding) grace, that he should suffer himself, as it were, to be overpowered by the faith and love of his people, who has conquered them and all their enemies.

**thy hair is as a flock of goats;** (from Song of Solomon 4:1) like the hair of goats, so Ben Melech. **Hair adds** much to the **comeliness** of persons, and is therefore frequently mentioned, both with respect to the bride and bridegroom, in this song, Song of Solomon 5:1; and so in all poems of this kind Vid. Barthii Animadv. ad Claudian. Nupt. Honor.

Ode 1. v. 12. ; and **one part** of the **comeliness** of women **lies in their hair**;  
 ...And here the church's hair is said to be like the hair of goats, for that is the sense of the expression; and which is thought to be most like to human hair, 1 Samuel 19:13; and it is compared to that, **not so much** for its **length** and **sleekness**, as for its **colour**, being **yellowish**; which, with women formerly, was in esteem, and reckoned graceful "Nondum illi flavum", &c. Virgil. Aeneid. 4. prope finem. Vid. Horat. Carmin. 1. 1. Ode 5. v. 4. Martial. Epigr. 1. 5. Ep. 65. ; **this being the colour** of the **hair** of some of the **greatest beauties**, as Helena, Philoxena, and others, whose hair was flaxen and yellow; hence great care was taken to make it look so, even as yellow as gold "Aurea Caesaries", Virgil. Aeneid. 8. v. 659. Vid. Barthii Animadv. ad Claudian. de Rapt. Proserp. 1. 3. v. 86. : the Jewish women used to have their **perukes**, or **false hair**, of **goats' hair**, and still have in some places to this day Vid. Braunium de Vest. Sacerdot.

(Source: <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/geb/view.cgi?bk=so&ch=6#1>)

**Song of Solomon 6:6**, *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.*

**NOTE:** (taken from song of Solomon 4:2) **Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep**,.... That is, like the **teeth of a flock of sheep**; as her eyes were like the eyes of doves, and her hair like the hair of goats: and Galen long ago observed, that human teeth are much like the **teeth of sheep**, in figure, order, and structure, as well as are small and white; neatly set, innocent and harmless, not ravenous and voracious, cropping herbs and grass only. In Salazar apud Marckium in loc. ; the **whiteness of the teeth** is chiefly intended, in which the beauty of them lies, for which they are sometimes compared Theocrit. Idyll. 6. v. 37,38. to Parian marble for whiteness. The Targum interprets these **teeth of the priests and Levites**; but it is much better to understand them of the **ministers** of the Gospel: teeth are bony, solid, firm, and strong, sharp to cut and break the food, and prepare it for the stomach: all which well agree with ministers; who are strong in the Lord, and in his grace, to labour in the word and doctrine; to **oppose gainsayers**, withstand Satan's temptations; bear the reproaches of the world, and the infirmities of weaker saints; and remain firm and unmoved in their ministry; unshaken by all they meet with, from without and from within: they are **sharp to rebuke** such who are **unsound** in the **faith**, or corrupt in their morals, and to penetrate into Gospel truths; to cut and rightly divide the word of truth, and break the bread of life to others, and so chew and prepare spiritual food for souls; not raw and crude; not hard and difficult of digestion, but plain and easy to be understood. And they are like to a flock of sheep...

**which came up from the washing**; white and clean, which is another property of good teeth; as the teeth of sheep be, and they themselves are, when just come up out of the washing pit: this may signify the **washing of regeneration**, and **renewing** of the Holy Ghost, which are necessary to ministers of the word, in order to preach it; and more especially the **purity** of their lives and conversations, in which they should be examples to the flock;

**whereof everyone bear twins, and none is barren among them**; the figures are just and beautiful; it is common with sheep to BEAR TWINS, or MORE, in the eastern countries, as the philosopher observes<sup>F26</sup>Aristot. de Animal. Hist. 1. 6. c. 19. ; frequent mention is made of **goats bearing twins**<sup>F1</sup>Theocrit. Idyll. 1. v. 25. & 3. v. 34. & 5. v. 54. & 8. v. 44. : these may answer to the two rows of teeth, and the word for "teeth" is in the dual number; and when these are white and clean, and equal, are well set, and not one wanting, none rotten, nor shed, nor fallen out, look very beautiful. This may express the **fruitfulness** and success of **Gospel ministers**, in bringing many souls to Christ; and was particularly true of the apostles, and first ministers of the Gospel, who were instrumental in the conversion of many; and who bore twins to Christ, **Jews and Gentiles**.

(Source: <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/geb/view.cgi?bk=so&ch=4#1>)

**Song of Solomon 6:7**, *As a piece of a pomegranate are thy temples within thy locks.*

**NOTE:** (from song of Solomon 4:3) He repeats, almost word for word, part of the description he had given of her beauty (Song of Song of Solomon 4:1-3), **her hair, her teeth, her temples** (Song of Song of Solomon 6:5-7), not because he could not have described it in other words, and by other similitudes, but to show that he had still the **same esteem** for her since her unkindness to him, and his withdrawals from her, that he had before. Lest she should think that, though he would not quite cast her off, yet he would think the worse of her while he knew her, he says the same of her now that he had done for those to whom **much is forgiven will love the more**, and, consequently, will be the **more loved**, for Christ has said, I love those that love me. He is pleased with his people, notwithstanding their weaknesses, when they **sincerely repent** of them and **return** to their **duty**, and commends them as if they had already arrived at perfection.  
(Source: <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/mhm/view.cgi?bk=so&ch=6#1-3>)

**Song of Solomon 6:8-9**, *There are threescore **queens**, and fourscore **concubines**, and **virgins** without number. 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**.*

**NOTE:** " **...threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number.** In this verse and Song of Solomon 6:9 the church is commended as she stood related to others; and is compared with them, and preferred to them. The words may be considered either as an assertion, "there are", &c. or as a supposition, "though there be", &c. yet Christ's church is **but one**, and excels them all. "**Queens**" are principal and **lawful wives** of kings; "**concubines**", **secondary or half wives**, as the word פילגשים "secundariae uxores", Michaelis. signifies; who were admitted to the bed, but their children did not inherit: "**virgins**", **unmarried persons, maids of honour**, who waited on the queen. The allusion is to the custom of kings and great personages, who had many wives, and more concubines, and a large number of virgins to wait on them; see 1 Kings 11:3; or to a nuptial solemnity, and the ceremony of introducing the bride to the bridegroom, attended with a large number of persons of distinction; and so Theocritus Idyll. 18. v. 24. speaks of four times sixty virgins attending the nuptials of Menelaus and Helena; see Psalm 45:9. By all which may be meant either the kingdoms and nations of the world; by "**queens**", the more **large, rich and flourishing kingdoms**; by "**concubines**", **inferior states**; and by "**virgins without number**", the vast multitudes of inhabitants that fill them; but all, put together, are NOT EQUAL to the **church**; see Song of Solomon 2:2; or else false churches; by "queens", such who boast of their riches and number, as the church of Rome, Rev. 18:7; by "concubines", such as are inferior in those things, but equally corrupt, as Arians, Socinians, &c. and by "virgins without number", the multitudes of poor, weak, ignorant people, seduced by them; and what figure soever these make, or **pretensions to be** the true churches of Christ, they are none of his, his spouse is preferred to them all. **My dove, my undefiled, is but one**,.... Of these titles, see Song of Solomon 2:14. Christ's church is called ONE, in distinction from the many before mentioned; and either designs her small number, in comparison of the nations of the world, and of **false churches**, like one to sixty or eighty, and even to an innumerable company; see Eccl. 9:14, Luke 12:32; or else her unity in herself, being but one general assembly and **church of the firstborn**, made up of various particular congregated churches; and "ONE BODY", consisting of various members, united together in affection, and partakers of the same grace, blessings, and privileges; actuated by "**one Spirit**", the Spirit of God, Ephesians 4:4; and having but "**one Head**", Christ Jesus, Ephesians 4:15, and it may signify that the church is the spouse of Christ; that though other princes may have sixty queens, and eighty concubines, and virgins without number, to wait on them, Song of Solomon 6:8; Christ had but ONE, and was well pleased with her, and desired no other; **she is the only ONE of her mother**; the **Jerusalem above**, the **mother of us all**: OR the sense is, she was to Christ as a mother's only child, most tenderly beloved by him;

**Galatians 4:26**, But **Jerusalem** which is above is **free**, which is the **mother of us all**.

**she is the choice one of her that bare her**; esteemed and loved best of all her mother's children. The word may be rendered, "the PURE" or "CLEAN ONE"<sup>F12</sup> ברה "munda", Montanus, Mercerus; "pura", Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Marckius, Michaelis. ; so **the church** is, as clothed in "**clean**" **linen**, the **righteousness** of **Christ**... **...the queens and the concubines, and they praised her**: it may seem strange that concubines should praise a queen; but it was not unusual in the eastern countries; with the Persians, as the queen admitted of many concubines by the order of her lord the king, so the **queen** was had in great veneration, and even adored by the concubines...  
(Source: <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/geb/view.cgi?bk=so&ch=6#1>)

**Song of Solomon 6:10**, *Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, **fair** as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an **army** with **banners**?*

**NOTE: Looketh forth as the morning** - The **bride** is as **lovely** as the **dawn of day**, the Aurora, or perhaps the morning star, Venus. She is even more resplendent (shining with brilliant luster), she is as **beautiful** as the **Moon**. She even surpasses her, for she is as clear and bright as the Sun; and dangerous withal to look on, for she is as formidable as the vast collection of lights that burn by night at the head of every company in a numerous caravan. See the note on Song of Solomon 6:4; (note). The comparison of a fine woman to the splendor of an unclouded full moon is continually recurring in the writings of the Asiatic poets.  
(Source: <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/acc/view.cgi?bk=so&ch=6#1>)

**Song of Solomon 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.*

**NOTE: ...the garden of nuts**,.... This is very properly taken notice of in this **song of love**; it being usual for newly married persons to get nuts, and throw them among children, to make pastime; to signify, among other things, that they now renounced childish things Vid. Chartarium de Imag. Deorum, p. 89. & Kipping. Antiqu. Rom. 1. 4. c. 2. p. 697. "Sparge marite nuce", &c. Virgil. Bucolic. Eclog. 8. v. 30. "Da nuce pueris", Catuili Juliae Epithal. Ep. 59, v. 131.. These are the words of **Christ**, **declaring to the church where he went**, and what he employed himself about, when he departed from her; see Song of Solomon 6:2. Of the garden, as it intends the church; see Gill on Song of Solomon 5:12; into which he was invited to come, and did, as here; see Song of Solomon 4:16; here it is called a "**garden of nuts**", which may design a spot in it destined for this fruit; by which some understand "nutmegs", which is not very likely, since such grew not in those parts: rather "**walnuts**", which the Arabs call "gauz" or "geuz", which is the same word that is here used; Pistacia nuts were well known in Syria Plin. Nat. Hist. 1. 13. c. 5. Athenaei Deipnosophist. 1. 14. c. 17. p. 649. , which joined to Judea. And by "**nuts**", which grew in the garden, **the church, true believers**, may be designed; who, like them, have a mean (of little value) outward appearance, but are **valuable within**, having the true grace of God IN THEM; and because of their divers coverings, their outward conversation garments, the robe of **Christ's righteousness**, and the **internal sanctification** of the **Spirit**, which answer to the husk and shell, and the thin inward skin over the nut; and because of their hardness in enduring afflictions and troubles, the shell may represent; and because of their best and most excellent parts being hidden, even grace, the **hidden man** of the **heart**, signified by the **kernel**, and which will not fully appear until the shell or tabernacle of the body is broken down; and because of their **safety** from **harm** and **pollution**, amidst the **storms** of afflictions, persecutions, and temptations, and pollutions of the world, the principle of grace, like the kernel, remains UNHURT and UNDEFILED; and because of the multitude of **believers**, united and cleaving together, which is delightful to behold, like clusters of nuts in a nut garden. Some render it, "**the pruned garden**", or "**garden of pruning**" גנת

ἄρκα "hortos putatos", Junius & Tremellius; Heb. "tonsionis", Piscator; "hortum putationis", Marckius. ; whose plants, trees, and vines, are pruned and kept in good order, by **Christ's father**, the **husbandman** and **vinedresser**; see Song of Solomon 2:12. The ends of Christ in going into it were,

**to see the fruits of the valley**; to observe the graces of his Spirit; the actings, exercise, and growth of them in humble souls, among whom he delights to be, Isaiah 57:15...

**and to see whether the vine flourished**; particular churches, or believers, compared to vines; who may be said to flourish, when they increase in numbers, and are **fruitful** in grace and **good works**; see Song of Solomon 2:13;

**and the pomegranates budded**; of which, see Song of Solomon 4:13; the budding, of them may design the beginnings, or first putting, forth, of grace in the saints; which Christ takes much notice of, and is highly pleased with.

(Source: <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/geb/view.cgi?bk=so&ch=6#1>)

**Song of Solomon 6:12**, *Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadib.*

**NOTE:** My soul put me into the chariots of my **willing people** (so some read it), "the chariots of **their faith**, and **hope**, and **love**, their desires, and prayers, and expectations, which they sent after me, to fetch me back, as chariots of fire with horses of fire." Note, 1. Christ's people are, and ought to be, a willing people. 2. If they continue seeking Christ and longing after him, even **when HE SEEMS to withdraw from them**, he will graciously return to them in due time, perhaps sooner than they think and with a pleasing surprise. No chariots sent for Christ shall return empty. 3. All Christ's gracious returns to his people take rise from himself. It is not they, it is his own soul, that puts him into the chariots of his people; for he is gracious because he will be gracious, and loves **his Israel** because he would love them; not for their sakes, be it known to them. III. That he, having returned to her, kindly courted her return to him, notwithstanding the discouragements she laboured under. Let her not despair of obtaining as much comfort as ever she had before this distance happened, but take the comfort of the return of her beloved...

(Source: <http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/matthew-henry-complete/song-of-solomon/song-of-solomon-6.html>)

**Song of Solomon 6:13**, *Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon thee. What will ye see in the Shulamite? As it were the company of two armies.*

**NOTE:** Here, 1. The church is called **Shulamite**, referring EITHER to Solomon, the bridegroom in **type**, by whose name she is called, in token of her relation to him and union with him (thus believers are called Christians from Christ), OR referring to Salem, the place of her birth and residence, as the woman of Shunem is called the Shunamite. **Heaven** is the **Salem** whence the saints have their BIRTH, and where they have their CITIZENSHIP; those that belong to Christ, and are **bound for heaven, shall be called Shulamites**. 2. She is invited to return, and the invitation most earnestly pressed: Return, return; and again, "Return, return; recover the peace thou hast lost and forfeited; come back to thy former composedness and cheerfulness of spirit." Note, Good Christians, after they have had their **comfort disturbed**, are sometimes hard to be pacified, and need to be earnestly persuaded to return again to their **rest**.

...Others think her beloved gives the account of her. "I will tell you what you shall see in the Shulamite; you shall see as noble a sight as that of **two armies**, OR **two parts** of the **same army**, drawn out in rank and file; not only as an army with banners, but as two armies, with a majesty double to what was before spoken; she is as Mahanaim, as the **two hosts** which Jacob saw (Gen. 32:1, Gen. 32:2), a host of SAINTS and a host of ANGELS ministering to them; the church **militant**, the church **triumphant**." Behold **two armies**; in both the church appears beautiful.

(Source: <http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/matthew-henry-complete/song-of-solomon/song-of-solomon-6.html>)