

Session 12 Vindication of the Persecuted Bride (Song 6:11-7:9)

Young Woman

**11 I went down to the grove of walnut trees
and out to the valley to see the new spring growth,
to see whether the grapevines had budded or the pomegranates were in bloom.
12 Before I realised it, my strong desires had taken me to the chariot of a noble man.**

Young Women of Jerusalem

**13 Return, return to us, O maid of Shulam.
Come back, come back, that we may see you again.**

Young Man

**Why do you stare at this young woman of Shulam, as she moves so gracefully between two
lines of dancers?**

**7:1 How beautiful are your sandalled 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.
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—**

I. OVERVIEW OF SONG 6:11-7:9A

A. Because the bride was overcome by love for the whole Church as she walked through the revelation of Song 6:verses 4-10. she commits to serve the weak and immature ones in God's garden (Song 6:11-12). A primary theme of the Song is that Jesus is equipping His Bride to walk in mature partnership with Him.

B. After this season of service, the Bride is persecuted. She receives two different responses from the Church.

Part of the Church is supportive from (Song 6:13a).

But another part of the Church gives her a sarcastic response (Song 6:13b).

The Bride is vindicated by the daughters who express respect for ten areas of her life (Song 7:1-5). Next, the Bride is vindicated by Jesus who endorses her as His partner by releasing His grace on her in a great measure (Song 7:6-9a).

II. THE BRIDE'S COMMITMENT TO SERVE THE WHOLE CHURCH (SONG 6:11)

I went down to the garden of nuts [walnut grove] to see the verdure of the valley, to see whether the vine had budded and the pomegranates had bloomed. (Song 6:11)

A. The garden of God is mentioned nine times in the Song. The first three references are to her garden (Song 4:12, 15, 16).

B. The last six references are to His garden (Song 4:16; 5:1; 6:2, 11; 7:12; 8:13). The Bride goes down to God's garden to help the plants that were merely budding and blooming.

C. She taught the daughters that Jesus is found in His garden feeding His people (Song 6:2-3).

D. She goes down to His garden to partner with Him because she wants to be with Him where He is.

E The garden includes a walnut grove, which gives a clear picture of spiritual truth. Walnut trees have dense shade, thus they provide refuge from the summer heat as well as having economic value in producing food.

F. Oil is also produced from walnuts that was used to making soap, which speaks of cleansing. Its leaves were used in medicinal ways to aid in physical healing. The life in a walnut seed is on the inside. However, the seed must die and be broken before it can provide food, oil, or healing for others. We must die to ourselves to provide food, cleansing (soap), and healing for others. The life within is hidden and not immediately observable. She went to see the verdure, or the vibrant greenness, of God's garden. One dictionary defines verdure as the fresh, vibrant greenness of flourishing vegetation.

G. She "went down" to invest herself in God's vineyard in other places outside of her familiar sphere. She sees God's flourishing garden in the midst of the valley in this fallen world. She goes to see if the vine had budded, or to gain insight into God's work in other places.

H. In Scripture, the vine and vineyard speak of God's people and His work (Isa. 5; Jn.15). The budding vineyard speaks of the vine that did not yet have fruit. In other words, it speaks of the immature Church. She sees God's vineyard without much fruit, but He sees buds and blooms. In Song 2:11-13, the budding vineyard was a prophetic sign of God's visitation coming soon. The blossoming pomegranates speak of individual believers. She goes down to invest in the budding vine that had not yet matured, instead of being impatient with them.

To see whether the vine had budded and the pomegranates had bloomed. (Song 6:11)

I. The Bride sees the budding virtues in others as the Lord saw her virtues in seed form (Song 4:1-5). Her enthusiasm for them comes from His enthusiasm for her while she was immature.

J. The Bride is saying "yes!" to the Great Commission. We can "go down" to help immature ones in our own neighbourhood. We do not have to get on a plane to serve in God's garden. In principle, it speaks of leaving the comfort zone to embrace the difficulty of caring and helping others.

III. LOVE FOR GOD'S CHURCH OVERCOMES HER (SONG 6:12)

Before I was even aware, my soul had made me as the chariots of my noble people. (Song 6:12)

A. While she is down in the valley working with the budding vineyard, suddenly her soul becomes like the chariots of her noble people. This depicts the zeal she feels for others. The Bride's soul moved like a chariot. In the ancient world, a chariot was the fastest and easiest way to travel with luggage for a long distance. The best chariots belonged to the noble people or the royal family.

(KJV translates "noble people," as "Ammi-Nadib" which is a prince's name).

My soul had made me [my desire set me among, NIV]. Her soul was made like a king's chariot that moved swiftly. In other words, she suddenly found strong desires to serve God's people.

B As she went down to see how the work of God was progressing, she was suddenly overcome with desire to help others. She is "beside herself," or is compelled by love (2 Cor. 5:11, 14).

Instead of being put off by the immaturity, pride, wrong applications of the Word, and lack of discernment of these "budding vines," she is surprised by the tender compassion that she feels.

C. Her heart moves forward in this burden without any resistance like a swiftly moving chariot. She is surprised by this new movement of her heart. Before she was even aware, she had new desires and burdens with great enthusiasm to help others. This is the work of the Spirit. God loves the whole Church, not just the part we are involved in. He wants us to have ownership of the whole Church, not just the small part under our authority. Zeal for the whole Church is foundational to the unity in the end-time Church (Jn. 17:21). Most only support what is theirs.

D. The Lord is raising up shepherds who care about His larger purposes and who train the people to love the whole Church. She is filled with love for the Body like Joseph was for his brothers,

without any sense of bitterness over the way she was mistreated (Gen. 50:15-21). The Bride follows through on this burden by walking it out with diligence.

Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine has budded, whether the grape

blossoms are open, and the pomegranates are in bloom. (Song 7:12)

IV. THE TWO RESPONSES OF THE CHURCH TO THE BRIDE (SONG 6:13)

Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon you! What would you see in the Shulamite—As it were, the dance of the two camps? (Song 6:13)

A. The first response to the Bride is one of respect and admiration. The daughters of Jerusalem wanted to seek the Lord with the Bride in Song 6:1. Here, they urgently express this desire to learn from her by crying out to her four times “to return.” They wanted her to return from her labours in the garden in the valley seen in Song 6:11-12.

B. The Ephesian elders wept because Paul left them to go to other parts of the Lord's vineyard.

They all wept freely, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, ³⁸sorrowing most of all for the words which he spoke, that they would see his face no more... (Acts 20:37-38)

C. The Bride is called the Shulamite because she grew up in the Israelite city of Shunem. This is the only place in the Song where the Bride is called the Shulamite. Solomon and Shunem come from the same root word that means peace. Jesus and His Bride have the same name.

D. The second response is one of sarcasm from the jealous watchman who had recently struck and wounded her in Song 5:7. Here they sarcastically challenge the daughters' respect for the Bride (who they recently censored) by saying, “What do you see in the Shulamite?” or “Why do you want her to return?” They undermine their desire to look to the Bride for spiritual input.

E. The dance of two camps speaks of the conflict between the daughters and the watchman over the Bride. The KJV translates this as “the dance of the two armies,” NASB as the “dance of the two companies,” and the NIV translates it as “the camp of Mahanaim.” Mahanaim in Hebrew may be translated as “two camps, two armies” or as the name of the city. Since Mahanaim is the city in which Jacob and Esau had a great conflict, either translation brings us to the same conclusion.
What would you see in the Shulamite—as it were, the dance of the two camps? (Song 6:13)

F. Mahanaim is famous for the conflict between Jacob and Esau. In Genesis 32, Esau pursued Jacob with the intent of killing him because Jacob stole his birthright. At Mahanaim, Jacob divided his people into two camps so Esau could only destroy one if he caught them. Jacob saw angels at Mahanaim that intervened to help him in this great conflict.

So Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. ²When Jacob saw them, he said, “This is God's camp.” And he called the name of that place Mahanaim. (Gen. 32:1-2)

G. The dance is an interaction between two camps (companies) in the Body of Christ. This is a dance of spiritual warfare that also involves two realms in the spirit (angelic and demonic).

There are always two extreme positions in the Body of Christ. Those who pursue Jesus with great fervency and those who do not. Wholeheartedness is the core issue of many divisions.

Jesus brought division between the sincere and the insincere, not between the mature and the immature (Mt. 10:34-36). The Lord will unify the Church after He purges it of compromise.

“Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to ‘set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law...’” (Mt. 10:34-35)

H. The two camps are represented by Saul attacking David. Paul’s ministry resulted in division as he confronted disobedience to God and turned the world upside down (Acts 17:6).

“These who have turned the world upside down have come here too.” (Acts 17:6)

IV. THE BRIDE IS VINDICATED BY DISCERNING BELIEVERS (SONG 7:1-5)

¹How beautiful are your feet in sandals, O prince’s daughter! The curves of your thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of a skillful workman. ²Your navel is a rounded goblet; it lacks no blended beverage. Your waist is a heap of wheat set about with lilies. ³Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle. ⁴Your neck is like an ivory tower, your eyes like the pools in Heshbon by the gate of Bath Rabbim. Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon which looks toward Damascus. ⁵Your head crowns you like Mount Carmel, and the hair of your head is like purple; a king is held captive by your tresses [hair]. (Song 7:1-5)

A. This passage answers the sarcastic question, “Who is the Shulamite?” The Bride is vindicated first by sincere believers (Song 7:1-5). Next, the Lord Himself vindicates her and promises to release a greater measure of the Spirit on her (Song 7:6-9). The Holy Spirit always raises up sincere believers to vindicate those who radically pursue the Lord as His Bride.

B. These sincere ones discern many of the same affirmations that Jesus gave the Bride (Song 4:1-5). They speak of ten virtues in the Bride as she spoke of ten virtues of Jesus (Song 5:10-16). It is good to compare the ten affirmations of the Bride in Song 7:1-5 with eight given to her in Song 4:1-5. There are four main differences. In Song 4:1-5, Jesus began by describing her head (giving six of the eight affirmations about her head) and worked down her body. Whereas, in Song 7:1-5, the daughters start by describing her feet as they work up to the head (four affirmations are related to her head). The qualities in Song 7 relate to her ministry. In Song 4, the focus is on her character.

C. We also see what the Lord delights in when He sees these ten characteristics and what He wants in bringing us to maturity. They are practical definitions of holiness and fruitfulness. It is clear that the daughters are speaking in Song 7:1-5 and that Jesus speaks in Song 7:6. For example, the daughters call the Bride the “Prince’s daughter” (7:1), whereas Jesus calls the Bride “My love” or “My spouse” each time throughout the Song. In Song 7:5, Jesus is referred to as “a King” (instead of Him speaking in the first person to the Bride). In Song 7:8, Jesus speaks in

the first person saying, "I will," indicating a change of speakers in v. 6-9 from v. 1-5. The daughters take a stand for the Bride declaring that "she is beautiful" and by calling her the prince's daughter which points to her royal character or character befitting of royalty. We all have a royal bloodline through our new birth.

How beautiful are your feet in sandals, O prince's daughter! (Song 7:1)

D. The Bride's feet in sandals speak of evangelism. Her success in evangelism is a sign of her beauty. Our feet are to be shod by the preparation of the gospel (Eph. 6:15). How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news (Isa. 52:7). The place our feet walk speaks of our inheritance (Josh. 1:3). Shoes speak of prosperity and honour (Lk. 15:22). The poor in the ancient world often did not have shoes. Bare feet speak symbolically of shame, poverty, and humiliation.

E. The Bride's thighs or legs speak of the strength behind her walk in God. Jesus' legs are like pillars of marble (Song 5:15).

F. The curves of her thighs speak of the muscular definition in her legs giving her strength. This athletic feature was developed through much discipline. Thus, her strong walk is costly and esteemed as rare like the jewels worked on by a skillful workman.

The curves of your thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of a skillful workman. (Song 7:1)

G. The navel speaks of the nourishment a child receives in their mother's womb. This refers to our formative years in the Lord as the time when inner life in God is developed. A rounded goblet speaks of a healthy navel. This is opposite of being malnourished. A goblet which lacks no beverage speaks of a full range of nourishment. She is healthy with a balanced diet consisting of all the necessary nutrients for a strong life. This speaks of a good spiritual foundation in our life.

Your navel is a rounded goblet; it lacks no blended beverage. (Song 7:2)

H. The daughters see the Bride as prepared for the coming harvest. A heap of wheat speaks of an abundance of wheat which only occurs during the harvest. She is pictured as pregnant (large waist) with an abundant harvest. She is pregnant with the harvest wheat that is set about with lilies. The harvest that comes forth from her will be established in purity and holiness.

Your waist is a heap of wheat set about with lilies. (Song 7:2)

I. Breasts speak of the ability to nurture others. Babies are nurtured through milk from the breast. She is ready to nurture the harvest that she gives birth to. Her breasts are like youthful fawns (young deer less than one year old) in contrast to being elderly and without the ability to nurture with milk. Twins of a gazelle speaks of a double portion in her ability to nurture. This is in contrast to the little sister (immature believer) who is not prepared to nurture others (Song 8:8).

Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle. (Song 7:3)

J. In Scripture, the neck speaks of the will that can be stiff-necked (resistant) or submissive. The rebellious neck speaks of pride (Isa. 3:16). The Bride's will is like an

ivory tower which is rare and costly. Her resolute choices are as costly as an ivory tower which provides her protection.

Your neck is like an ivory tower... (Song 7:4)

K. Eyes speak of our ability to receive revelation (Eph. 1:18). She has keen spiritual insight (Song 1:15; 4:2, 9; 6:5). In Song 4:1, Jesus compared her eyes to dove's eyes, speaking of her purity and loyalty. Here, her eyes are like the pools in Heshbon. These pools were not muddy but clean and easy to see through. To see clearly is our first priority because seeing is the doorway to growing spiritually (Phil 3:8-10). When we see differently, we feel differently. The gate of Bath Rabbim was a resort area with clean water in the once royal city of Heshbon (Num. 21:25-26).

4Your eyes like the pools in Heshbon by the gate of Bath Rabbim. (Song 7:4)

L. The nose speaks of discernment. A tower provides protection. Her nose is like a protective tower that looked toward Damascus, the capital of Syria (Israel's greatest enemy). Lebanon was on the north side of Judah facing Syria. She had discernment of her fiercest enemies.

Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon which looks toward Damascus. (Song 7:4)

M. The Bride's thought life is powerful like the beautiful mountain tops of Carmel. Her thought life is filled with royal thoughts, or crowned like Mount Carmel (Isa. 35:2). Our thoughts are significant in spiritual warfare, especially related to our image of God.

Your head crowns you like Mount Carmel, and the hair of your head is like purple; a king is held captive by your tresses [hair]. (Song 7:5)

N. In Scripture, hair spoke of one's dedication to God. The hair of the Nazirite was an outward sign of their dedication to God (Num. 6). A Nazirite did not cut their hair. Her hair is like purple which speaks of royalty. Her dedication is like the resolution of a king (NASB says "the king").

O. The Bride's dedication holds the heart of God. His love is so powerful that it binds Him to weak people who love Him. It is His glory (not His weakness) to be captivated by love for His people.

P. His unique ability is to love those so much lower than He. His heart is "held" by us. He possesses all authority, but gives His heart without any reserve to His Bride.

Q. God's love binds Him to His people. For example, five intercessors captured His heart: Daniel, Noah, Job, Moses, and Samuel (Ezek. 14:14; Jer.15:1; Ex. 32:7-14).

V. THE BRIDE IS VINDICATED BY JESUS (SONG 7:6-9A)

How fair [beautiful] and how pleasant you are, O love, with your delights! 7This stature of yours is like a palm tree, and your breasts like its clusters. 8I said, "I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of its branches." Let now your breasts be like clusters of the vine, the

fragrance of your breath like apples, and the roof of your mouth like the best wine. (Song 7:6-9a)

A. Jesus vindicates His Bride (the speaker changed in Song 7:6). The watchmen asked, "Who is the Shulamite that anyone should pay attention to her?"

B. Jesus' heart is truly held captive by the Bride (Song 7:5) as He says, "How beautiful and pleasant you are, O love, with your delights!" (v. 6). Jesus sees His people as beautiful and pleasant. His fruit is sweet and pleasant to her (Song 1:16; 2:3). Her fruit is pleasant to Him (Song 4:16-5:1).

C. "O love" expresses the passion in God's heart for her. God loves us to the measure He loves Jesus (Jn.15:9; 17:23). It is beyond human comprehension (Eph. 3:18). Our love is greater than wine to Him (Song 4:10). There is nothing more delightful to Jesus than the love of His people.

D. Our voice is sweet and our face is lovely to Him, even in our weakness and struggle (Song 2:14).

E. Jesus affirms the stature of the Bride's spiritual maturity as proclaimed by the daughters in Song 7:1-5. A palm tree is a sign of victory and conquest (Rev. 7:4) and is a picture of maturity (Jer.10:5). It thrives even in a drought because its roots go down deep, finding water far below the surface. Thus, it grows exceptionally high and straight. Strong winds cannot break a palm tree.

G. Her breasts, or ability to nurture, are like the clusters of a palm tree that nourishes many.

This stature of yours is like a palm tree, and your breasts like its clusters. (Song 7:7)

F. Jesus promises to "take hold" of His people, to release a great manifestation of His presence through them. Jesus said that He is the vine and we are the branches that He releases His power through (Jn. 14:12). Jesus promises to "go up" to the palm tree to take hold of His servants.

I said, "I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of its branches." (Song 7:8)

I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me...bears much fruit...(Jn. 15:5)

G. The Lord lays hold of His people and commissions her in three significant ways.

Let now your breasts be like clusters of the vine, the fragrance of your breath like apples, and the roof of your mouth like the best wine. (Song 7:8-9a)

H. His first commission is to nurture others in the power of the Spirit. Her breasts are to nurture people with the dimension of the Holy Spirit's activity operating in her in a new measure.

I. His second commission is to let the fragrance of her breath refresh people like apples. Her breath speaks of her inner life. Apples speak of refreshing (Song 2:3). It is to refresh others in the Spirit.

He breathed on them, and said..."Receive the Holy Spirit." (Jn. 20:22)

J. Her third commission is that her mouth (intimacy with God) is to be like the best wine to God. The mouth throughout the Song speaks of the kisses of the mouth (Song 1:2; 4:3; 5:16). Our intimacy with Jesus is the best thing that the Spirit works in us for Jesus.

K. We are to give Him the best we have in our relationship with Him. We must not neglect our intimacy with Him for any reason.

Jesus said that the roof of her mouth was the best wine of the Holy Spirit. The roof of the mouth refers to the palate of the mouth (the taste of her mouth). The Hebrew word is roof or palate. It is simply that which comes from her mouth. It is to be the best wine, that which brings the greatest joy to Jesus (Song 4:10).

How fair is your love...How much better than wine is your love... (Song 4:10)

L. The wine speaks of the influences of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18). The best wine to God is the wine of our intimacy. It is the most pleasurable thing to God outside of their fellowship within the Godhead.

The best wine of all the works of His kingdom or the best work of the Holy Spirit or the wine that Jesus enjoys most is when the Church walks in mature love (Jn 17:26).

“...that the love with which You loved Me may be in them...

” (Jn. 17:26)

“You shall love the LORD...with all your heart, with all your soul and...mind.” (Mt. 22:37)