

July 17

Scriptures: Read Song of Solomon 7 & 8

Key Verse: “Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm...” (Song of Solomon 8:6)

Overview

All the people in the court found the Shulamite attractive, but of course for Solomon there was that special attraction that a husband has for his wife and lover. He spoke up to answer her question about what it was that they saw in her (6:13b). Once again he extols her beauty and physical perfection. He begins with her feet and progresses up to her hair (7:1-5); then he expresses his desire to physically enjoy her love and beauty (7:6-9). His desire for his wife is pure, and there is nothing “dirty” about it. These are gifts that God gave for mankind to enjoy with the wife of their youth (cf. Prov. 5:18).

Solomon begins his description by calling her a “prince’s daughter”. This does not refer to her actual status, but to her noble character and natural graces. His poetic imagery would have been very complimentary for that day and age. Her nose is likened to the “tower of Lebanon which looks toward Damascus”, meaning that it is exquisitely sculptured and well-formed (not extremely large as some humorously understand it to mean).

His wife’s response, “I am my beloved’s”, declares that she is his and just as his desire is for her, so her desire is for him (cf. Gen. 3:16). She requests that he go with her, possibly to her home town, and there they would renew their love. The mention of the mandrakes, sometimes referred to as the “love apple” (a fruit that was commonly believed to enhance sexual desire and promote fertility) likely means that she hopes to conceive and bear him a child (7:13; cf. Gen. 30:14-16), thus fulfilling one of the divinely ordained purposes of the marriage union (Gen. 1:28).

In that culture, the husband and wife could not kiss in public, but brothers and sisters might do so without incurring public scorn; thus she wishes that she could have that close and open relationship with him as a sister has with a brother (8:1-2). Their love has blossomed without any pressure or force, and so for the third time the Shulamite advises the daughters of Jerusalem: “Do not stir up nor awaken love until it pleases” (2:7; 3:5; 8:4).

Solomon must have agreed to go with his wife to her home in the territory of Shunem, for it appears she was met by someone in her clan, who had aided her mother in her birth. While there, where she first met Solomon, the Shulamite requests: “Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm” (8:6). This is a very important and significant request. The seal or signet ring upon the right hand symbolized authority, and as such it was a precious possession which its owner would never part with (cf. Jer. 22:24). The Shulamite desires that they might have an inseparable union and that she might be to him like his most precious and treasured possession. The reason for this desire is because they share an undying and true love for one another — a flame that cannot be quenched, a love that cannot be bought (8:6-7). The Lord’s people, Jesus’ Bride, are His most loved and treasured possession. He has put His claim upon us. We are very

important to the Lord. He will never leave us nor forsake us. He loves us with a matchless and unconditional love, and we must also love Him with our greatest love.

With these words, the Shulamite not only expressed her undying love for her husband, but she also expressed her faithfulness and commitment to him. She had kept herself pure for her husband, and her good reputation was beyond dispute. When she was still a young girl, her brothers had taken the responsibility to ensure that their sister be an acceptable wife in that culture (8:8-9). When she had matured, she proved that her brothers had no need to worry. She was well-shaped and “like a wall”, probably meaning that before her marriage she had protected her honour and remained a virgin, so that when she married, she “found peace” with her beloved. Our Lord Jesus, the Bridegroom of the church, will insist that His Bride remain pure, for only if this is true will His Bride find His peace.

Prayer

Dear Lord Jesus, may Your peace be upon us as we await Your return to take Your Bride unto Yourself. We love You and desire to be faithful to You always. By the help of Your Holy Spirit, we will truly love You.