



Romantic Tryst at the Estate: The Brothers' Interruption, the Shepherd's Eviction, the Shulammitte's Banishment, SOS 2:14-15; Indwelling of Christ, v. 16

SOS 2:14 - [SW] "O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the secret place of the steep pathway, let me see your form, let me hear your voice, for your voice is sweet, and your form is lovely."

1. This verse takes us to the place of the tryst. The Shulammitte's family lived in an estate that obviously was near headquarters for the family winery. The family home, according to archaeological evidence from the tenth century, was built of stone and apparently of at least two stories.
2. The phrase "in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the steep pathway" indicates a secluded area on a stairway connecting the floors. The word "cleft" is חַגָּוּ *hagaw* and refers to a "hiding place" or a "private place" secluded away from others within this stone stairwell.
3. Windows in walls fronting inner courts were of larger size than those on the outer walls. This probably describes a window in a stairwell near the Shulammitte's bedroom that was treated with hinged latticework that when open provided a secluded area behind which they met.
4. It is here they embrace but the Shulammitte desires to look upon her Shepherd and says to him that she wants to see his form. The noun here is מַרְאֵה *mar'eh* and it is a derivative of the verb "to see."
5. It makes reference to the entirety of what is seen and thus she wants to see the Shepherd's entire person. In other words, "Let me take a good look at you."
6. Next she wants to hear him speak: "Let me hear your voice." We know the Shepherd accommodates her wishes for concluding the verse the Shulammitte compliments both assets. She says his "voice is sweet." The word is an adjective meaning "sweet" but is used to describe the pleasant sound of the Shepherd's voice.
7. And finally, she says that his form is "lovely." The word here is the masculine adjective נְאֻוֶה *na'weh* that does mean "lovely" or "beautiful" but in the masculine we'll opt for "handsome."
8. Here now is the corrected translation of the verse:

SOS 2:14 - [SW] "O my dove, in the private place of the rock stairwell, in the secrecy of the staircase, let me take a good look at you, let me hear your voice. Your voice is pleasingly resonant and you are handsome."

9. This sublime moment is probably one that the Shulammitte wished would last forever, however it was about to come to a sudden, shocking end. Up the stairs bounded her brothers. They interrupted their romantic moment, threw the Shepherd out of the house, and sent her in up to the vineyard.

SOS 2:15 - [SB1&2] "Catch the foxes for us, the little foxes that are ruining the vineyards, while our vineyards are in blossom."

1. This duty has been mentioned several times in our study since this is the Shulammitte's location when the king spotted her as his caravan passed by from the north.
2. The problem with the foxes is described in:



Orr, James (gen. ed.). *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956), 4:3050:

As the grapes ripen they must be watched to keep off jackals and foxes, and in some districts even wild boars. The watchman is stationed in one of the towers and overlooks a considerable area. When the grape season comes, the whole family of the owner frequently take their residence in a booth constructed upon one of the larger towers and remain there until the grapes are practically finished.

3. To send a young woman to take on this kind of work, in the heat of the summer, and in sparse conditions shows the cruelty of her brothers.
4. They have allowed their power lust to move them into unreasonable efforts to separate the Shulammitte from the Shepherd.
5. Their idea of punishment has made them look foolish with regard to one of their reasons for disliking the Shepherd. They want their sister to marry someone higher on the social ladder than a sheep herder but make the decision to lower her to the level of chasing foxes out of a vineyard. Not very sophisticated.
6. Two things need to be noted about this verse. First the opening verb is the Qal imperative of אָחַז *'ahaz* and means "to seize, grasp, or hold." The Shulammitte is surely incapable of catching a fox but she is capable of shooing them off. The brothers give her a task she is unable to perform but she gives it her best try.
7. Second, the last word in the verse is "blossom." This is correct but leaves the wrong impression. The word is the noun מַתָּר *s^emathar* and refers to young grapes as they are flowering. This is when foxes and jackals begin to plunder the vines at night.
8. Having received her assignment she has no choice but to go up to the vineyard and assume her demeaning task. The Shepherd, banished from the estate, is soon required to return to the Sharon Plain and resume his duties with the flocks.
9. Now the context returns us to the Shulammitte as she stands in Solomon's tent and thinks about her love and devotion to the Shepherd:

SOS 2:16 - [SW] "My beloved is mine, and I am his; he pastures his flock among the lilies."

1. She again uses the faith-rest technique. She reminds herself that the Shepherd is her right man and that she is his right woman. He is in her soul and she is in his as he pastures his sheep among the lilies of Sharon.
2. This principle of doctrine continues to sustain her as she confronts Solomon's advances. The Shepherd remains in her soul although he is physically absent.
3. Thus the eyes of her memory keep him ever present in her soul. She can recall him any time and any place.
4. The Shulammitte doesn't know if she will ever see the Shepherd again but even if she doesn't see him again in this life she will always have him present in the eyes of her memory.
5. For some people the coalescence of souls is so complete and strong that when circumstance permit they never consider marriage after the death of their spouses. Even after death memories of a woman's right man continue to provide invisible historical impact for her as a source of great protection and contentment.



6. This eternal bond between right man-right woman illustrates the theological implications of the statement, "My beloved is mine."
7. So also is the ultimate Beloved, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is always with us and we are never alone and thus always protected by his provision and care.
8. The doctrine of the indwelling of Jesus Christ is among the subjects our Lord addressed in His Upper Room Discourse on the night he was betrayed.
9. We will not do a comprehensive study of the doctrine of the indwelling of Christ but only note some of its principles in order to amplify the theological implication of the Shulammite's statement, "My beloved is mine, and I am his."

Principles from the Doctrine of the Indwelling of Jesus Christ

1. The Lord prophesied that He would indwell all believers during the upcoming Church Age in the context of John 14:18-20.
2. It is within the Upper Room Discourse that the Lord reveals some of the details about the Church Age. In verse 18-20 He addresses several doctrines: (1) the Rapture, (2) the Incarnation, (3) eternal life, (4) the resurrection body, and (5) His indwelling of Church Age believers.
3. The passage reads as follows:

John 14:18 - "I will not abandon you as orphans, I will come face to face with you [**the Rapture**].

v. 19 - "For a little while the world will not perceive Me, but you will perceive me [**awareness through Bible study**]. Because I live [**resurrection body with eternal life**], you will live also [**promise of a resurrection body & eternal life for believers**].

v. 20 - "But in that day [**birthday of the Church: Pentecost—50 days hence**] you will know that I am in My father [**the Members of the Trinity are one in essence**], and you all are in Me [**union with Christ, positional truth, baptism of the Holy Spirit**], and I am in you all [**indwelling of Christ.**]"