

Solomon's Mighty Men, SOS 3:7-8, & David's, 1 Chron 11:11, 2 Sam 23:9-10; Solomon's Sedan & Crown, SOS 3:9-11; His Wealth, 2 Chron 9:13-28

SOS 3:8 - [BS2] “All of them are wielders of the sword, expert in war; each man has his sword at his side, guarding against the terrors of the night.”

1. This bystander is one who is an admirer of the military and its weaponry and those who are its leading practitioners. He knows about their exploits in battle and their present duty to protect the king.
2. These warriors are “wielders of the sword,” an idiom that speaks of their superior ability in use the weapon. Archeological evidence indicates that the swords used by the mighty men were long swords developed by the Philistines:

Harris, R. Laird, Gleason L. Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 320:

חֶרֶב *cherev*, “sword.” The LXX [Septuagint] translates it 195 times as *rhomphaia* [ῥομφαία] “sword”; 165 times as *machaira* [μάχαιρα] “short sword.”

From archeological and iconographic evidence we know that the common swords of the third and early second millennia B.C. were rather short, straight swords made of bronze.

At the end of the second millennium, the Philistines and other Sea Peoples introduced the long, straight sword made of iron.

Apparently the tempering of iron to make steel usable for swords was a military secret kept from the Israelites. This advantage was held by the Philistines until David's day. The 1 Samuel 13:19-22 passage preserves a very accurate analysis of the days when the Philistines had the long iron swords and the Israelites had only the short bronze daggers.

In the days of the united monarchy [the reigns of David and Solomon] the Israelites adopted the heavy swords of the Philistines, which could penetrate armor.

3. Prowess with the *cherev* by two of David's mighty men is described in parallel accounts of their exploits on the battlefield:

1 Chronicles 11:11 - These constitute the list of the mighty men [גִּבּוֹרִים *gibborim*] whom David had: Jashobeam \ja-shō' be-am\, the son of a Hachmonite \hak' mo-nī\, the chief of the thirty; he lifted up his spear [חֶרֶב *cherev*] against three hundred whom he killed at one time.

2 Samuel 23:9 - And after him was Eleazar \el-ē-ā' zer\ the son of Dodo \dō' dah\ the Ahohite \a-hō' hīt\, one of the three mighty men [גִּבּוֹרִים *gibborim*] with David when they defied the Philistines who were gathered there to battle and the men of Israel had withdrawn.

v. 10- He arose and struck the Philistines until his hand was weary and clung to the sword [חֶרֶב *cherev*]. And the Lord brought about a great victory that day ...

4. The Honor Roll of David's *gibborim* in 1 Chronicles 11 and 2 Samuel 23 includes at least some of the men who are among the elite troops who protect Solomon around the clock. Solomon increased the number of the *gibborim* to sixty. They are battle tested and experts in the use of the *cherev*.
5. The constant presence of the *gibborim* around Solomon means that it will be extremely difficult for the Shepherd to rescue the Shulammitite. However her rescue is in the plan of God so even Solomon's elite cannot defend against it.

6. This is a picture of the wall of fire that believers enjoy in the devil's world. No matter how intense the Invisible War may rage, the believer is safely inside the eye of the hurricane.
7. The dénouement of the opera will depict the rapture of the church. The Shepherd's rescue of the Shulammitte illustrates the Lord's extraction of His final pivot as the entire body of Christ follows Him into heaven to become the Bride of Christ forever (Revelation 19:7).
8. Solomon may assume that tight security may convince the Shulammitte that her fate is sealed and she might more easily submit to it. Her faith is mightier than his mighty men for as David asserted to Goliath of Gath in 1 Samuel 17:47, "The Lord does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the Lord's." (Cp. Solomon's own observation in Psalm 127:1b.)
9. The next bystander describes what most pick-up artists consider to be a sure turn-on for the ladies and Solomon assumes the Shulammitte will respond in kind:

SOS 3:9 - [BS3] "King Solomon has made for himself a sedan chair from the timber of Lebanon.

v. 10 - [BS3] "He made its posts of silver, its back of gold, and its seat of purple fabric, with its interior lovingly fitted out by the daughters of Jerusalem."

1. This was Solomon's Ego-Stoking Device. As king he is carried around by several strong guys. Those he passes must admire him from afar since he is surrounded by his elite bodyguards.
2. Solomon's wealth and influence is attested to in Scripture and from conclusions derived from historical evidences from the time of his reign. An excellent summary is provided by:

Orr, James (gen. ed.) *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956), 4:2825:

Solomon's Wisdom and Splendor. About the middle of Solomon's reign he received a notable visit from the Queen of Sheba, who came "from the ends of the earth" to hear his wisdom (Mt 12:42). Her aim in visiting Solomon was presumably to establish a commercial treaty between herself and him. Solomon took occasion to show her Jerusalem, its temples, palaces, and fortifications which he had builded [*sic*]. The queen was overcome by the beauty of his capital, the food of his table, the attendance of his servants, and the general munificence of his court.

If we ask what some of the beautiful things the Queen of Sheba beheld, the record leads us to conclude that on every hand there was a great display of gold (from Ophir *ō' fer*)—this was the golden age of Israel—and silver (probably from the mines of Spain and Asia Minor), precious stones and spices (from Arabia), almug trees or sandalwood (from India), ivory (from India and Eastern Africa), cedarwood (from Lebanon), a temple inlaid with pure gold, palaces and stairways beautifully ornamented, an endless array of servants and cup bearers, gorgeous apparel, a rich cuisine, drinking vessels of gold, officers in costly uniforms, and horses and chariots; in short, a capital worthy of a king whose wisdom and splendor eclipsed at the time all the other potentates of earth.

Something like 10,000 people were probably fed from his table—courtiers, guests, retainers, employees, slaves. His revenues were unnumbered, being drawn largely from strangers, gifts from tributary princes and those who paid homage to him. His fleets brought back to Ezion-geber *lē' zi-on gē' ber* [Solomon's naval base and copper-refining port at the head of the Gulf of Aqabah (1 Kings 9:26)], and thence overland to Jerusalem, great resources from many foreign shores, upwards of \$10,000,000 annually. [**Cp. 2 Chronicles 9:13-28 NASB**]

3. Solomon's sedan chair was no exception among his ostentatious display of wealth. It is described for us by:

Dillow, Joseph C. *Solomon on Sex*. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1977), 67-68:

A sedan chair ... is a couch long enough for the rider to recline, covered with a canopy and resting on pillars at four corners. It is hung around with curtains to exclude the sun and has a door, sometimes of lattice work, on each side.

The headboard to which the canopy was attached was gold, and the couch itself was royal purple, the color of kings. The “daughters of Jerusalem [Zion]” ... had lined the inside of the canopy with flowers intermingled with short sentences telling of the power of love. [Rabbi S. M. Lehrman, *The Song of Songs: The Five Megilloth*, ed. Dr. A. Cohen (The Soncino Press, 1946), p. 12.]

4. From our research we can extrapolate that the frame, top, and base of the sedan were made of cedarwood from Lebanon, the silver support posts of the sedan came from Spain or Asia Minor, the gold for the headboard was mined in Ophir, present-day Yemen.
5. The upholstery, curtains, and adornments for the sedan were provided by the palace designers and upholsters. These women are most likely among the virgins who offered to design the wedding dress for the Shulammitte in Song of Solomon 1:11. The design of the interior of the sedan is said to have been lovingly motivated by the daughters of Zion.
6. The upholstery of the couch was died purple, a color that became attached to royalty because of the extremely expensive procedure used to acquire its dyestuff:

Orr, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, 2:884:

An analysis of the various Bible references shows but four colors which were produced on cloth by dyeing, namely, purple, blue (violet), crimson and scarlet. Of these purple is the one best known because of the many historical references to it. It was the symbol of royalty and luxury. Because of its high price, due to the expensive method of obtaining it, only royalty and the rich could afford purple attire. One writer tells us that the dyestuff was worth its weight in silver.

Probably it was because of its scarcity, and because it was one of the very limited number of dyes known, rather than for any remarkable beauty of color, that the purple was so much sought after.

The purple and blue dyes were extracted from shellfish. Tyre and Sidon were noted as the suppliers of these colors, hence the name “Tyrian purple.” The inhabitants of these cities were at first simply dealers in the purple, but they afterward became the manufacturers, as the heaps of the empty shells of the *Murex trunculus*, which still exist in the vicinity of these cities, testify. The pigment was secreted by a gland in the lining of the stomach. The shell was punctured and the fish removed in order to secure the dye. The juice, at first whitish, changed on exposure to yellowish ... and finally to purple. Tyrian purple was considered most valuable when it was “exactly the color of clotted blood and of a blackish hue” (Pliny). Various species of the *murex* are found today at Haifa (Syria), about the Greek isles and on the north coast of Africa.

7. These references clearly show that Solomon spared no expense in any of his endeavors including his sedan. Men today who seek to impress the girls place a high priority on the kind of wheels they drive. As Solomon is lifted in his sedan to be carried through the streets of Jerusalem to his palace the final bystander observes his attire with emphasis on his crown:

SOS 3:11 - [BS4] “Go forth, O daughters of Zion, and gaze on King Solomon with the crown with which his mother has crowned him on the day of his wedding, and on the day of his gladness of heart.”

1. The antonomasia “daughters of Zion” refers to the women of Jerusalem who are called upon to admire the king in his splendor and glory.
2. After Solomon dismounted his chariot he or those of his retinue apparently told those who came to meet him of his intention to marry a girl from the North Country.
3. The news inspired his mother, Bath-sheba, to have a laurel crown brought to the gate which she placed on his head with the assumption Solomon would be married on that day to the Shulammitte.
4. It was not to be, but nevertheless, for the moment, Solomon rides in his sedan through the streets of Jerusalem confident that his harem is about to be increased by one.