

Dec 10 –Song of Solomon 5-8

Chapter 5

Vs. 2 begins another scene where we're unaware if she is awake or dreaming of this seeking in the night. Her lover is out in the rain, knocking on the door, putting his hand through the open window. Though she has prepared herself for his visit, she is reluctant to go to the door because she is already undressed and her feet are already clean. By the time she does go, he is gone. She runs out into the city to find him, but is instead found by the city watchmen, who represent the conventions of society, which frown on young, unaccompanied, women wandering the street at night. Then lengths she will go for her beloved are endless –even to being beaten and stripped. The chorus asks her what makes him so special, and in vs. 10-16 she describes him in great detail, with soaring praise, like a precious statue of a king would have been described in ancient times. This is the only description of a man's body by a woman in the entire Hebrew Bible.

Chapter 6

In chapter 6, her lover responds with his own description of her body –very similar to what he said in chapter 4, but now expanded with more awe-inspiring imagery (terribly as an army with banners, even the queens and concubines praise her). She is perfect in his eyes, and in her mother's eyes (she has the respect of her elders). The woman is referred to as Shulamite, the meaning of this term is unclear, but it may be a feminine version of Solomon, indicating nobility.

Chapter 7

The man now describes his lover from bottom to top, with increasing intimacy (knowledge of her navel and belly suggest that he's seen her without clothes), using imagery from agriculture and the topography of the natural world. He describes her stature of that of a palm tree. He desires to reach out and touch her (to lay hold of her branches). Her breath is sweet like apples and kisses like wine. The woman responds to his wooing favorably and suggests that they go out into the vineyards and fields where the buds are just beginning to open, where she will also give herself to him. The mandrake was an aphrodisiac in many ancient cultures.

Chapter 8

The woman expresses desire for him to be her brother, so that no one would think anything of the two of them touching and being affectionate. As they are not related, nor married, their affection and intimacy must be cloaked in secrecy. She desires for them to be able to openly share the love they have for one another. Vs. 6-7 seems to be a poem inserted into the narrative. "Set me as a seal upon your heart" means the woman marks the man as her own. This is a sign of permanence and commitment, a sign of covenant. Love is more valuable than all the wealth in the world. Vs. 8-9 is a famous love poem from the ancient world, spoken in the voice of the brothers of a young woman, whose duty it would have been to preserve their sister's chastity. They're saying that if their sister is found to still be chaste on her wedding day that they will shower her with silver and precious baubles, but if not they will guard her. The woman now responds to this famous poem in vs. 10, saying that she is chaste and her breasts are fully developed (she's not a little girl anymore), and that she has found peace in her lover's eyes. Her lover responds, connecting her to a vineyard, saying that she is more precious to him than all of the wives and concubines of Solomon combined, and all of the eunuchs that kept them. She doesn't need a eunuch, because he trusts her faithfulness, he knows that she is his and his alone.