

THE VOICE OF MY BELOVED!

TEXT: SONG OF SOLOMON 2:8-17

Introduction:

1. Franz Delitzsch, in his *Commentary on the Old Testament*, wrote, “With 2:8 the second act begins...The locality is no longer the royal city.”
2. However, if the Shulamite is now back in her country home, why is she speaking again to the daughters of Jerusalem (3:5)?
3. Some commentators believe the Shulamite is recalling a past visit she had with the shepherd.
4. The refrain (2:7; 3:5; 8:4) serves as a poetic device, marking off the ending of one section and introducing the next.

I. THE SHULAMITE’S SOLILOQUY

“The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills” (2:8).

1. Here the Shulamite is thinking again of her beloved shepherd (2:8).
2. The Shulamite knows the voice of her beloved. “The sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out... And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers... My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me” (John 10:3, 5, 27).
3. “He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled” (John 3:29).
4. Her shepherd is in a hurry to see her – “leaping upon the mountains” and “skipping upon the hills” (2:8).
5. “Leaping” and “skipping” indicate the shepherd’s eagerness.
6. Note the words, “Behold, he cometh” (2:8). Revelation 1:7 says, “Behold, he cometh...”
7. First Peter 5:4 says, “And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.”
8. Our Lord Himself said, “I will come again and receive you unto myself” (John 14:3).
9. The Shulamite woman was looking and waiting for her beloved shepherd, just as we are looking and waiting for our good shepherd.
10. “My beloved is like a roe or a young hart: behold, he standeth behind our wall” (2:9). The Shulamite says that her beloved “is like a roe” (deer, gazelle), a graceful antelope with lustrous eyes. Or like a young hart (or “stag,” an adult male deer).
11. When we think of this beautiful roe with his shining, lustrous eyes, we are reminded of Revelation 1:14, where our Lord is said to have eyes that are “as a flame of fire.”
12. The shepherd is standing outside the wall (2:9). Today the Lord is still standing outside the wall – a wall of unbelief, a wall of indifference, a wall of sin, a wall of

false religion, a wall of rebellion against God. Our Lord says in Revelation 3:20, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock...”

13. “He looketh forth at the windows, shewing himself through the lattice” (2:9b). The Shulamite could see her beloved, but not clearly.

14. Such is our present state as the bride of Christ waits for her bridegroom. “For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face” (I Cor. 13:12).

Only faintly now I see Him,
With the darkened veil between,
But a blessed day is coming,
When His glory shall be seen.

Face to face I shall behold Him,
Far beyond the starry sky;
Face to face in all His glory,
I shall see Him by and by! – Carrie E. Breck

II. THE SHULAMITE’S BELOVED SPEAKS

“My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away” (2:10). “Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away” (2:13b).

1. The Shulamite woman is inside the house but she can hear her beloved’s voice saying, “Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away” (2:10).

“I can hear my Saviour calling, I can hear my Saviour calling, ‘Take thy cross and follow, follow me.’

Where He leads me I will follow, Where He leads me I will follow,
Where He leads me I will follow,

I’ll go with Him, with Him all the way.” – Ernest W. Blandy

2. John Phillips (*Exploring the Song of Solomon*) has pointed out that the shepherd’s call appealed to the Shulamite’s will, her mind, and her heart.

- First of all, the shepherd’s call was volitional; it spoke to the will. To each one of us is given a measure of volition and power of choice. Over and over again, the Bible says, “Come” (cf. Isaiah 1:18; Rev. 22:17). God told Noah and his family, “Come...into the ark” (Genesis 7:1). The people in Noah’s day had a choice. They all perished (except for Noah and his family) because they made the wrong choice.
- Secondly, the shepherd’s call was also logical; it spoke to the mind. The shepherd was offering the Shulamite woman a new life (2:11-13). It was to be a life of beauty, rather than a bleak and barren life. “For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land” (2:11, 12). A life devoted to God is a beautiful life. A life without God is a wasted

life. Jesus said, “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10).

- Thirdly, the shepherd’s call to the Shulamite was also emotional; it spoke to the heart. The shepherd asks, “Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice...” (2:14). The shepherd was longing for a response from his beloved Shulamite. And our good Shepherd longs for a willing response from us.

“All to Jesus, I surrender;
All to Him I freely give;
I will ever love and trust Him,
In His presence daily live.” – Judson W. Van DeVenter

“On wings of faith mount up, my soul, and rise;
View your inheritance beyond the skies.
Nor heart can think, nor mortal tongue can tell,
What endless pleasures in those mansions dwell.
Here my Redeemer lives, all bright and glorious;
O’er sin, and death, and hell he reigns victorious.

“No gnawing grief, no sad, heart-rending pain,
In that blessed country can admission gain.
No sorrow there, no soul-tormenting fear,
For God’s own hand shall wipe the falling tear.
Here my Redeemer lives, all bright and glorious;
O’er sin, and death, and hell he reigns victorious.

“No rising sun his needless beams displays,
No sickly moon emits her feeble rays.
The Godhead here celestial glory sheds;
The exalted Lamb, eternal radiance spreads.
Here my Redeemer lives, all bright and glorious;
O’er sin, and death, and hell he reigns victorious.

“One distant glimpse my eager passion fires.
Jesus, to thee my longing soul aspires.
When shall I at my heavenly home arrive?
When leave this earth, and when begin to live?
For here my Saviour is, all bright and glorious;
O’er sin, and death, and hell — he reigns victorious.” – G. T. Driffield

Spurgeon concluded his “Sermon For Spring” with the final stanza of this hymn, but the words are slightly different.

“When shall I hear thy voice divinely say,
‘Rise up my love, my fair one come away.
Come meet thy Saviour bright and glorious
O’er sin and death and hell victorious.” (*The Most Holy Place*)

3. “For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land” (2:11).

“The legal wintery state is gone,
The mists are fled, the spring comes on;
The sacred turtledove we hear
Proclaim the new, the joyful year.
And when we hear Christ Jesus say,
Rise up my Love, and come away,
Our hearts would fain outfly the wind,
And leave all earthly joys behind.” – Isaac Watts

5. The cold and rainy winter season was over, the flowers are blooming, the birds are singing, and “the voice of the turtle (turtledove) is heard in our land” (2:12). WJ Cameron writes, “The whole picture is suggestive of spiritual revival” (*New Bible Commentary*).
6. The figures of speech used by the shepherd are all of the countryside – flowers blooming, birds singing, the fig tree putteth forth her green figs, the tender grapes on the vine, etc. However, when King Solomon speaks, he usually talks of the city, his elegant court, etc.
7. “Most references to Solomon have the city and palace as background whereas references to the shepherd picture him appropriately in a rural setting. This sharp contrast between the city and the country reinforces the idea that there are two male characters in the drama, not just one” (William MacDonald, *Believer’s Bible Commentary*).
8. “O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely” (2:14).
9. In poetic language the shepherd says the Shulamite is “in the clefts of the rock.” The clefts of the rock speak of our salvation in Christ, the Rock of Ages.
 - “The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust” (Psalm 18:2a).

- “Be thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort: thou hast given commandment to save me; for thou art my rock and my fortress” (Psalm 71:3).

“Rock of Ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee.” – Augustus M. Toplady

“He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock
That shadows a dry, thirsty land;
He hideth my life with the depths of His love,
And covers me there with His hand,
And covers me there with His hand.” – Fanny Crosby

10. “Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes” (2:15). As we have noted, the Shulamite woman’s love for the shepherd was hindered by her family (cf. 1:6).
11. Likewise it is sin in the life of the Christian that hinders fruitfulness for God. Here we see in 2:15 that her brothers wanted her to stay in the vineyard and attend to the little foxes that were spoiling the vines. Little foxes and jackals are known to tear up vines, dig up holes, and spoil the grapes.
12. Hudson Taylor said, “And how numerous the little foxes are! Little compromises with the world, disobedience to the still small voice in little things, little indulgences of the flesh to the neglect of duty, little strokes of policy, doing evil in little things that good may come, and the beauty and the fruitfulness of the vine are sacrificed!” (*Union and Communion*).
13. Harry Ironside wrote, “What are the little foxes that spoil the vine? I can tell you a good many. There are the little foxes of vanity, of pride, of envy, of evil speaking, of impurity (I think this though is a wolf instead of a little fox). Then there are the little foxes of carelessness, of neglect of prayer, of neglect of fellowship with the people of God. These are the things that spoil the vine, that hinder spiritual growth. Deal with them in the light of the cross of Christ; put them to death before they ruin your Christian experience, do not give them any place” (*Addresses on the Song of Solomon*).

III. THE SHULAMITE’S DEVOTION

“My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the lilies” (2:16; cf. 6:3).

1. The Shulamite’s brothers wanted her to stay away from the shepherd, but nevertheless nothing could come between the two of them (2:16, 17).
2. Nothing can come between our soul and the Saviour as long as we are determined to stay faithful to Him.

“Nothing between my soul and the Savior,
Naught of this world's delusive dream;

I have renounced all sinful pleasure;
Jesus is mine, there's nothing between.

Nothing between my soul and the Savior,
So that His blessed face may be seen;
Nothing preventing the least of His favor,
Keep the way clear! Let nothing between.” – Charles Albert
Tindley

3. “Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether” (2:17).
4. “Bether” means “separation.” The rough mountains were difficult to cross and they separated the Shulamite from her beloved. This speaks of the obstacles that kept the two of them apart. The Shulamite’s brothers tried to separate them, but the Shulamite loved her shepherd dearly.
5. “My beloved is mine, and I am his” (2:16a). We are Christ’s because God the Father gave us to Christ. Our Good Shepherd said, “I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. ...My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all” (John 10:14, 29a).
6. “I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine” (John 17:9).

“Each step I take my Saviour goes before me,
And with His loving hand He leads the way.
And with each breath I whisper ‘I adore Thee’;
Oh, what joy to walk with Him each day.
Each step I take I know that He will guide me;
To higher ground He ever leads me on.
Until some day the last step will be taken,
Each step I take just leads me closer home.” – W. Elmo Mercer