

Song of Solomon and the Rapture

By T.W. Tramm

THE biblical book entitled Song of Solomon is described as a collection of poems that beautifully celebrate love.

Jews consider Song of Solomon to have allegorical value in describing the love of God.

Christians, likewise, see allegorical value pertaining to the love between Christ and the Church.

Many eschatologically minded believers, however, see more: a multi-act drama chock-full of rapture types.

The most commonly cited passage in this regard features one of the main characters, a shepherd, coming to gather and spirit away his beloved, a Shulammite/Gentile maid:

“The voice of my beloved! Behold, he comes leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag. Behold, he stands behind our wall; he is looking through the windows, gazing through the lattice. My beloved spoke, and said to me: ‘Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away’ (Song 2:8-10).

Let’s break the passage down.

In verse 8, the phrase, “Behold, he comes,” evokes the similar phrase, “Behold, He is coming with the clouds,” connected to Jesus’ return (Rev. 1:7).

In the same verse, the shepherd’s approach is characterized as being swift, “like a gazelle or young stag, skipping upon the hills.” Swift or sudden is how the Bible characterizes the Lord’s coming at the end of the age (Matt. 24:27; Rev. 16:15; 1 Thess. 5:3).

That the shepherd is said to be behind a “wall ... looking through the windows,” is suggestive of one coming from a separate realm, i.e., heaven, through a door or window. The Bible frequently uses the analogy of a door or window as an entry point into heaven: “Behold, a door was opened in heaven,” or “I will open the windows of heaven for you” (Rev. 4:1; Mal. 3:10).

“Gazing through the lattice” suggests the shepherd’s being partially concealed, as one imagines the Lord will appear upon His return in the clouds (Luke 21:27; Rev. 1:7).

Finally, as the shepherd arrives to gather his beloved, he utters the phrase, "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away."

The language recalls rapture/resurrection verses in which the Lord says, "Come up here," and, "Your dead... shall arise," (Rev. 4:1; Isa. 26:19).

Allowing that Song 2 points typologically to the Rapture, we come to the second half of the passage and a series of clues about the timing of the shepherd's coming:

"For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. The fig tree puts forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grapes give a good smell" (Song 2:11-13).

Clearly the spring and possibly summer are being indicated. A study of Israel's climate and agriculture shows May through June to be the likeliest months.

The question is: Are these seasonal references merely aesthetic, a felicitous backdrop for the romantic exchange between the shepherd and his beloved? Or are they, rather, a hint at the season in which the Good Shepherd known as Jesus will come and say to His bride: "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away"?