



Fragrance of Memories from a Pouch of Myrrh, SOS 1:13; "The" Program is Bible Class; the Shulammite's Jeshimon & Engedi Oasis, 1:14

SOS 1:13 -[SW] "My beloved is to me a pouch of myrrh which lies all night between my breasts."

1. For those who are budding perverts but short on grammar please note it is not the Shepherd that lies all night between the Shulammite's breasts but a "pouch of myrrh."
2. The Shepherd is compared to this pouch of perfume. As noted in our brief look at perfumes in the ancient world the ladies were big users of these herbs and oils.
3. Part of their nighttime preparations for bed was to wear a necklace from which was attached this pouch of perfume. Its contents consisted of aromatic mixtures made from "sap, bark, flower, and root."
4. It was discovered that by wearing these sweet smelling preparations between the breasts they resulted in the entire body taking on its aroma the next day.
5. This sweet smell was pleasant to the woman and to those with whom she associated.
6. In her analogy, the Shulammite compares the sweet smell of her perfume pouch to the fragrance of memories she has of the Shepherd stored in the "memory pouch" of her soul.
7. This sweet smell is also applicable to her inventory of doctrine which is also stored there. It is one's capacity to remember doctrine under pressure that enables him to move through trials and testings with poise and grace.
8. The important point made here is that the Word of God is the greatest sweet fragrance of them all. Without principles of biblical wisdom, children are left without any ability to deal with the challenges they confront in today's corrupt culture.
9. The tragedy that faces the next generation is its spin-off from mainline Protestant Christianity. The sad fact is that it is not a bad idea. The Gospel has been so distorted by Protestant denominations that there is no need for young people to attend the church since unbelievers cannot grow in grace.
10. Further, even if the Gospel is accurately presented no doctrine is being taught therefore there is no desire to stay around just to be involved in programs that do not address the day's critical and challenging issues.
11. I recently received an e-mail that contained a blurb for a book written by Ray Comfort entitled *How to Bring Your Children to Christ & Keep them There: Avoiding the Tragedy of False Conversion*. Without documentation the following quote is used, "Eighty-eight percent of children raised in evangelical homes leave church at the age of eighteen never to return."
12. Not only is there no source for the quote but the phrase "never to return" is hyperbole. Who knows if they will *never* return? Yet even if this is an overstatement the trend is probably true. Mainline churches stress entertainment of the youth rather than teaching them doctrine.
13. Parents demand and gutless preachers comply with the notion that "programs" are the be-all and end-all of a child's spiritual life. There is presentation of biblical information but there is little instruction in how to live the Christian way of life.



14. The “program” that children need beyond the obvious requirement of an accurate presentation of the Gospel is instruction in the basic doctrines of the Christian faith which prepares them to then learn the advanced doctrines of the Bible.
15. I have noticed that only a minority of the young people who attend this church up to college age stay with doctrine. The oddity is that those who have doctrine choose to opt for churches with programs while those who are products of these programs opt to leave church altogether.
16. What they all need is the fragrance of memories of doctrine in their souls.
17. For the Shulammite, her Shepherd is in her soul along with the doctrine she needs to deal with the king. The “pouch of myrrh” is therefore symbolic of her devotion to her two right men: the Shepherd who is to be her earthly husband and the Lord Jesus Christ Who is her future heavenly Bridegroom.

SOS 1:14 - [SW] “My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blossoms in the vineyards of Engedi \en-ged' אֵן.”

1. The Shulammite again uses aromas to describe the presence of the Shepherd in her soul.
2. They again present the idea of divine protection in the midst of testing. The geographical context of her statement is literally a picture of a concept we developed several years ago when we studied how the desert of the Oklahoma Panhandle and northwestern New Mexico presented challenges and difficulties to the pioneers who traveled the Cimarron Cutoff of the Santa Fé Trail.
3. This trek provided a shortcut from Cimarron, Kansas, to Fort Union, New Mexico, but its barren landscape, especially the eastern sixty miles of it, provided little opportunity for water and those who chose to take this route knew they must traverse the course rapidly or be caught in a potentially desperate circumstance.
4. This area was referred to by the Spanish phrase *Jornada del Muerto* which literally means “journey of death,” an apt description of this waterless stretch of desert country and the challenges it presented.
5. We adapted the term *Jornada* to illustrate those occasions when a believer faces the trials and testings of the devil’s world. If he doesn’t have the water of doctrine flowing in his soul then these circumstances can become a figurative *Jornada del Muerto*.
6. Without doctrine available for recall the believer is faced with the intractable chore of crossing his spiritual *Jornada* without the wisdom necessary to endure it.
7. The Shulammite’s reference to henna blossoms indicates her recognition her own personal *Jornada* that she can only endure by having within her soul both the Word of God and her right man.
8. “Henna blossoms” makes reference to shrubbery that was found in the desert oasis of Engedi, located on the west central shore of the Dead Sea.
9. Engedi is located in the middle of the Judean Wilderness which stretches along a sixty-by-ten-mile area between the Dead Sea and the hill country of Judah. This area is referred to by the term Jeshimon \jesh' i-mon\:

יְשִׁמוֹן **Yeshimōn** - Desert, wilderness, wasteland, desolation.



Rasmussen, Carl G. *Zondervan NIV Atlas of the Bible.* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1989), 42-43:

The Judean Wilderness is a rectangular strip approximately 60 miles long and 10 miles wide, sandwiched between the crest of the hills of Judah and the Rift Valley. Its northern limit is 5.5 miles north of Jericho. Its southern border is the southern end of the Dead Sea.

The major topographical feature of the region is the steep descent from the Judean mountain ridge (3,000 feet above sea level) to the surface of the Dead Sea (1,210 feet below sea level). In some places this means a descent of 4,300 feet over a horizontal distance of only 10 miles. It is not a smooth incline but looks rather like a series of steps descending into the Rift Valley. The final "step" down is the most pronounced and consists of limestone cliffs 350 to 1,300 feet high, stretching along the length of the western shore of the Dead Sea.

More than half of the Wilderness area receives less than 8 inches of rain per year. The scarcity of rain and the geology of the area make it impossible to grow crops here. As a result, the Judean Wilderness is a desolate variegated landscape of plateaus, rounded hills, dramatic scarps, deep canyons, and cliffs.

The only major springs are located in the northern section of the Judean Wilderness; the central and southern sections are practically devoid of fresh-water supplies. It is no wonder, then, that this rocky, chalky, dry, and desolate region is called the "Jeshimon," the "waste" or the "desert" place.

The major roads through the Judean Wilderness all began at the large water sources located in the Rift Valley: the springs of Jericho, Ein Feshkha, and En Gedi.

10. It is in the Jeshimon's climate that Engedi is located and is the site of the southernmost spring in the Judean Wilderness:

Blaiklock, Edward M. and R. K. Harrison (gen. eds.). *The New International Dictionary of Biblical Archaeology.* (Grand Rapids: Regency Reference Library, 1983), 180:

EN GEDI (Hebrew עֵיֶן-גִּדִּי 'en-gedi). "The name meaning spring of the goat," designated an important source of fresh water on the West of the Dead Sea about 35 miles from Jerusalem. The location of the oasis made it possible to produce semitropical vegetation such as palm trees, vineyards, and balsam. One of the discoveries of the large Israeli program of excavation in 1961 was evidence of a perfume industry based on the balsam tree. The balsam, as both Pliny and Josephus say, was common in the area.

NET Bible. 1st Beta Edition. (Dallas: Biblical Studies Press, 2001), 1196:

² **sn [study notes].** *En-Gedi* is a lush oasis in the midst of the desert wilderness on the southwestern shore of the Dead Sea region. The surrounding region is hot and bleak; its dry sands extend monotonously for miles. The Dead Sea region is a salty desert covered with a dusty haze and characterized by almost unbearable heat during most of the year. The lush oasis of En-Gedi is the only sign of greenery or life for miles around. It stands out as a surprising contrast to the bleak, dry desert wilderness around it. In the midst of this bleak desert wilderness is the lush oasis in which indescribable beauty is found. The lush oasis and waterfall brings welcome relief and refreshment to the weary desert traveler.

11. Henna blossoms are among the flora found in Engedi and the Shulammitte compares their clusters to the presence in her soul of the Shepherd:

NET Bible, 1196:

¹ **sn [study notes].** The henna plant is an inflorescent shrub with upward pointing blossoms, that have sweet smelling whitish flowers that grow in thick clusters. Like myrrh, the henna plant was used to make sweet smelling perfume.

Myers, Allen C. (ed.). *The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary.* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987), 480:



HENNA. A shrub with dark-colored bark, light green leaves that are slender and oblong, and long clusters of white flowers having a strong fragrance. In the ancient Near East henna was the "bride's flower," and because of its fragrance it was often kept in houses or worn by women.

12. From this research we can now derive the meaning of the Shulammite's comment, "My beloved is like a cluster of henna blossoms in the vineyards of Engedi":
 1. The Shulammite considers Solomon's chamber to be a bleak environment and compares it to the environs of Engedi.
 2. In other words, Solomon's tent is her Jeshimon or *Jornada* which she must endure with the water of the Word she has circulating in her soul.
 3. Engedi with its consistent supply of fresh water in the midst of a desert wilderness becomes the illustration of the Shulammite's circumstance in the wilderness of Solomon's Jeshimon.
 4. The henna blossoms are compared to the Shepherd. They are the beautiful flowers used by the perfumers in Engedi to make the sweet-smelling scents that were worn by the ladies of the ancient world.
 5. She has already mentioned her perfume giving off its fragrance in verse 12. The perfume illustrates her inventory of doctrine while its fragrance speaks of those doctrines the Holy Spirit brings into her conscious mind.
 6. Her occupation with her Shepherd is a picture of the believer's occupation with Christ, the ultimate problem-solving device of the Church Age.
 7. She then compared the Shepherd with the "pouch of myrrh" that lies between her breasts. This is symbolic of the fragrance of memories of the Shepherd that she constantly recalls in the face of Solomon's advances.
 8. In verse 14 the Shulammite compares the Shepherd to the henna blossoms of Engedi. These shrubs were prominent around the vineyards of Engedi and their sweet smell provided an aroma that was in stark contrast to the bleak surroundings of the oasis.
 9. Therefore, this reference is a very subtle retort to Solomon. The Shulammite has implied that the king is a desert wasteland to her but that the sweet savor of her Shepherd Lover in her soul provides for her with the courage and confidence she needs to endure the test.
 10. In verse 6 the Shulammite has described her sexuality as "her vineyard." Here in verse 14 the henna blossoms are in the vineyards of Engedi.
 11. Engedi is symbolic of the Shulammite, the vineyards are again an illustration of her sexuality which is status-quo virgin, and the henna blossoms represent her reveries of her Shepherd Lover.
 12. The presence of the Shepherd in her soul becomes a protection for her even though her "vineyard" is being threatened by the king of Israel.
13. Recall of doctrine under pressure provides the capacity to endure the *Jornadas of cosmos diabolicus*. As the Shulammite was protected by her occupation with the Shepherd so also is the believer protected by occupation with Christ.
14. Even though the Shulammite has figuratively drawn a line in the sand under Solomon's tent, he, in arrogance, considers himself to have made progress with his benign pick-up lines so he undaunted fires another:



SOS 1:15 - [KS: Pick-Up Line #4] “How beautiful you are my love, how beautiful you are. Your eyes are like doves.”