THE MEANING OF DESIRE (תשוקה) IN GENESIS 3:16; 4:7; AND SONG 7:10[11]

ABSTRACT

The Old Testament describes a change in relationship between man and woman after humanity sinned in the Garden of Eden. The nature and implications of this change hinge on the interpretation of Gen 3:16 and, specifically, the meaning of תשוקה—the "desire" of a wife. Definitions of this word have inadequately harmonized its three uses (Gen 3:16; 4:7; Song 7:10[11]). A sexual interpretation fails to explain Gen 4:7, and those who believe the woman's desire is to "rule, possess authority" over her husband have failed to reconcile their interpretation with Song 7:10[11]. Definitions like "inclination," "turn/return," "movement toward," "basic instinct," or "preoccupation, devotion" fail to nuance the nature of the motion. An exegetical and structural analysis of all three passages reveals the nature of the motion concerns authority and submission. The Song of Songs employs city and military imagery to illustrate the sexual act—the female is the city whom the male conquers. After humanity sinned, intimacy was tainted by selfishness which destroyed the manner of this union. A structural and exegetical analysis of Song 5:2–8:4 teaches an Old Testament theology of intimacy which includes a sexually assertive wife who desires and initiates (Song 7:11–13[12–14]) the loving (Song 2:5) and peaceful (Song 8:10) rule of her husband over (על) her (Song 7:10[11]). The section begins in Song 5:2 with the wife's refusal for intimacy which puts the couple at war in Song 6. In Song 7, the couple recovers the original order of creation for intimacy. This interpretation of Song 7:10[11] harmonizes the three uses of תשוקה.

Keywords:

The meaning of תשוקה has been vigorously debated in recent years. Meanings range from a dependence,[1] obedience,[2] desire to control,[3] turning,[4] or various levels of longing, attractiveness, or sexual desire.[5] Discussions circle around textual criticism issues, etymology and philology, history of interpretation, hermeneutics, exegesis of narrative (Gen 3:16; 4:7) and poetry (Song 7:10[11]), intertextual studies, and theology. This paper acknowledges these issues but focuses on an exegesis of the Song of Songs arguing that תשוקה includes the idea of submission to authority. Part of the woman's judgment in Gen 3:16 concerns her "desire, inclination, or preoccupation" to rule over her husband; sin similarly seeks to rule over Cain in Gen 4:7; and the female lover of the Song of Songs recreates God's original design for intimacy by submitting to her husband's loving and peaceful rule over her in Song 7:10[11]. In Song 5, the wife rules over her husband by refusing to have sex with him. Song 6 teaches that a wife's beauty (Song 6:5–7) awakens her husband's sexual desire (Song 1:9) which she alone can fulfill in their exclusive union (Song 6:9). With this power, the woman could fight against her husband (Song 6:4, 10)

[1] Phyllis A Bird, "'Bone of My Bone and Flesh of My Flesh,'" *Theology Today* 50, no. 4 (January 1994): 527; S. R Driver, *The Book of Genesis: With Introduction and Notes*, 3d ed. (London: Methuen, 1904), 49.

[2] Abraham ben Meïr Ibn Ezra, H. Norman Strickman, and Arthur M. Silver, *Ibn Ezra's Commentary on the Pentateuch* (New York: Menorah, 1988), 73.

[3] Susan T Foh, "What Is the Woman's Desire," *The Westminster Theological Journal* 37, no. 3 (1975): 382; Richard S Hess, "The Roles of the Woman and the Man in Genesis 3," *Themelios* 18, no. 3 (April 1993): 17; Victor Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1–17*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 201–2; Derek Kidner, *Genesis*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries 1 (Downer's Grove, ILL: Intervarsity Press, 1967), 71.

[4] Joel N Lohr, "Sexual Desire?: Eve, Genesis 3:16 and Tshwḳh [Unpointed Hebrew Characters]," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 130, no. 2 (2011): 245; Janson C Condren, "Toward a Purge of the Battle of the Sexes and 'Return' for the Original Meaning of Genesis 3:16b," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 60, no. 2 (June 2017): 244.

[5] Irvin A Busenitz, "Woman's Desire for Man: Genesis 3:16 Reconsidered," *Grace Theological Journal* 7, no. 2 (1986): 212; Anne Lapidus Lerner, *Eternally Eve: Images of Eve in the Hebrew Bible, Midrash, and Modern Jewish Poetry*, ed. Shulamit Reinharz, HBI series on Jewish women (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2007), 112; Abi Doukhan, "The Woman's Curse: A Redemptive Reading of Genesis 3:16," *Religions* 11, no. 11 (November 2020): 6; Gordon Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), 81; Lerner, *Eternally Eve*, 112; Adrien J Bledstein, "Are Women Cursed in Genesis 3:16: Feminist Companion to Genesis," in *A Feminist Companion to Genesis* (Sheffield, Eng, 1993), 145; Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis*, trans. Mark E. Biddle, Mercer Library of Biblical Studies (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997), 21.

like the Gen 3:16 judgment, or recreate the Garden of Eden by awakening his desire to sexually rule over her (Song 7:10–13[11–14]).

I. THE ETYMOLOGY AND HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION OF תשוקה

Determining the meaning of תשוקה based on etymology and philology has produced varying speculative explanations, often with only minute semantic differences.[6] Bledstein argues that תשוקה derives from the Akkadian *kuzbu* which, she says, "may mean 'desirable' or 'allure' instead of 'desire.'"[7] HALOT explains that תשוקה means, "desire, longing" (HALOT, 4:1802) and it derives from שׁוק II that corresponds to the Arabic *šāqa(w)* meaning, "to fill with longing, desire, craving" (HALOT, 4:1448). Rabin believes תשוקה derives from שקק (to crave) and attributes the rise of the meaning "desire" to the Mishnaic period. He explains that תשוקה was used rarely during the Mishnaic period and when it was used, it was also associated with תאוה (desire) or השתוקק (to crave).[8] Macintosh challenges the meaning "desire" on philological grounds, "It is very doubtful whether the Arabic root شاق / *šūq* is cognate with Hebrew שׁוק, for, as is well known, the isogloss of Hebrew *šīn* is Arabic *śín*."[9] He then argues that the "Arabic root ساق (و *sūq*) is familiar to many in its nominal form *sūq* meaning a 'market'."[10] The nominal form of *sūq* means "market" and the verbal form *sūq* means "to drive" because people "drive" (e.g. goods, cattle) their commodities to the market.[11] Macintosh notes that BDB and Gesenius agree

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[6] Busenitz evaluation that etymological studies are unhelpful continues to ring true, Busenitz, "Woman's Desire for Man," 203.

[7] Bledstein, "Are Women Cursed in Genesis 3," 143.

[8] Rabin writes,

"המשמעות תאוה מופיעה בדברי חזייל המלה תשוקה לא היתה נהודה בלשון חזייל כמלה חפשית אך קשרו אותה בפעל השתוקק" [The meaning 'lust' appears in Mishnaic Hebrew. The word תשוקה was not common in Mishnaic Hebrew as a free-standing word, but it was associated with the verb, 'to crave.' I think that this verb belongs to the same root as שקק,"], תרביץ לג, "זוטות אטימולוגיות," חיים רבין, no. 16–115 :(1963) ב.

[9] Andrew Alexander Macintosh, "The Meaning of Hebrew תשׁוקה," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 61, no. 2 (2016): 380.

[10] Ibid., 381.

[11] Ibid.

that תשוקה derives from *sūq* meaning, "to drive." The semantic distinction between desire, desirable, or drive is slight and unhelpful.

Rabin, however, also agrees that תשוקה derives from the Arabic *sūq*, but he nuances the meaning, "to lead" (להוביל) and "one who submits to the king's discipline (מי שסר למשמעתו של מלך).[12] Rabin's definition is similar to Macintosh's—*lead* the submissive and *drive* the obstinate. Just as a king leads his people, so also does the farmer lead (or drive) the cattle to market. Rabin's etymological analysis supports the argument here—תשוקה concerns subordination to authority, but the broad semantic range of the Arabic *sūq* as a determining factor for the meaning of תשוקה is extremely speculative.

The historical interpretation of תשוקה is equally speculative and unhelpful. Lohr claims a historical analysis that spans from the LXX translation ἀποστροφή through the church fathers supports translating תשוקה "return." He tests the meaning "return" by the Dead Sea Scrolls usage and argues that "turning" or "return" works well in all clearly attested uses.[13] Macintosh, however, disagrees and posits that "return," "simply does not fit [1QM 13:12] whereas the meaning posited for the biblical תשוקה above, i.e. 'preoccupation, concern' does so precisely."[14] The evidence, however, is inconclusive. Whether Belial's spirits have a "desire for darkness," "preoccupation with darkness," or "return to darkness" in 1QM 13:12 is difficult to distinguish. Ones who have a desire or preoccupation with a certain location tend to *go* in that direction. The semantic distinction between the words inclination,[15] desire,[16] turning (Lohr), or preoccupation (Macintosh) is too slight to make a strong argument for one over the other.

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[12] רבין, "זוטות אטימולוגיות," 116.
[13] Lohr, "Sexual Desire?," 240–44.
[14] Macintosh, "Meaning 378 ",תשׁוקה.
[15] Géza Vermès, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), 177.
[16] James Hamilton Charlesworth, ed., *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek Texts with English Translations*, Princeton Theological Seminary Dead Sea Scrolls Project 2 (Tübingen, Germany: J.C.B.

How the church fathers and rabbis have interpreted Gen 3:16 is equally dubious and debated by scholars yielding multiple speculative historical assessments based on fragmentary information. Lohr notes how the LXX, Peshitta, several Targumim, and several church fathers translated תשוקה as "turning" or "return."[17] He concludes that "for ancient interpreters and writers, תשוקה and תשובה had an overlapping semantic range."[18] Macintosh, however, interacts with several rabbinic sources and articulates a different historical reconstruction.

Macintosh and Lohr's explanation of Jerome's interpretation of תשוקה illustrates the historiographers challenge in reconstructing a translator's *interpretation* of a text. Jerome's translation is particularly insightful because, Lohr explains, "it is believed to be a translation of the Hebrew."[19] Lohr explains:

> Of particular interest is Jerome's decision to render all three biblical instances of תשוקה differently. In Gen 3:16 he uses phrasing that indicates not "turning" or "desire" but the *submission* of the woman to the man. It states *et sub viri potestate eris*, meaning "and *under the power* of your husband you will be." This then dovetails into his translation of the following line: the man will "have dominion" over the woman (*et ipse dominabitur tui*). In Gen 4:7, however, Jerome uses the *appetitus*, indicating an "attack," a "longing," or a "grasping at." In Canticles, however, Jerome translates the term *conversion*, signifying a "turning" or "return." If *appetitus* were indeed the closest of the terms to תשוקה, indicating a type of desire, we might have expected Jerome to employ it in the sexually charged Canticles passage as well, which he does not. Whatever the case, in Gen 3:16 the matter is further complicated in that Jerome discusses the passage in his later *Quaestiones Hebraicae in Genesim*, where he uses the term *conversio* and makes no mention of his translation. Coupled with negative comments toward women in Jerome's other writings, this suggests to some a misogynist tendency in Jerome's Vulgate ("under the power of your husband you will be"). Jane Barr, for instance, argues that Jerome's otherwise faithful renderings in the Vulgate appear most slanted and inaccurate in matters pertaining to women.[20]

Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1995), 123; Michael Owen Wise, Martin G. Abegg, and Edward M. Cook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation*, Rev. (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2005), 160.

[17] Lohr, "Sexual Desire?" *passim.*

[18] Ibid., 245.

[19] Ibid., 233.

[20] Ibid., 233–34.

Lohr, unfortunately, agrees with Jane Barr's misogynistic evaluation of Jerome and marginalizes his translation. Macintosh challenges Lohr's historical reconstruction on two points. First, Lohr's argument that if Jerome understood תשוקה to mean "desire" then one would expect him to translate Song 7:10[11] with *appetitus*. Macintosh presents a different reason, "Jerome is known to have been greatly impressed by Origen's allegorical treatment of Canticles and his *conversio*, though a literal equivalent of ἐπιστροφή, may, perhaps, suggest a term indicative of Christ's turning to, i.e., choosing his church (or the Christian soul), rather than of the LXX's straightforward ἐπιστροφή, of the lover's turning to his love."[21] Considering the ubiquitous allegorical interpretation of the Song by the church fathers and the rabbis, one should question the value of historical sources of Song 7:10[11]. While Macintosh's historical reconstruction seems more compelling, the point being made here is that reconstructing a historical interpretation can be very speculative.

Macintosh's second challenge to Lohr illustrates the fragmentary and speculative nature of historiography. Lohr incorrectly labels Jerome's interpretation of Gen 3:16 as misogynistic. Macintosh notes that Ibn Ezra translated Gen 3:16 as obedience and "Jerome appears to take a similar view of the matter, rendering וְאֶל־אִישֵׁךְ תְּשׁוּקָתֵךְ 'you will be under your husband's authority (*sub viri potestate eris*)."[22] Macintosh lists additional rabbinic sources that interpret Gen 3:16 in this way. Could Jerome have been influenced by the rabbis[23] and understood תשוקה to mean a "desire, inclination, preoccupation, turning" to rule over her husband and then translated it, like Ibn Ezra, in an applicatory sense—"obey your husband"? The fragmentary

[21] Macintosh, "Meaning 77–367 ",תשׁוקה.
[22] Ibid., 370.
[23] Walter C. Kaiser, *Tough Questions about God and His Actions in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2015), 143.

history of interpretation concerning תשוקה makes determining the meaning of תשוקה based on historical grounds very speculative.

Lohr and Macintosh's historical, lexical, philological, and etymological analyses of תשוקה contain helpful information, but their analyses in the end do not help explain the meaning of תשוקה in Gen 3:16; 4:7; or Song 7:10[11]. Lohr concludes, "With תשוקה there is a strong movement toward, perhaps of an impelling nature, returning someone (or thing) to where he or she (or it) belonged, perhaps for refuge or to one's origins, or even for destruction or in the sense that the returning is final."[24] Similarly, Macintosh concludes, "On the evidence of comparative philology and of the ancient versions, 'concern, preoccupation, (single-minded) devotion, focus', appears to be more likely."[25] The semantic difference between "desire," Lohr's "strong movement toward, perhaps of an impelling nature," or Macintosh's "preoccupation, devotion, focus" is slight. All of these meanings simply beg the question concerning the nature of the "desire, strong movement toward, or preoccupation." Foh could theoretically simply change the verb when she states, "The woman has the same sort of desire [strong movement or preoccupation] for her husband that sin has for Cain, a desire [strong movement or preoccupation] to possess or control him."[26] Data from diachronic word studies should be held loosely.[27]

Historically, Ibn Ezra and Jerome may have interpretively *applied* Gen 3:16 in terms of obedience (מִשְׁמַעַת). Their application, however, read the disharmony between man and woman back into the garden of Eden. The garden was not a place of "obedience," it was a place of peace.

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[24] Lohr, "Sexual Desire?," 245.

[25] Macintosh, "Meaning 385 ",תשׁוקה.

[26] Foh, "What Is the Woman's Desire," 381.

[27] Walton agrees, "(1) Usage determines meaning . . . (2) The history or constituent parts of a word are not reliable guides to meaning," John H. Walton, *Genesis*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 227.

No obedience was needed in the Garden of Eden. Edenic life involved two people living in the way of wisdom—"one flesh" walking together in the same direction without conflict. The man never told his wife what to do because she always did what sinless perfection would do. The Song of Songs seeks to recreate the Garden of Eden, this place of peace, and teaches the reader the way to find it.

This article agrees with Rabin that all three uses of תשוקה concern subordination to authority.[28] This subordination is not a conquest, but an "order of creation" kind of submission. Ibn Janah may have captured the idea in his Hebrew-Arabic *Book of the Hebrew Roots*.[29] Macintosh compares Ibn Ezra and Ibn Janah's views and explains,

> Another rabbinic authority, Ibn Janah, in his *Book of the Hebrew Roots*, compares Cant. 7:11 with this phrase [you will be under your husband's authority] and proposes a rendering which is not unlike Ibn Ezra's, but is not exactly the same. He uses the term أنقيا د (*inqiyād*) denoting 'compliance', derived from the VIIth theme of قو ر (*qwd*) 'to be led, guided, follow, obey, yield, submit'. The translation is, perhaps, rather more subtle and nuanced than those of Ibn Ezra and Jerome, and may indicate an aspect of a woman's and a man's (cf. Cant. 7:11) devotion in love; it is a devotion intended and willingly offered.[30]

The Edenic relationship between man and woman was one of devoted love that was willingly offered to the other person. This Edenic love is accomplished not through the striving of either party to dominate or control the other, but through the submission of both parties to the order of creation. An exegetical and intertextual analysis of the three uses of תשוקה support this interpretation. First it will be demonstrated that all three uses of תשוקה must be harmonized. Second, תשוקה in Gen 3:16 and 4:7 is something undesirable. Third, an exegesis of all three passages supports the idea of one party submitting to another party.

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[28] רבין, "זוטות אטימולוגיות," 114–17.
[29] Ibn Janah, *The Book of Hebrew Roots* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1875).
[30] Macintosh, "Meaning of תשוקה," 370.

II. HARMONIZING THE THREE USES OF תשוקה

Proponents of the sexual desire interpretation emphasize the connection to Song 7:10[11] but discard or marginalize Gen 4:7.[31] Similarly, proponents of the "power to control" view emphasize the connection to Gen 4:7 but jettison or dismiss Song 7:10[11].[32] The three uses of תשוקה must possess some common meaning.

1. Correspondence Between Genesis 3:16 and Genesis 4:7

Genesis 3:16 is too grammatically and syntactically parallel and closely connected (separated by only fifteen verses) to Gen 4:7 to be discarded. Correspondences between Gen 3:16 and 4:7 have been regularly noted.[33] Foh noted that the Hebrew was "the same, except for appropriate changes in person and gender."[34]

Table 1: Correspondence Between Gen 3:16; 4:7

3:16	ואל־אישך	תשוקתך	והוא	ימשל־בך
4:7	ואליך	תשוקתו	ואתה	תמשל־בו

Eve's תשׁוקה for her husband corresponds in some way to whatever "his/its" תשׁוקה is for Cain.

Busenitz rejects Gen 4:7 as an interpretive key to Gen 3:16 but concedes,

> It is readily admitted that there are some noteworthy similarities between Gen 4:7 and Gen 3:16. Both are given in a context of divine judgment. Both come from the hand of the same writer. Both employ similar terminology. It is true that 'the proximity of

[31] For example, Busenitz goes to great lengths discussing the interpretive challenges in Gen 4:7 and then argues that the clearer Song 7:10 should be used to interpret Gen 3:16, failing to even provide an interpretation of Gen 4:7, "The true difficulty, then, is not understanding the meaning of 'desire' as used in Cant 7:10[11] and Gen 3:16, but as it is used in Gen 4:7. . . . To grant Gen 4:7 in its obscurity a determinative role in the interpretation of Gen 3:16 without permitting the clarity of Cant 7:10[11] to permeate the exegetical process is to abandon hermeneutical discernment and propriety," Busenitz, "Woman's Desire for Man," 211.

[32] Foh, for example, reserves to a footnote, "Because the context of Song of Solomon 7:10 is ambiguous, it is not possible to determine the precise meaning of תשוקה in this case. We shall only suggest that the meaning of 'desire' proposed in this article is credible in Song of Solomon 7:10. Note that the immediate context is that of possession: 'I am my beloved's . . . ,'" Foh, "What Is the Woman's Desire," 379 n. 19.

[33] Hamilton, *Genesis 1–17*, 201; Walton, *Genesis*, 228; Kenneth Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 251; Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 94; Allen P Ross, *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of the Book of Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988), 146–47.

[34] Foh, "What Is the Woman's Desire," 380.

> Genesis 4:7 to Genesis 3:16 suggests that a similar grammatical construction would have similar meaning.' But since Gen 4:7 is besieged with interpretive uncertainties, it ought not to be applied unreservedly to interpret Gen 3:16.

While recognizing the similarities between Gen 3:16; 4:7, Busenitz rejects using Gen 4:7 as an interpretive guide to Gen 3:16, "While there are linguistic and thematic parallels between [Gen 4:7] and Gen 3:16, there are also differences."[35] He unconvincingly seeks to disassociate Gen 4:7 from 3:16 and prefers using Song 7:10[11] to interpret Gen 3:16 instead. Busentiz fails to provide even a valid translation of Gen 4:7. Condren follows a similar tactic, "My point here is not to defend any one position on 4:7 but to insist it is not the rock-solid interpretive key to 3:16 that it is often made out to be."[36] The sexual interpretation of תשׁוקה, however, cannot be read into Gen 4:7 regardless of the interpretive decisions. The similarities between Gen 3:16 and 4:7 are too pronounced, and any viable interpretation of תשוקה must reconcile both passages.

2. Correspondence Between Genesis 3:16 and Song 7:10

Similarly, the Song of Songs idealizes *Edenic* love. Attempts to disassociate Song 7:10[11] from Gen 3:16 should likewise be rejected. In Song 1:14–17, the lovers unite in a Garden of Eden kind of environment. In Song 2:10–13 the male lover entreats the female lover to "take yourself" out of the house and into the garden of blossoming springtime.[37] In Song 7:11–13[12–14], the female lover propositions the male lover in a Garden of Eden kind of setting. Song 7:12[13] emphasizes the location (שם) of love—outside in a garden.[38] Trible, Landy, and others have produced compelling analyses of the Song's relationship to the Garden of Eden.[39] Davidson correctly

[35] Busenitz, "Woman's Desire for Man," 208.

[36] Condren, "Toward a Purge," 234.

[37] Keel agrees, "The content of 7:11–12 (12–13) is reminiscent of 2:10–13, although the similarities have limits," Othmar Keel, *The Song of Songs*, Continental Commentaries (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 254.

[38] Keel also makes the connection to Song 1:16–17, "The lovers of 7:11–12 (12–13) wanted to go into the fields to be together undisturbed. Like 1:16–17, this text envisions making love in the open," Ibid.

[39] Phyllis Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, Overtures to Biblical Theology 2 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978), 159–60; Phyllis Trible, "Depatriarchalizing in Biblical Interpretation," *Journal of the American*

writes, “Several recent studies have penetratingly analyzed and conclusively demonstrated the intimate relationship between the early chapters of Genesis and the Song of Songs. In the ‘symphony of love,’ begun in Eden but gone awry after the fall, The Song constitutes ‘love’s lyrics redeemed.’”[40] The climactic statement comes in Song 7:10[11] when the female lover states, “ועלי תשוקתו.” Keel correctly notes, “Cant. 7:10 (11) seems to relate directly to Gen. 3:16.”[41] Trible notes, “Perhaps the Paradise described in Genesis 2 and destroyed in Genesis 3 has been regained, expanded, and improved upon in the Song of Songs.”[42] Landy articulates, “In the Song of Songs love is protected from society and returns to origins.”[43] Song 7:10[11] represents the reordered love—love the way God designed it in the Garden of Eden. Divorcing Song 7:10[11] from Gen 3:16 represents an intertextual incongruity.

III. תשוקה IN GENESIS 3:16 AND 4:7 IS SOMETHING UNDESIRABLE

Proponents of the sexual interpretation argue that without Gen 4:7, an adversarial interpretation of Gen 3:16 fails. Condren, for example, writes, “Without [Gen 4:7], there is absolutely no reason to infer that the woman’s desire is adversarial. In fact, the closest parallel to 3:16 becomes the affectionate use of תשׁוקה in the male-female relationship of Song 7:10[11].[44] Condren has misunderstood Song 7:10[11] and read his misinterpretation back into Gen 3:16. Song 7:10[11] communicates the return to the Garden of Eden from where they were expelled in Gen 3:16.

Academy of Religion 41, no. 1 (March 1973): 30–48; Francis Landy, “The Song of Songs and the Garden of Eden,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 98, no. 4 (December 1979): 513–528; Francis Landy, *Paradoxes of Paradise: Identity and Difference in the Song of Songs*, 2d ed. (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011); Daniel J Estes, “The Song of Songs,” in *Ecclesiastes & the Song of Songs*, Apollos Old Testament Commentary 16 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2010), 397; Richard S. Hess, *Song of Songs*, Baker Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 224.

[40] Richard M. Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), 552.

[41] Keel, *The Song of Songs*, 252.

[42] Trible, “Depatriarchalizing in Biblical Interpretation,” 42.

[43] Landy, “The Song of Songs and the Garden of Eden,” 513.

[44] Condren, “Toward a Purge,” 231.

Trible explains, "The woman says, 'I am my lover's and for me is his desire' (7:10). Her use of the word *desire* (*tᵉšûqâ*) echoes, in contrast, the divine judgment upon the first woman: 'Your desire [*tᵉšûqâ*] shall be for your man, but he shall rule over you.'"[45] Trible, however, interprets תשוקה in Gen 3:16 as something positive, "The man (*hā-'ādām*) turned against the woman and betrayed her to God (3:12). Yet, according to God, she still yearns for the original unity of male and female: 'for your man [*'îš*] is your desire [*tᵉšûqâ*].' Alas, however, union is no more; one flesh is split. The man will not reciprocate the woman's desire; instead, he will rule over her." Trible's feminist interpretation, however, fails. It makes an intertextual error by connecting the man's תשוקה in Song 7:10[11] to the man's rule (משל) in Gen 3:16. In the Song, the female lover recreates the Garden of Eden by refusing to relate to her man according to the judgment of Gen 3:16. Instead, she submits to the order of creation and recognizes her husband's תשוקה over (על) her. This creates peace—the theme of the Song of Songs.[46] Trible is correct, "*Desire* in the Song of Songs reverses this meaning of the male-female relationship."[47] But she incorrectly connects the man's desire (תשוקה) in Song 7:10 to his rule (משל) in Gen 3:16. The male's desire (תשוקה) in Song 7:10[11] reflects the Edenic creation order; whereas, the woman's desire (תשוקה) in Gen 3:16 does *not*.

IV. תשוקה DENOTES SUBORDINATION IN GENESIS 3:16 AND 4:7

An exegesis of Gen 3:16 and 4:7 further substantiates the previous two points and argues that תשוקה includes the idea of subordination. Three exegetical insights support a subordination interpretation of תשוקה in Gen 3:16. First, Gen 3:16 is written chiastically connecting "your

[45] Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, 159–60.
[46] The exegesis of the Song of Songs below substantiates this point.
[47] Trible, "Depatriarchalizing in Biblical Interpretation," 46.

desire" (תשוקתך) with "but he will rule" (והוא ימשל) and the prepositional phrase "to your husband" (ואל־אישך) with "over you" (בך).

ואל־אישך[1] תשוקתך[2] [2]והוא ימשל־בך[1]

Waltke correctly recognizes that this structure suggests "that her desire will be to dominate."[48] Second, the disjunctive ו contrasts the תשוקה of the woman with the rule of the man (cf. Gen 6:7–8; 17:20–21; 40:21–22; 41:54).[49] Third, the Lord's judgment of Adam in Gen 3:17 implies that Eve *led* Adam astray, "Because you obeyed (שמע) the voice of your wife and ate from the tree."[50] Eve's subordination of Adam through the eating from the tree may illustrate a תשוקה type of subordination (peaceful, united and walking on the same path—the wrong one). The chiastic structure, disjunctive ו, and implication from the first line of Adam's judgment collectively argue that תשוקה denotes subordination in Gen 3:16.

The exegetical evidence from Gen 4:7 similarly argues for a subordination interpretation of תשוקה. Just as the woman desires to subordinate her husband, so also does sin seek to subordinate Cain. But just as the man rules over the woman, so also does God admonish Cain to rule over sin.[51] The grammar and syntax of Gen 4:7 argues that personified sin desires to subordinate Cain, but Cain needs to rule (משל) over it.

This interpretation, while widely held, is hotly contested. Cassuto remarks concerning Gen 4:7, "This is one of the most difficult and obscure Biblical sentences."[52] Cassuto describes

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[48] Waltke, *Genesis*, 94.

[49] Waltke and O'Connor explain, "Interclausal *waw* before a non-verb constituent has a disjunctive role. . . . If the disjunctive *waw* is used in a situation with *continuity of setting*, the clause it introduces may *contrast* with the preceding, specify contemporary *circumstances* or *causes*, or provide a *comparison*," Bruce Waltke and Michael O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 650–51. The use in Gen 3:16 and 4:7 represents the same setting that contrasts different participants.

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[51] For more information see, Foh, "What Is the Woman's Desire," 380–81; Waltke, *Genesis*, 94; Hamilton, *Genesis 1–17*, 201; Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 146.

[52] Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis: Part I From Adam to Noah*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1961), 208.

the difficulty with the LXX's translation and the troubling syntax which has led some modern exegetes to "[abandon] all hope of understanding it, and [leave] part of it untranslated."[53] Condren and Busenitz make much of this point in an attempt to discredit using Gen 4:7 as an interpretive key to Gen 3:16.[54] The interpretation, however, is not as hopeless as these scholars make it out to be.

The exegete has essentially been offered two interpretations of Gen 4:7: (1) personified sin seeks to subordinate Cain; or (2) the text is incomprehensible. Given these options, there is little surprise exegetes favor the former interpretation, particularly when answers can be found for the challenging textual, grammatical, and syntactical issues. The LXX's translation that suggests, according to Lohr, "that the problem with Cain and his offering is an error in a ritual detail of the sacrifice" can be better explained as a misreading of the Hebrew text than a viable interpretation of Gen 4:7.[55] Similarly, the disagreement in gender between "sin" (חטאת) and "reclining" (רבץ) has been overemphasized. Lohr explains, "Although the noun 'sin' (חטאת) is feminine and the verb רבץ is masculine in the MT, I take the latter as a substantival participle; thus sin is a crouching thing or beast that happens to be masculine, something to be mastered (this accounts for the masculine pronominal suffix [ו] on תשׁוקתו and בו)."[56] Regardless of the "enigmatic" Hebrew, exegetes are quite confident that Gen 4:7 depicts personified sin lying at the door, desiring to subordinate Cain. In the biblical corpus, תשוקה always involves a *being* (e.g., personified sin) seeking to subordinate or lead another.

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[53] Ibid.

[54] Condren, "Toward a Purge," 232; Busenitz, "Woman's Desire for Man," 209–10.

[55] Joel N Lohr, "Righteous Abel, Wicked Cain: Genesis 4:1-16 in the Masoretic Text, the Septuagint, and the New Testament," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 71, no. 3 (July 2009): 489. Hendel attributes the variant to "graphic confusion (נ/פ)," Ronald S Hendel, *The Text of Genesis 1-11: Textual Studies and Critical Edition* (New York: Oxford University, 1998), 128. Lohr identifies strengths and weaknesses to this reconstruction, Lohr, "Righteous Abel, Wicked Cain," 489 n.15. See also John William Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Genesis*, Septuagint and Cognate Studies 35 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993). ****Get page number****

[56] Lohr, "Righteous Abel, Wicked Cain," 489 n.16.

V. תשוקה DENOTES SUBORDINATION IN SONG 7:10[11]

The Song of Songs, however, is presumably free of this authority/subordination theme. Busenitz, for example, assumes, "[The Song of Songs] speaks clearly of the natural power and compulsion of the love of an individual for another. The slightest hint of one desiring to dominate the other is totally absent." Similarly, Trible states, "There is no male dominance, no female subordination, and no stereotyping of either sex. The woman is independent, fully the equal of the man. Her interests, work, and words defy the connotations of 'second sex.'"[57] Davidson's "fourth major facet in the Song's theology of sexuality is the highlighting of egalitarianism, mutuality, and reciprocity between the lovers"[58] wherein he never mentions a single dissenting voice.

The Song of Songs, however, is a song of peace, not equality. Trible, LaCocque, Landy, and the list could go on all create a false equation between equality and peace. The Song teaches, however, that for a couple to enjoy Edenic intimacy, the female lover lives in subordination to the male lover—aligning herself with the created order. The sexual act itself requires female submission. The husband's authority over his wife, however, is not a domineering, conquer the city, kind of authority. He must also align himself with the created order and exercise loving authority over his wife. In the Garden of Eden, the husband never tells his wife what to do because she is already doing it. She never has to obey him because she always does what they both want. The two are one. Applied to the judgment of Gen 3:16 and the theme of sexuality in the Song, the man never entreats the woman for intimacy because she has already entreated him for it. Edenic love could be pictured as two people walking on the same path and going in the same direction. The Garden of Eden does not present a picture of egalitarianism, but peace.

[57] Trible, "Depatriarchalizing in Biblical Interpretation," 45.
[58] Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 569.

The structure and exegesis of Song 5:2–8:2, military imagery in the Song, and reversed etiological roles support this position. In Song 5:3, the female lover rebuffs the sexual proposition of the male lover. The woman's figurative punishment by the watchmen in Song 5:7 instructs the reader concerning the damaging effects of selfish love. Military imagery depicting conflict in the relationship appears in concentrated form in Song 6:4–13. The section concludes in Song 7:10[11]–8:4 when the female lover lives in subordination to her husband and recreates the Garden of Eden.

1. Interpretation of Song 5:2–7

In Song 3:1–4 and 5:2–7, the woman searches for her lover on the streets of the city where the watchmen of the city encounter her. In Song 3 they simply pass her by, but in Song 5, they punish her. The woman's first nighttime search in Song 3 is unprecipitated. She simply awakes, he is not present, so she goes to find him. In Song 5, however, her nighttime search is precipitated by her rejection of his sexual proposition. Her rejection typifies the etiology introduced by the judgment in Gen 3:16.

In Song 5:2, the wife describes the setting, "I was sleeping but my heart stirred." She appears to be almost asleep or dreaming.[59] Her husband propositions her, "Open for me, my sister, my sweetheart, my dove, my perfect one; because my head is filled with dew, my locks with the droplets of the night." His request for "entry" is a proposition for intimacy. The

[59] Delitzsch argues she is dreaming, "To sleep while the heart wakes signifies to dream, for sleep and distinct consciousness cannot be coexistent; the movements of thought either remain in obscurity or are projected as dreams," Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes*, trans. M G Easton (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 91. Keel, however, counters, "The Song never speaks of dreams or dreaming. When dealing with poetry like that collected in the Song, one should think instead of poetic fiction that draws its material primarily from artistic conventions—conventions fed as much by events in the real world as by daydreams or dreams during sleep," Keel, *The Song of Songs*, 188. Whether she is sleeping or not makes no theological difference.

reference to his head being covered with dew signifies that he has been outside for a long period of time; in other words, the couple has not had an intimate encounter for quite a while.

The wife then responds in vs. 3, "I have taken off my tunic, how can I put it on? I have washed my feet, how can I defile them?" She employs two rhetorical questions using four first person verbs creating a self-centered forceful rebuff.[60] The use of the rhetorical questions imply that he should already know the answer and his request is absurd.[61] The two reasons she proffers for denying him amount to poor excuses.[62] That she has taken off her clothes and bathed would constitute reasons for intimacy, not denial.

The forcefulness of her rebuff and ridiculous nature of her excuses have led some to conclude that she is teasing him. Murphy, for example, explains, "The reply of the girl might suggest that she is bothered by her lover's request. But the context shows that this is not the case. Her remonstrations are to be interpreted as a tease, not as a refusal. The tease is expressed in neat symmetrical lines, and it is as illogical as his excuse (the dew) to gain entrance."[63] Contrary to Murphy's claim, the context argues against a tease. First, the tease interpretation forces an unnatural reading of Song 5:4; second, it disorders the sequence of events in Song 5:3–5; third, it cannot account for his departure in Song 5:6; and, fourth, it fails to provide a plausible

[60] McGinniss agrees, "There is one example where the first person demonstrates a characteristic that is devastating to any relationship: selfishness. In the dream sequence of chapter five in verse three, there are four verbs in the first person which state the woman's reasons not to meet the nocturnal advances of her lover. Four first person personal pronouns function as nominatives that highlight her own reluctance," Mark McGinniss, *Contributions of Selected Rhetorical Devices to a Biblical Theology of the Song of Songs* (Eugene, Or.: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2011), 73.

[61] Moshavi notes, "'How (איך) questions can be used non-literally to refer to a past action whose reality is undeniable, expressing shock and dismay rather than actual disbelief (compare the English 'I can't believe you did that!')," A Mosak (Adina Mosak) Moshavi, "What Can I Say?: Implications and Communicative Functions of Rhetorical 'WH' Questions in Classical Biblical Hebrew Prose," *Vetus testamentum* 64, no. 1 (2014): 96. Watson explains, "A rhetorical question is basically the posing of a question which requires no answer since either the speaker or the listener (or even both of them) already knows the answer," Wilfred G. E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to Its Techniques* (New York: T&T Clark, 2005), 338.

[62] Exum writes, "She makes some rather weak excuses for not letting him in," J. Cheryl Exum, *Song of Songs*, The Old Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 190.

[63] Roland E. Murphy, *The Song of Songs*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 170.

explanation for the guards punishing her and the literary parallel between the guards actions and her rebuff. Each of these points will be established in turn.

The first three objections are addressed together. The NET translates Song 5:4, "My lover thrust his hand through the hole, and my feelings were stirred for him." Pope understands this verse as a double entendre for sexual intercourse, "Given the attested use of 'hand' as a surrogate for phallus, there can be no question that, whatever the context, the statement 'my love thrust his "hand" into the hole' would be suggestive of coital intromission, even without the succeeding line descriptive of the emotional reaction of the female."[64] Exum clarifies Pope's last statement, "Presumably by 'the emotional reaction of the female' Pope means [the woman's] orgasm."[65] Thus, Pope and Exum argue that Song 5:4 is a double entendre for sexual intercourse. Contextually and exegetically, this interpretation fails.

In Song 5:5–6, the woman rises to open the door and finds that the male lover is gone. She proceeds to go out into the night to find him. The sequence of events proffered by Exum and Pope is illogical: proposition (vs. 2); tease (vs. 3); coitus (vs. 4); opens door (vs. 5); male lover is lost (vs. 6); guards beat her (vs. 7). A playful tease and sexual union does not fit this context.

This view represents a common misinterpretation of Song 5:4. The verse literally reads, "My lover sent his hand *from* the hole" (דודי שלח ידו מן־החר). Pope's interpretation of שלח + מן as "to thrust into" cannot be supported semantically.[66] One would expect the preposition ב or no

[64] Marvin H. Pope, ed., *Song of Songs*, The Anchor Bible 7C (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1977), 519. Exum takes a similar view, Exum, *Song of Songs*, 194–95.

[65] Exum, *Song of Songs*, 191.

[66] HALOT notes that שלח יד means "to stretch out the hand" and references Song 5:4, citing Keel and translating, "he thrust his hand through a gap in the door," (HALOT, 4:1512). All corresponding references, however, lack a qualifying prepositional phrase as is found in Song 5:4. An exegete cannot compare Samson's "sent out his hand" (וישלח ידו) to take the donkey's jawbone (Judg 15:15) with Song 5:4 which reorients the "sending" *from* the hole (not the person). The use of שלח fits the female lover's perspective. Being inside and seeing his hand in the hole, he then "sends his hand from the hole" and withdraws after her rebuff. Finally, Pope's observation that some ancient translations and many modern translations have followed this translation is equally not compelling.

preposition at all if the male lover thrust his hand into the hole (cf. Gen 48:14; Jer 1:9; Job 1:11; 2:5; 1 Chron 13:10). The מן preposition usually has a locative meaning denoting movement *away from* a place or origin—he sent his hand *away from* the hole—implying that the man left.[67] Estes agrees, "Because his hand is being extended 'from' (*min*) the hole and not into the hole . . . it may better mean that he turns away from her after her words in v. 3."[68] The male lover knocked and put his hand through the hole, asking to come inside. She rebuffed him, so he withdrew his hand and left. At this point, the woman's insides "roared" for her lover. Aware of her selfishness, she possesses a change of heart. She rises to *open* for her lover in a state of sexual readiness as indicated by the superfluous myrrh (vs. 5) but finds that he has left (vs. 6).

Her punishment at the hands of the guards corresponds to her selfish rebuff in Song 5:3. The guards function as flat characters, the ones who should know who is out and about the city at night (3:3) and who enforce righteousness in the streets. McGinniss explains,

> [The watchmen] are the ones who discover the woman and they take seemingly violent action against her. But even in this, they are presumably acting in concert with their character. It would not be unusual for city watchmen to discover and meet out the proper discipline. Since the woman makes no complaint against their actions and there are no other comments by other characters or the narrator, the reader is left to assume that their actions are justified, albeit unsettling to modern sensibilities. In any case the guards act simply as guards. Their actions are usual and predictable for their function. They are one-dimensional or flat characters.[69]

The guards four actions against the woman correspond to the four first person verbs in her selfish rebuff. McGinniss, again, explains,

> In the dream sequence of chapter five in verse three, there are four verbs in the first person which state the woman's reasons not to meet the nocturnal advances of her lover. Four first person personal pronouns function as nominatives that highlight her own

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The LXX does not agree, "ἀδελφιδός μου ἀπέστειλεν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τῆς ὀπῆς" (My beloved sent his hand from the hole).

[67] Arnold and Choi write, "One of the most common uses of מן designates where something or someone originated," Bill T. Arnold and John H. Choi, *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 2d ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 129. See also, Waltke and O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 212.

[68] Estes, "The Song of Songs," 368.

[69] McGinniss, *Biblical Theology of the Song of Songs*, 188.

reluctance. The author draws attention to her subsequent discipline by paralleling the pronouns of her reluctance with four first person pronouns functioning accusatively to show that she is the object of the chastisement (5:6). The author might be making the case that the discipline inflicted by the watchmen was in direct response to her negative response to her lover.[70]

Table 2: Correspondence between Song 5:3 and 5:7

Song 5:3	Song 5:7
פשטתי[1] את־כתנתי איככה אלבשנה[2] רחצתי[3] את־רגלי איככה אטנפם[4]	מצאני[1] השמרים הסבבים בעיר הכוני[2] פצעוני[3] נשאו את־רדידי[4] מעלי שמרי החמות
I[1] have taken off my tunic; how can I[2] put it on? I[3] have washed my feet; how can I[4] get them dirty?	They found me,[1] the guards going around in the city; they struck me;[2] they bruised me;[3] they took my[4] veil from upon me, the guards of the wall.

McGinniss compellingly argues that the watchmen function as a literary creation to teach the reader, "when a spouse fails to respond to the other unselfishly, the marriage relationship suffers."[71]

2. Structure of Song 5:2–6:10

In Song 5:8, the female lover entreats the daughters of Jerusalem to find her lover. They respond in vs. 9, asking the female lover why her lover should be sought. She responds with a *waṣf* about him. The female lover did not desire intimacy in Song 5:3 which is why she rebuffed him. Song 5:8–6:1 teaches readers wisdom concerning how to awaken desire even when one does not desire. The section concludes in 6:3 with the refrain of peace, "I am my lover's, and my lover is mine." This union, however, does not end the wisdom instruction concerning the events in Song 5:2–7. The names the male lover uses in Song 5:2 function as catchwords and connect Song 6:4–10 back to 5:2.

Table 3: Catchwords between Song 5:2–6:9

[70] Ibid., 73.
[71] Ibid.

5:2	Open for me, my sister, my sweetheart,[1] my dove,[2] my perfect one.[3]
6:4	You are beautiful, my sweetheart[1]
6:9	She is unique, my dove,[2] my perfect one.[3]

The four names he calls her in Song 5:2 function structurally. The first name, sister, occurs in Song 4:9, 10, 12; 5:1, and lastly in our verse 5:2. It is first in the list because it functions as a catchword connecting to the previous section. The second word, sweetheart, occurs for the last time in Song 6:4, and the third and fourth names, my dove and my perfect one, occur only in Song 5:2 and 6:9. These names function as catchwords connecting Song 6:4–10 to the events in Song 5:2–7.

3. Exegesis of Song 6:4–10

Song 6:4–10 evidences the Gen 3:16 judgment etiology that ensues when a lover loves selfishly. The inclusio "awesome as an army with banners" (NKJV) in Song 6:4–10 marks the section off as a unit. The adjective "awesome" (אימה) occurs three times in the Hebrew Bible (Song 6:4, 10, and Hab 1:7) and should be translated "terrifying" rather than "awesome" (NKJV, ESV, NASB), "awe-inspiring" (NET), or "majestic" (NIV). Habakkuk 1:6–7 describes the Chaldeans as an invading army which is "terrible (אים) and dreadful (ונורא)" (NKJV). The adjective is related to the noun אימה meaning, "fright, horror."[72] Translators have metaphorically interpreted אימה as "awe" in error. Delitzsch captures the idea of the scene though he also metaphorizes it, "She is terrible in the irresistible power of the impression of her personality."[73]

The "terrifying" translation of אימה is further substantiated by the two military metaphors employed in Song 6:4: banners (דגל) and the city metaphor. The use of banner (דגל) in Song 2:4

[72] HALOT, 1:41; cf. Exod 15:16, "Horror (אימה) and dread (פחד) will fall upon them."

[73] Delitzsch, *Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes*, 110. Estes recognizes a possible connection to pride, Estes, "The Song of Songs," 383.

and the city metaphor in Song 8:10 communicate Edenic love, but Song 6:4–10 connects to the Gen 3:16 judgment.

The root דגל (banner) occurs three times in the Song (Song 2:4; 6:4, 10). In Song 2:4, the woman states, "He brought me to the house of wine, and his banner (דגל) over me is love." דגל occurs repeatedly in Numbers, and applies to the identification of the tribal military units. Pope explains this meaning and then states, "The military metaphor in the present verse, however, remains troublesome."[74] The only thing troublesome about the metaphor is its implications. The woman explains in Song 2:4 that the male lover has conquered her. *His* banner is now *over* (על) her. The nature of the conquest, however, is not through a coercive or forceful Gen 3:16 judgment kind of conquest, but through willing submission and love. The male lover does not claim that he conquered her; rather, the female lover claims she has been conquered. She willingly submits herself to his banner being placed over her, and the male lover placed the banner over her through *love*—this is Edenic love. Edenic love represents peace, not equality. Edenic love requires a husband's peaceful conquest by a willing, submissive, and desirous wife.

In Song 6:4, 10, however, the man's banner is not over her; instead, she is pictured as "terrifying like rows of banners." Exum correctly interprets the imagery, "Like KJV 'terrible as an army with banners,' it is a striking and memorable poetic image that calls up a picture of the two royal cities as strongholds, with troops streaming out of them—an image of power that suggests the woman's 'conquering' of the man's heart."[75] Exum, unfortunately, rejects this interpretation, "The difficulty this translation encounters is that bannered hosts are nowhere indicated in the rest of our verse, whose subject is the beauty of the cities, not their military

[74] Pope, *Song of Songs*, 376. Exum uncompellingly seeks to tone down the metaphor, "The woman in the Song may be announcing that she is under the cover, or refuge, of her lover. If so, the poet has taken a military image and subverted it to love's ends: on the male lover's banner is written 'love,'" Exum, *Song of Songs*, 115.

[75] Exum, *Song of Songs*, 219.

might."[76] Exum fails to recognize the power of beauty to instill fear in a man. The correlation between the beautiful cities and the terrifying army teaches the reader the power of beauty. A power which, when used in a selfish way like in Song 5:2–7, can wreak havoc on a relationship.

The city metaphor in Song 8:10 further substantiates this interpretation. Keel correctly notes that "the OT sometimes presents cities as virgins—for example, Jerusalem/Zion (Isa. 37:22; 52:1–2) or Babylon (Isa. 47:1–2)."[77] A virgin city is a city which has not been conquered—penetrated. The Song builds off this metaphor in Song 8:10, "I am a wall, and my breasts are like towers. Then I became in his eyes like one who finds peace." The female is an impenetrable city with walls and towers. Nobody is permitted entry into the city, except one. The one who enters the city, however, enters not through cunning, force, or coercion, but by peace. In Song 6:4 the woman represents two beautiful and impenetrable cities with streams of bannered armies which instill terror in the male lover. This is war.

The lack of peace is further substantiated by comparing the effect of the woman's beauty on the man in Song 4:9 and 6:5.

Table 4: Effects of the Woman's Eyes in Song 4:9 and 6:5

Song 4:9	Song 6:5
You have captivated my heart, my sister, my spouse, you have captivated my heart with one of your eyes, with one link of your necklace	Turn your eyes away from me, because they have overwhelmed me (הרהיבני)

In Song 4:9, one wink (or glance) from the bride sets the man's heart ablaze and leads him to the garden (Song 4:12–5:1), but in Song 6:5, he commands her to look away from him because her eyes have "overcome" (NKJV) him. The verb רהב occurs four times in the Hebrew Bible (Isa 3:5; Psa 138:3; Prov 6:3; Song 6:5) and according to HALOT means, "to harry, confuse" in the

[76] Ibid.
[77] Keel, *The Song of Songs*, 212.

Hifil.[78] Rüterswörden admits, "It is difficult to determine the precise meaning of the verb,"[79] but in Song 6:5 he claims the meaning "is clear, the verb refers to an overwhelming emotion."[80] In the very next sentence, however, he agrees with Würthwein who translates רהב "terrify," claiming it "fits well with the Arabic verb of the same root."[81] Exum claims "'overwhelm' indicates arousal."[82] Terror would be the opposite emotion of arousal.

Seeking to define רהב, Rüterswörden analyzes Isa 3:5 where he identifies parallelism between נגש and רהב. נגש, he explains, "means 'dictator,' with overtones of coercion. The verb *ngś* is a verb of motion and can also express the exercise of authority. We may assume the same spectrum of meanings for *rhb*, which can denote a surge of emotions as well as the exercise of authority."[83] HALOT, CDH, Rüterswörden, and others recognize the association of רהב to pride, defiance, and even an enemy. Job, Psalms, and Isaiah reference the "personified entity" רהב, what HALOT calls "a mythical monster" whom the Lord cuts in pieces in Isa 51:9.

Translating Song 6:5 requires further exegetical work, but the adverse meaning of רהב argues against interpreting it as something positive like "arousal." It could be translated "Turn your eyes away from me, for they have defied me," meaning that the man does not desire to look at the woman's eyes because of her insolence. The Hifil stem in Song 6:5, however, probably reflects his response to her defiance, "Turn your eyes away from me, for they make me insolent" (cf. Isa 3:15). If Rüterswörden is correct and רהב contains the overtones of a coercive dictator, then her eyes evoke in him the emotion of a coercive dictator (6:5) like depicted in the

[78] HALOT, 3:1192.
[79] U. Rüterswörden, "רָהַב" *TDOT*, 13:352.
[80] Ibid., 13:353.
[81] Ibid. Rüterswörden notes, "Arab. *rahiba*, 'be afraid, fear,' also *rahab*, 'fear,' and *rahib*, 'fearsome,'" Ibid., 13:352.
[82] Exum, *Song of Songs*, 219.
[83] U. Rüterswörden, "רָהַב" *TDOT*, 13:353.

etiological judgment of Gen 3:16 (he will rule over you).[84] War has commenced; chaos reigns; the Garden of Eden is gone; and the lovers experience the judgment of Gen 3:16.

Song 6:4–10 connects two ideas: beauty (6:4–7) and an exclusive union (6:8–10). Female beauty (6:4–7) awakens male desire (Song 1:9) which, as his exclusive lover (6:8–10), she alone possesses the power to fulfill. The wisdom instruction concerning beauty, power, and its connection to an exclusive union is multifaceted with multiple areas of application from an OTTH perspective. For example, if a wife postures as an arrogant, beautiful, impenetrable city before her husband, then he may marry another woman destroying the unique, exclusive, Edenic union God intended (6:8–9). While this may have been a legitimate OTTH application of Song 6:8–9, the Song cultivates desire through love, not fear. The man praises her unique, "oneness" (אחד) status among the other women, even the queens and concubines are jealous of the exclusive union which the female lover possesses with the male lover. By praising exclusive love, the Song cultivates desire in the reader, the very problem the female lover had in Song 5:3. The tricolon in Song 6:9 also connects her unique, "oneness" status (אחד) with the man's proposition in Song 5:2, "My dove, my perfect one." The Song essentially tells the female reader, "You are special! You have great beauty which evokes great desire in your husband. You are the only one who can fulfill this desire. His desire greatly empowers you. You could use this power to exercise authority over your husband in a Gen 3:16 kind of way (Song 5:2–7). Or you could use this power to recreate the Garden of Eden by subordinating yourself to your husband's desire over you (Song 7:10–8:4)."

[84] Keel recognizes the significance of רהב, "The root of the Hebrew word translated here 'to make crazy' is related to the noun רהב, which designates a chaotic power that, according to Hebrew thought, called the ongoing existence of a sound and ordered world into question (Isa. 51:9; Ps. 89:10 [11]; Job 9:13; 26:12)," Keel, *The Song of Songs*, 215. Unfortunately, Keel misses the wisdom instruction here and allegorizes, "Every great love is a new cosmos, whose birth is accompanied by life-threatening manifestations of chaos, for the birth of a new world calls into question that which already exists," Ibid.

Song 6:10 sits at the crux between two options for the female lover. She could choose to use her beauty to exercise authority over her husband like a harem girl (3:6–11), or she could use it to recreate the Garden of Eden like the female lover in the Song of Songs (Song 8:5). The interrogative question, "Who is this" (מי־זאת) occurs three times in the Song (3:6; 6:10; 8:5) and presents the reader with these two options.

Table 5: "Who is this?"

Song 3:6	Song 6:10	Song 8:5
Who is this coming up from the wilderness? Like pillars of smoke, a fragrant cloud of myrrh and frankincense	*Who is this*? The one who looks down from above like the dawn	*Who is this coming up from the wilderness*, leaning upon her lover? Under the apple tree I awakened you

Song 3:6 and 8:5 describe two different women coming up from the wilderness. The one comes with abundant smells, security (3:7–8; sixty armed men), and a luxurious seat (3:9–10) being the envy of the daughters of Zion (3:10). The other comes simply, leaning on her lover and awakening him under the apple tree (the Garden of Eden?) (8:5). Song 6:8–9 teaches readers that while the harem girl in Solomon's palanquin may appear to be the envy of the daughters of Zion (3:11), the exclusive love that the male lover of the Song has for his only wife is the envy of the sixty queens, eighty concubines, and numberless virgins (6:8). Many young women would prefer the power and luxury which a Solomon could provide. The Song teaches women to prefer the exclusive, Edenic love with a Song of Songs kind of male lover.

4. Exegesis of Song 6:11–7:10

Song 6:11–13 contains the most textually and exegetically challenging section of the Song.[85] Making a forceful interpretive or theological argument based on these challenging verses

[85] Exum calls 6:11–12 a "notorious crux. In v. 12 the MT is hopelessly corrupt, and the ancient versions seem to have translated from a text that was already corrupt as well," Exum, *Song of Songs*, 222. Gordis writes

would be hermeneutically wrongheaded. The interpretation offered here presents a plausible connection to the succeeding *waṣf* in chapter seven.

Because the male lover "went down" (ירד) to "his garden" in Song 6:2, it is likely that he again "goes down" (ירד) to the garden in Song 6:11 to see if it is the time for love (cf. Song 2:10–13).[86] He quickly learns that it is not the time for love. The phrase לא ידעתי נפשי שמתני (lit.: I did not know, my soul set me) suddenly places her in a chariot. Military metaphors represent war. Gardens are good; chariots are bad.[87] Whatever happened (a fight?) is not good.

The male lover then entreats her to return to the garden four times in Song 6:13. Keel agrees with the sequence of events presented here [Man propositions (11); she "chariots" (12); he states, "Return" (13[7:1])].[88] He calls her Shulamite—Mrs. Peace—because he desires peace, not

concerning 6:12, "This verse is completely incomprehensible as it stands, and as it is usually rendered," Robert Gordis, *The Song of Songs* (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1954), 92.

[86] Exum, *Song of Songs*, 222; Ariel A. Bloch and Chana Bloch, eds., *The Song of Songs: The World's First Great Love Poem* (New York: Modern Library, 2006), 192. The vineyard/garden motif is regularly used of the woman (Song 1:6, 14; 2:15; 4:12–5:1; 6:2; 7:12[13]; 8:12). Its qualification here as a garden of *nuts* has led Hess to conclude that it could represent the male "garden," Hess, *Song of Songs*, 206. Pope, however, explains, "The nut as a sexual symbol also represents the female genitalia," Pope, *Song of Songs*, 578. Longman succinctly explains the "nut" imagery could apply to either male or female genitalia, "The whole nut represents the male gland (even down to contemporary English slang), and the open nut, the woman's vulva. In any case, the verse as a whole is a coy suggestion of intimate relations between the man and the woman. When she talks of exploring the grove, she means that she will be exploring the man's body," Tremper Longman, *Song of Songs*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 184–85. The purpose infinitive, לראות ב, could denote, according to Pope, "a variety of different emotions, delight, grief, sympathy, remorse, suspicion, disdain; cf. Gen 34:1; 1 Sam 6:19; Eccles 2:1; Gen 21:16; Exod 2:11; Gen 29:32; Ezek 21:21," Pope, *Song of Songs*, 579. Keel acknowledges that "the construction has the sense of 'checking to see,'" Keel, *The Song of Songs*, 223. The speaker, whoever it is, goes to the garden to determine if it is the time for love.

[87] Hess recognizes the transition from gardens to chariotry but misses the point of the metaphor, "The female lover's sense of a place on board this instrument of terror is part of a fantasy of danger and excitement, which provides the climax of the experience. Away from the peaceful gardens, the chariotry of the nobles, whether in war or in procession, heightens the drama and fuels the passion of the lover," Hess, *Song of Songs*, 208.

[88] Keel explains, "One must certainly understand these lines as the cries that greet this young woman whose fancy has transported her into these dazzling, arrogant (cf. 1 Kgs. 12:8–11), and forbidden surroundings. The call to 'return' cannot refer to a 'turn' in a dance, even though many scholars interpret it in this way. It assumes that someone who had been oriented toward those who are calling has now turned away. This turning or alienation is anticipated by the words 'Before I was aware, my desire set me in the chariots of Amminadib.' But now that she is aware, she turns away. It is also possible that the cry to return comes from relatives (cousins) or some similar group," Keel, *The Song of Songs*, 228.

war.[89] This name only occurs here in the Song and further substantiates that the war terminology in Song 6:4–13 should not be interpreted positively. The male lover now does desire to look (חזה) at her which seems to contradict his statement in 6:5, "turn your eyes away from me." Her logical response, "What would you look at in the Shulamite" addresses the male lover's incongruity: "Does he want to look at me or not?" In Song 6:5 he saw defiance, but what he desires to see is peace.

Scholars are at a loss to explain the "two camps" dance, but considering the disputation transpiring in these verses, a reference to two war camps seems plausible. The two have a dispute and it is like two camps at war, but what they want is peace. Love speech begins in Song 6:13 and continues through 7:9[10]. The reference to "dance" sets up the male lover to describe the female lover in the most descriptive *waṣf* of the Song (7:1–6[2–7]). Sexual desire builds and he earnestly communicates his desire for intimacy in Song 7:8–9a[9–10a] which she affirmatively reciprocates in 9b[10b]. The lovers' language of Song 6:12–7:9[10] includes banter like the Edenic scene in Song 1:5–2:7 with one lover picking up on one word and turning it back on the other (see Table 6). Intimacy grows and they recreate the Garden of Eden.

Table 6: Banter Between Lovers in Song 6–7

Male Lover	Female Lover
6:13[7:1] — Return, return that we may look (חזה)[1] at you	6:13[7:1] — What would you look at (חזה)[1] in the Shulamite,
7:1[2] — How beautiful are your feet[2] (describes her dancing)	6:13[7:1] — like the dance[2] of the two camps
7:9[10] — Your palate is like the best wine	7:9[10] — flowing to my lover smoothly, gliding between the lips of sleepers

[89] Her name's association with Solomon—Mr. Peace—is well documented, Longman, *Song of Songs*, 192; Keel, *The Song of Songs*, 228; Exum, *Song of Songs*, 227–28; Murphy, *The Song of Songs*, 181; Pope, *Song of Songs*, 596–97. The male lover entreats Mrs. Peace to return so he can live at peace with her in the Garden of Eden.

She states in Song 7:10[11], "I am my lover's; and over me is his desire" after which she entreats her lover to the garden using terminology reminiscent of Song 6:11. The continuity between Song 5:2–7:13[14] cannot be missed.

Table 7: Continuity between Song 5:2–7:13[14]

Connection to Song 3:6–5:1	Connection to Song 6	Connection to Song 7
Song 5:1 — I have come into my garden, my sister,[1] spouse		
Song 5:2 — Open for me, my sister,[1] my sweetheart,[2] my dove,[3] my perfect one[3]	Song 6:4 — You are beautiful, my sweetheart,[2] like Tirzah	
	Song 6:9 — She is unique, my dove,[3] my perfect one;[3]	
	Song 6:11 — To the garden of nuts I went down, to see[4] the verdue of the valley, to see[4] if the vine has sprouted (הפרחה הגפן),[5] the pomegranates have bloomed (הנצו הרמונים).[6]	Song 7:12[13] — Let us rise early to the vineyards; let us see[4] if the vine has sprouted (פרחה הגפן),[5] the buds of the vine have opened (פתח הסמדר), the pomegranates have bloomed (הנצו הרמונים);[6] there I will give you my love.

In Song 7:10[11], the Garden of Eden is recreated through the wife's submissive statement, "his desire is over (על) me." The change in preposition from אל in Gen 3:16; 4:7 to על in Song 7:10[11] has not been missed by commentators who attribute it to a textual issue or simply an inconsequential variation of the same idea.[90] Indeed, Joüon/Muraoka note, "It is clear that אל quite often corresponds to על."[91] The change to על, however, seems more consequential considering the author's intertextual connection to Gen 3:16. Rather than taking a hostile

[90] See Pope, *Song of Songs*, 643.
[91] Paul Joüon and Tamitsu Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, Subsidia Biblica 27 (Roma: Pontificio istituto biblico, 2006), 456.

position against one's husband in Gen 3:16,[92] the wife of the Song, instead, communicates peace by submitting to her husband's sovereign rule "over me" (עלי). The change to על would further strengthen the idea of peaceful subordination in Song 7:10[11]. She refuses to use her sexuality to subordinate her husband according to the judgment etiology in Gen 3:16 and chooses instead to let him rule over her. Song 7:10 is a variant of the refrain found in Song 2:16 and 6:3 (see Table 8). This refrain communicates two exegetical truths: (1) lovers possess a mutual possession for one another; (2) disordered love has been reordered.

Table 8: Peace Refrain

Song 2:16	Song 6:3	Song 7:10
My lover is mine (דודי לי), and I am his (ואני לו); the one who feeds among the lilies	I am my lover's (אני לדודי), and my lover is mine (ודודי לי); the one who feeds among the lilies	I am my lover's (אני דודי); and over me is his sovereign desire (ועלי תשוקתו)

VI. EDENIC INTIMACY RECREATED

The three occurrences of the peace refrain are shrouded in disordered love. In Song 2:15, jackals need to be seized, and the issues in Song 5:2–8:4 have already been noted. This refrain communicates that the couple has reordered love according to the order of creation and are at peace. Furthermore, only in three sections of the Song does the male lover entreat the female lover to intimacy: Song 2:8–17; 4:1–5:1; 5:2–6:3 and two of these sections are times of disordered love. The only time the male lover initiates an intimate encounter is when jackals are in the vineyard (2:15), a couple's first intimate encounter (4:1–5:1), or when he was left outside for a long time (5:2).

[92] Joüon and Muraoka write, "אֶל־ properly means *towards*. . . . With hostile direction the meaning merges with *against* (= עַל)," Ibid. The preposition functions as an "ethical dative of interest, advantage, or disadvantage," Waltke and O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 193–94.

The reordered love that the couple has sought is achieved in Song 7:11[12]–8:4. The female lover now entreats the male lover to "Come, my lover, let us go to the field." In this Garden of Eden, she offers her lover "new and old fruits" which she has stored up for her lover. She is no longer in bed hoping that he does not knock on the door (Song 5:2–3), but is instead seeking him outside, hoping to lead him back to the house where she will make him drunk with her pomegranate (Song 8:1–2). The male lover does not conquer her through force, coercion, manipulation, or deceit. Rather, he places his banner over her in love (Song 2:4) and peacefully enters the city which desires his authority (Song 8:10).

VII. OLD TESTAMENT THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The implications of this study are vast, a few can be noted here.

1. The univocal egalitarian interpretation of the Song of Songs should be rejected. The Old Testament teaches peace through submitting to God's order in creation which is hierarchical. The man is never metaphorically a city, nor is he ever a garden. The man metaphorical goes into the city and metaphorical tends and consumes the garden. Both of these metaphors communicate male headship.

2. Genesis 3 teaches the wife that she will have a natural inclination to usurp the authority of her husband. The Song of Songs applies this usurpation of authority to the marriage bed (Song 5:2–7). The beauty of a wife and the exclusive union she possesses with her husband empowers her to usurp his authority (Song 6:4–13). The Song teaches a wife that the relationship with her husband will suffer if she uses the marriage bed to rule over him.

3. The Song teaches the wife the way to live at peace with her husband. Instead of withholding intimacy for personal gain, the Song teaches the wife that her relationship with her husband will likely blossom when she initiates intimate encounters with her husband in various

places, at various times, and offering various intimate fruits according to God's original design in the Garden of Eden (Song 7:11–13[12–14]).

4. The Song also teaches the wife how to cultivate sexual desire for her husband when there is no desire. First, by rejoicing in her lover's positive traits with the daughters of Jerusalem (Song 5:10–16). Second, by remembering her special goddess kind of status (Song 6:10) that she has with her lover (Song 6:4–13)—he may be able to pay someone else to take care of the sheep or complete the business transaction, but she is the only one with whom God has ordained that he can experience an intimate encounter. Third, by taking pleasure in his sexual desire for her (7:1–9[2–10]). Fourth, by desiring her husband during the regular affairs of the day (8:1–2).

5. The Song also teaches the husband how to handle sexual rejection—he walks away (Song 5:4). The husband should not manipulate, coerce, or force himself upon his wife. The male lover walks away and allows the wife's conscious (Holy Spirit) to convict her of her selfishness (Prov 25:21–22). The Song focuses on cultivating desire. The husband who "conquers the city" like a conquering king through manipulation, coercion, or force crushes his wife's desire.

6. The Song also teaches the husband how to cultivate sexual desire in his wife. First, by fearing the Lord and selflessly serving one's wife—not forcing or manipulating her to have sex with him (Song 5:4). Second, by grooming and maintaining a desirable physique (Song 5:10–16). Third, by communicating with his wife and assuring her of the exclusive relationship he has with her (Song 6:4–10). Fourth, by praising her beauty and telling her how it affects him (Song 7:1–9[2–10]).

7. Seventh, the Song teaches the husband to trust his wife with their sexual relationship. Edenic intimacy includes a sexually passive husband who rarely initiates an intimate encounter. Instead, he cultivates the garden and then joyfully consumes the fruit which his wife offers him

(Song 2:15; 7:11–13[12–14]; 8:11–12). The patriarchal culture of the Garden of Eden included a man who delegated the sexual relationship off to his wife.

8. Finally, the Song is a song of peace. When the wife sexually awakens her husband's desire and the husband is not constantly trying to awaken her desire, the couple experiences peace. The two possess mutual trust and affection, living in a selfless and sacrificial relationship where they regularly experience a mutually desirous and peaceful Edenic union.