

English Language resources: Bible texts analysis – Song of Songs 2: 1-14

Questions on two biblical versions

The following texts are from the **Song of Songs 2:1-14**.

Text A is from the *King James Bible*. The *King James Bible (KJB)* was first translated in 1611 and was revised in 1769. This is the version in general use today.

Text B is from *Today's New International Version (TNIV)*, published in 2005.

This is a highly poetic text which dramatises the relationship between two lovers, which some see as representing the relationship between humans and God. Imagery is a dominant feature within the passages.

As a way of introducing the material:

- ❖ Divide the class in half and allocate one text version to each
- ❖ Ask each group to identify five key images in their passage and analyse what is meant by each – research on the internet if helpful
- ❖ As a homework, or using magazines / pens etc. supplied by the teacher in class, draw or collage pictures to illustrate the selected images
- ❖ Present findings to the other group, considering the differences between the two.

Now use the methods for analysis template and:

- ❖ Consider the texts in detail
- ❖ Explore the ways in which they show that language has changed over time
- ❖ Refer to relevant ideas from language study.

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Text A

- ¹ I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.
- ² As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.
- ³ As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.
- ⁴ He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.
- ⁵ Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples: for I am sick of love.
- ⁶ His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me.
- ⁷ I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please.
- ⁸ The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.
- ⁹ My beloved is like a roe or a young hart: behold, he standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the windows, shewing himself through the lattice.
- ¹⁰ My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.
- ¹¹ For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone;
- ¹² 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;
- ¹³ The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.
- ¹⁴ 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.

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Text B

She

¹ I am a rose of Sharon,
a lily of the valleys.

He

² Like a lily among thorns
is my darling among the young women.

She

³ Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest
is my beloved among the young men.

I delight to sit in his shade,
and his fruit is sweet to my taste.

⁴ Let him lead me to the banquet hall,
and let his banner over me be love.

⁵ Strengthen me with raisins,
refresh me with apples,
for I am faint with love.

⁶ His left arm is under my head,
and his right arm embraces me.

⁷ Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you
by the gazelles and by the does of the field:
Do not arouse or awaken love
until it so desires.

⁸ Listen! My beloved!
Look! Here he comes,
leaping across the mountains,
bounding over the hills.

⁹ My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag.
Look! There he stands behind our wall,
gazing through the windows,
peering through the lattice.

¹⁰ My beloved spoke and said to me,
'Arise, my darling,
my beautiful one, come with me.

¹¹ See! The winter is past;
the rains are over and gone.

¹² Flowers appear on the earth;
the season of singing has come,
the cooing of doves
is heard in our land.

¹³ The fig tree forms its early fruit;
the blossoming vines spread their fragrance.
Arise, come, my darling;
my beautiful one, come with me.'

He

¹⁴ My dove in the clefts of the rock,
in the hiding places on the mountainside,
show me your face,
let me hear your voice;
for your voice is sweet,
and your face is lovely.