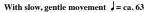
## Set Me as a Seal upon Your Heart (SSATB, accompanied)

Song of Songs 8:6-7

Hal H. Hopson











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\*The chanted section (meas. 30-33) may be chanted by the choir as follows: SA - vs. 1; TB - vs. 2.







Hal H. Hopson is both a full-time composer and a church music clinician residing in Austin, Texas. With over 1300 published works, comprising almost every musical form in church music, he has a special affinity for congregational song. He continues to make a significant contribution to the new repertoire of hymn tunes and responsorial psalm settings as evidenced by the prollific number of his works included in newly published hymnals and psalm collections.

Hopson was born in Mound, Texas, into a family of thirteen children where music-making was a way of life. At the age of thirteen, he began playing for services in a small village church. Hopson received the Royalty-Edwards

Scholarship in music at Baylor University where he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree. In 1956, he earned a Master of Sacred Music degree from Southern Baptist Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, Also, he further studied at the University of Erlangen, Erlangen, Germany; the Peabody Conservatory of Music, Baltimore, Maryland; and Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. He served as chair of the Church Music department, Westminster Choir College and taught at Scarritt Graduate School. In addition, Hopson has served congregations in several states as organist/filerector of music mistries.

His cantata GOD WITH US was one of the few compositions selected by a panel at the Kennedy Center, Washington, D.C., to be placed in a capsule during the American Bicentennial in 1976. It will be performed as a part of the Tricentennial in 2076 as representative of American choral music of the twentieth century. Each year, he is commissioned to compose several musical works in various genres of church music

An active conductor and clinician who has conducted choral festivals and workshops in the United States, Canada, Europe, Korea and Japan, he also has been recognized for his contribution to music by the International Who's Who in Music, Cambridge, England. Having served on the national boards of the Presbyterian Association of Musicians and Choristers Guild, he remains active in several professional organizations, both on the national and local levels. As a member of ASCAP, Hal H. Hopson receives (and has received) an annual award from that agency for many consecutive year.

## **Comments Regarding the Text**

Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is strong as death.

Jealous passion is cruel as the grave. The flash of it is a flash of fire.

Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it.

Were one to offer all of one's wealth for love, it would be judged a price not at at much. Love cannot be bought, love cannot be sold. Love cannot be found in the native place. Set me as a seal upon you heart, as a seal upon your arm; for lot or strong as death.

This text is taken from Chapter Eight of the Song of Songs, so retiriles referred to as The Song of Solomon. There are basically two views of interns to be of this book from scripture: an elaborate allegory of the love story of God and God's propie; or simply a collection of poems about love and marriage. Regardless of one's in expretation, there is no doubt that these love poems were incorporated into the early cull's marriage liturgies and feasts.

The use of "Set Me as a Seal unon Your Heart" in ancient wedding ceremonies has an obvious parallel in our marriage liture les at the exchange of rings. In ancient times the wedding seal was a signet, a larved stone cylinder for impressing in clay the equivalent of a modern signature. It was larved on a cord about the neck and thus hung over the heart. The seal on the arm, refers to a signet ring or decorative chain worn on the arm.





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