

Christ in the Hebrew Poets

“Love That Many Waters Cannot Quench”—Christ in Song of Songs

Introduction:

- Final reminder of John 5:39 and Luke 24:44
- Song of Songs maybe more difficult

About the Song of Songs

A. General Thoughts

1. Breath of fresh air in a world so obsessed with sexualization of culture and so self-enamored
2. Beautiful point of context with that which is “lovely and pure”
3. Only 117 verses yet one of the most debated and difficult of books to interpret, understand, and apply.

B. Title: “The Song of Songs, which is Solomon’s (1:1)

1. Sir hassarim—Song of all Songs—like King of Kings/Lord of Lords/Holy of Holies
2. Solomon wrote 3,000 proverbs and 1,005 songs (1 Kings 4:32)
3. “Which is Solomon’s” can be by him, about him, or dedicated to him.

C. Author

1. Traditionally Solomon—but really not seen in a great light (womanizer, try to buy wealth—700 wives, 300 concubines)
2. Likely someone from Northern Kingdom—crucial to interpretation

D. Date—970-930 BC (his reign)

E. Interpretive methods applied

1. Mythological (cultic) interpretation

- a. Song was a cultic worship practice of Tammuz-Ishtar cult
- b. 2 people enacted parts of god Tammuz and goddess Ishtar (Ezekiel, Isaiah Jeremiah mentioned cult negatively).

2. Dramatic play interpretation—two character romance with six acts

3. Celebration interpretation—love poems and songs celebrating marital love

4. Allegorical interpretation

- a. Church Fathers (Augustine, Origen)
- b. God—Israel or Christ—Church
- c. Solomon a portrait of Christ?
- d. Excessive attempts for allegory—lover between breasts Christ between two tablets

(ILL) Australian Sunday School teacher—too predictable

- What is gray fury and lives in eucalyptus trees?
- Susie—I know the answer must be Jesus but it sure sounds like a Koala to me

NOTE: Many want allegory. How could inspired text speak of sexual intimacy?

5. Typological interpretation

- a. Sees historical fulfillment but draws analogies between figures and Christ

(ILL)

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up. John 3:14 NKJV

- b. Speaks unity in the Old and New Testament
- c. But must be careful when New Testament does not speak

6. Natural or literal interpretation—true story, one that celebrates human love

I. A Balanced Interpretation of the Song of Songs

- A. The Song of Songs is wisdom literature that celebrates a great mystery in life, the mutual love of a man and woman.

There are three things which are too wonderful for me, yes, four which I do not understand: 19 The way of an eagle in the air, the way of a serpent on a rock, the way of a ship in the midst of the sea, and the way of a man with a virgin. Proverbs 30:18-19 NKJV

(ILL) Koala illustration

Sunday School Teacher—a sparrow—God’s care for sparrow and His far greater care for us. The sparrow is not Jesus—remains a sparrow. Yet a lesson can be drawn from the sparrow and still certain in Jesus as one who provides the full extent of fatherly love and care for us.

- B. So Christ can be seen in the Song of Songs without making the figures Christ

II. The Story of the Song of Songs

- A. A humble family from Shulam or Shunem that includes a daughter

Return, return, O Shulamite; Return, return, that we may look upon you! What would you see in the Shulamite — As it were, the dance of the two camps? Song of Solomon 6:13 NKJV

1. Mother

I am dark, but lovely, O daughters of Jerusalem, Like the tents of Kedar, Like the curtains of Solomon. 6 Do not look upon me, because I am dark, Because the sun has tanned me. My mother's sons were angry with me; They made me the keeper of the vineyards, But my own vineyard I have not kept. Song of Solomon 1:5-6 NKJV

2. Brothers

We have a little sister, And she has no breasts. What shall we do for our sister In the day when she is spoken for? 9 If she is a wall, We will build upon her A battlement of silver; And if she is a door, we will enclose her With boards of cedar. Song of Solomon 8:8-9 NKJV

B. She is the focus of King Solomon and he pursues her

I have compared you, my love, To my filly among Pharaoh's chariots. 10 Your cheeks are lovely with ornaments, Your neck with chains of gold. 11 We will make you ornaments of gold with studs of silver. Song of Solomon 1:9-11 NKJV

NOTE: Very passionate pursuit

Who is this coming out of the wilderness Like pillars of smoke, Perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, With all the merchant's fragrant powders? 7 Behold, it is Solomon's couch, With sixty valiant men around it, Of the valiant of Israel. 8 They all hold swords, Being expert in war. Every man has his sword on his thigh Because of fear in the night. 9 Of the wood of Lebanon Solomon the King Made himself a palanquin: 10 He made its pillars of silver, Its support of gold, Its seat of purple, Its interior paved with love By the daughters of Jerusalem. 11 Go forth, O daughters of Zion, And see King Solomon with the crown With which his mother crowned him On the day of his wedding, The day of the gladness of his heart. Song of Solomon 3:6-11 NKJV

C. Young maiden is not in love with Solomon, but the humble shepherd

1. She seeks for him

Tell me, O you whom I love, Where you feed your flock, Where you make it rest at noon. For why should I be as one who veils herself by the flocks of your companions? Song of Solomon 1:7 NKJV

2. They enjoy the outdoors and he courts her

The voice of my beloved! Behold, he comes Leaping upon the mountains, Skipping upon the hills. 9 My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag. Behold, he stands behind our wall; He is looking through the windows, Gazing through the lattice. 10 My beloved spoke, and said to 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 singing has come, And the voice of the turtledove Is heard in our land. 13 The fig tree puts forth her green figs, And the vines with the tender grapes Give a good smell. Rise up, my love, my fair one, And come away! 14 "O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, In the secret places of the cliff, Let me see your face, Let me hear your voice; For your voice is sweet, And your face is lovely. "Her Brothers 15 Catch us the foxes, The little foxes that spoil the vines, For our vines have tender grapes. 16 My beloved is mine, and I am his. He feeds his flock among the lilies. Song of Solomon 2:8-16 NKJV

NOTE: This verbiage throughout—Shepherd vs. Solomon

D. Solomon—apparently wanting to take her as a wife or concubine—take her to his court

Take me away with you—let us hurry! Let the king bring me into his chambers. We rejoice and delight in you we will praise your love more than wine. How right they are to adore you! Song of Solomon 1:4 NIV

I went down to the grove of nut trees to look at the new growth in the valley, to see if the vines had budded or the pomegranates were in bloom. 12 Before I realized it, my desire set me among the royal chariots of my people. Song of Solomon 6:11, 12 NIV

E. She remains loyal to her shepherd-lover and longs to be with him

I am my beloved's, And his desire is toward me. 11 Come, my beloved, Let us go forth to the field; Let us lodge in the villages. 12 Let us get up early to the vineyards; Let us see if the vine has budded, Whether the grape blossoms are open, And the pomegranates are in bloom. There I will give you my love. Song of Solomon 7:10-12 NKJV

1. Royal enticement cannot sway her heart
2. Wealth and riches cannot buy her
3. Nothing can quench their love

Set me as a seal upon your heart, As a seal upon your arm; For love is as strong as death, Jealousy as cruel as the grave; Its flames are flames of fire, A most vehement flame. 7 Many waters cannot quench love, Nor can the floods drown it. If a man would give for love All the wealth of his house, It would be utterly despised. Song of Solomon 8:6-7 NKJV

F. She tells Solomon that he may have others but not her.

My own vineyard is before me. You, O Solomon, may have a thousand, And those who tend its fruit two hundred. Song of Solomon 8:12 NKJV

III. Profound implications of the Song of Songs

A. Celebrate marital sexual intimacy enjoyed as God's good gift.

1. Elevates erotic love with dynamics of care and tenderness—needs to be heard
2. Elevates erotic love by emphasizing selflessness and mutual care

Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge. Hebrews 13:4 NKJV

B. Promotes intimacy within marriage by offering pleasure/enjoyment—not just procreation.

Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. 2 Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. 3 Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. 4 The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. 5 Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. 1 Corinthians 7:1-5 NKJV

C. It is counter-cultural

1. Promotes sexuality as to be enjoyed within the parameters determined by God.
2. These parameters?
 - a. Heterosexual
 - b. Monogamy—loyalty
 - c. Covenantal

NOTE: Any other definition will destroy society

D. Attacks neo-paganism or gnosticism that says spiritual is good—physical is evil.

1. God made male and female good

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Genesis 1:26-27 NKJV

2. Sin brought death spiritually and physically

In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return." Genesis 3:19 NKJV

Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever" — 23 therefore the Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. 24 So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life. Genesis 3:22-24 NKJV

3. Redemption restores both

Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. Romans 8:23 NKJV

E. Promotes to this generation a true devotion and sexual integrity in the face of a sexualized and selfish culture that has perverted that which God meant to be beautiful

Conclusion: So where is Christ in the Song of Songs?—All of the above

1. His plan
2. His order
3. His purpose
4. His desire

But cannot forget the words of Apostle Paul

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. 24 Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. 28 So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. 30 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. 31 "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." Ephesians 5:22-31 NKJV

NOTE: Be careful of a forced allegory of the book. Don't miss the mystery.

- 1859 Protestant Preacher, James Henry Thornwell announced the wedding of daughter, Nancy
- Hundreds attended a funeral not a wedding
- Took ill from cholera typhoid-rapid demise
- Waning moments of her life Thornwell said, “oh my dear daughter such tragedy.”
- “Do not weep,” she said, “I know my Savior!”
- “But this was to be your wedding, you whole life before you!” He said.
- She said, “Father, but I now go to a greater Groom that I am prepared to meet.”
- Laid to rest in her wedding gown—tombstone read, “Like a bride prepared for her groom.”

So much the Song of Songs teaches us and still it points to God's people as Bride of Christ for our glorious, majestic, and intimate relationship with our Bridegroom, Jesus Christ.

- Our gown is spotless
- Our relationship is pure by His blood, righteousness, and promised presence
- With Him there are more there 10,000 joys.

Even so come. Lord Jesus, come.