



Song of Songs: God of Passion

Memory Verse: Song of Songs 2:3-4 “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. Let him lead me to the banquet hall, and let his banner over me be love.”

Background

The Song of Songs is the 22nd book of the Bible and the fifth and final poetry book in the Old Testament. This book, also known as the Song of Solomon, receives its title from the very first verse: “The song of songs, which is Solomon’s.” The repetition of the word “song” implies that this song was the very best or most exquisite of all of the 1,005 songs written by King Solomon.

King Solomon reigned from 971-931 BC and Song of Songs was likely written early in his reign. The evidence for this comes from the low number of 140 women in his harem (6:8) compared to the 1,000 women he ended up with in his later years (1 Kings 11:3). In addition, Song of Songs was written before Solomon’s wives led him astray into idolatry. Many places north and south of Israel are mentioned in the book indicating the good relationships and peace with other nations that Solomon had early in his reign.

The Short Story

Married love is a beautiful, joyful thing and should be celebrated.

What’s the Big Idea?

Song of Songs is a poem full of metaphors and oriental imagery illustrating the passion, joy, and beauty that can be found in a committed marital relationship. This dramatic poem is a dialogue between two main characters, the King and his Shulamite bride, with an occasional chorus from the daughters of Jerusalem (likely a group of palace ladies who were attendants to the Shulamite). The book begins with the king and his bride falling in love and has them expressing their love for one another during their courtship (1:1-3:5). Following this, the two are united in marriage with the groom extolling his bride’s beauty before the consummation of their relationship (3:6-5:1). Finally, their love and marriage continues to mature and deepen as the Shulamite struggles with fear of separation from her husband, only to be reassured by him of his great love and affection for her (5:2-8:14). Their love is one that is unquenchable and their marriage permanent and enduring.

So What? Why is this book so important? What was God’s purpose for the book?

Song of Songs is a book that is like no other in the Bible. It describes the fullness of the union that takes place at marriage. At times the imagery and language in the poem may make the reader uncomfortable. However, the topic of physical love within the bounds of marriage as seen in Song of Songs is not to be despised as base or unspiritual. Indeed, Song of Songs offers the reader a proper perspective on human love and intimacy as part of God’s creation. It would make sense then for God to provide us with this guide to the truth about the beauty, goodness, and design for marriage. Marriage and the physical and emotional union that follows is a beautiful gift from God and should be valued as such. In fact, the union of the two sexes illustrates the unity and oneness of the Trinity - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Genesis 1:27; 2:24; 1 Corinthians 6:16-20). Song of Songs is also important in anticipating the enduring love that Jesus Christ will have with His bride, the church. Those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ can look forward with great joy to the marriage supper of the Lamb described in Revelation 19:6-9, “Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: ‘Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.’ (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of God’s holy people.) Then the angel said to me, ‘Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!’ And he added, ‘These are the true words of God.’ ”

**Material taken from various sources.*

Teaching Text

Song of Songs 2:3-6 Like the finest apple tree in the orchard is my lover among other young men. I sit in his delightful shade and taste his delicious fruit. He escorts me to the banquet hall; it's obvious how much he loves me. Strengthen me with raisin cakes, refresh me with apples, for I am weak with love; His left arm is under my head, and his right arm embraces me.

Sermon-Based Discussion Questions

- What are you really passionate about in life? What makes you feel most alive? Why?
- As you read the Song of Songs what stands out most to you? What is the message?
- Why would God place a book so sexually explicit in the Bible? What does it say about our sexuality? What does Solomon and his wife see in each other? What does that symbolize?
- As you read the different passages, how do you relate it to Christ and the church?

Practical Application

- How hard is it to make connection with your spouse on an intimate level? What are the inhibitors?
- Why has Satan made our sexuality and need for intimacy a dirty thing rather than a gift from God?
- What role does sex play in a covenant marital relationship? Where do you need to turn up the heat in your marriage? Where do you need to have more passion for Christ in your life?
- If you are struggling in the bedroom it would be good to seek some professional help.

Hitting the Highpoints

- 1:2-4 Kiss me and kiss me again, for your love is sweeter than wine.....”
- 4: 1-5 How beautiful you are, my darling! Oh, how beautiful Your eyes behind your veil are doves...”
- 5:2-6a I slept, but my heart was awake when I heard my lover knocking and calling....”
- 5:10-16 My beloved is radiant and ruddy; outstanding among ten thousand”
- 8:7 “If one were to give all the wealth of one’s house for love it would be utterly scorned.”

Bonus Features

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Personal Takeaways and Notes