



**Series: Bible Survey**

**Lesson: 27. Song of Songs**

- **Introduction**

- Author: Most likely Solomon
- Date: Most likely sometime during Solomon's reign (960–931 BC)
- Context:
  - Solomon's extensive wisdom, knowledge of the natural world, and musical and poetical skills (cf. 1 Kings 4:29–34) gave him the ability and frame of reference to craft what claims to be the 'best song ever written.'
  - Despite his eventual polygamy, he appears to have been either initially very committed to his first wife or writing about a fictional character to express his ideals of love either before his polygamy or later in life when his perspective matured.
- Main themes:
  - The beauty of marital love and \_\_\_\_\_  
"The Song presents sexuality as a *good thing protected by marriage and not as an evil thing made permissible by marriage*"  
– Duane Garrett

- The beauty of expressing them \_\_\_\_\_

*Song 8:6–7 – “Put me like a seal over your heart,  
Like a seal on your arm.*

*For love is as strong as death,*

*Jealousy is as severe as Sheol;*

*Its flashes are flashes of fire,*

*The very flame of the Lord.*

*<sup>7</sup>Many waters cannot quench love,*

*Nor will rivers overflow it;*

*If a man were to give all the riches of his house for love,*

*It would be utterly despised.”*

- What it implies about our relationship with God (cf. Hos. 2:2–5, 19–20)

*Eph. 5:25–27 – Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, <sup>26</sup>so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, <sup>27</sup>that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.*

- **Answering Some Important Questions about Song of Songs**

- How many figures are in this account?

- There are definitely a bride, a bridegroom, and a ‘chorus’ who interacts with the other two.

- \_\_\_\_\_ is probably the bridegroom (especially if he is the author), but some believe he is a separate figure who may even be competing for the bride's affection.
  - It can be difficult to tell when one speaker ends and another begins, but English Bibles try to add headings/notes to indicate where the Hebrew grammar helps make that clearer.
- How should it be interpreted?
- Ancient Jewish tradition says it is an \_\_\_\_\_ for God's love for Israel, but that interpretation ignores the way the text presents itself and leads to some bizarre and/or impossible to substantiate explanations of details.
  - Many influential Christian theologians saw it as an allegory for Christ's love for the Church, but that has the same issues as above plus being even farther from the original context.
  - All the text shows is an extended celebration of romantic love and intimacy within the context of marriage.
- Is there a coherent plot to the poem?
- Many theologians see a plot line through the book of two lovers anticipating marriage, consummating marriage, and enjoying marriage, but others see it simply as a love song with no plot.
  - Even for those who see a plot, there is great disagreement about when those three phases begin/end.

- How should we understand its many metaphors?
  - The primary correspondence is usually *not* \_\_\_\_\_.
  - The comparisons are figurative, not literal.
  - What is being compared is a certain \_\_\_\_\_, not a physical trait.
  - The carryover is the value of the two things being compared.
  - The book uses metaphor and euphemism to describe marital love without becoming crass, so we should be careful not to read too many details into the text that aren't there.
  - However, some of the language is unambiguously 'not-PG' (even if still euphemistic), so we shouldn't deny what is being celebrated even as we try to approach it in a reverent and appropriate manner.

### Discussion:

1. How can the Church reclaim a healthy attitude about love and sex?
2. Do you think it would be appropriate to preach an expository sermon series on Song of Songs from the pulpit? Why or why not?

**FOR REFLECTION:** How can you *idealize* your spouse without *idolizing* him/her?

**Blanks:** intimacy, poetically, Solomon, allegory, visual, quality