

SongOfSolomon 20-01-23b

We're back for the second part of our study tonight, and we look to this portion of God's Word for guidance not only in the Particular area of marriage and married love but for an understanding that reaches across the entire Bible from beginning to end Looking at our place in God's plan and how that plan has unfolded from the very beginning to its future culmination in the new Jerusalem and the new heavens and the new earth and throughout you find this theme of marriage and married love and What's interesting as we come to this particular book is We've talked about how it is a part of that fabric that includes This subject of marriage and yet it is distinct and unique Particularly in the Old Testament because what do you know about marriage? What do you observe I might say about marriage in the Old Testament? What does it typically? Do how does it function? What is its what is its role? Once you leave the garden Adam knew his wife Eve and what happens? offspring Descendancy she conceived and bear a son and called his name X and the function of marital union and marital intimacy in the Old Testament is almost entirely for the purpose of generating progeny so You have Abraham and Sarah and The sorrow that Sarah has why not that She and Abraham don't have wild times together, but what? No, son The Hagar Solution what does it do it messes up the marriage it messes up the family? and Even when there is Physical progeny from the couple that is thought to be too old. He's 100 and she's 90 You still have this conflict with Ishmael mocking Isaac and he and Hagar get driven out of the camp and you have Mahanaim and the whole bit It is the offspring that is the issue I don't Abraham goes to God and says You said I was gonna have descendants like the stars of heaven So far my only heir is my servant. What about this? Where's the offspring and over and over again all the way to the end of Malachi it is Do you have a son? You think of Judah and Tamar you think of? Over and over again the the daughters of Zelophehad.

It's all about Offspring The reason Jephthah's daughter mourns her virginity with her friends is She has been dedicated to God and isn't going to have children isn't going to be able to to raise up seed for a husband You think about Hannah being barren you think about the mother of Samson being barren over and over again these instances of Barrenness they're not mourning because they're not enjoying a wonderful marriage or Wonderful intimacy with their husband. It's because there's no child. There's no son so sex in the Old Testament is for filling out the list of so-and-so begot so-and-so, right and It the aim is Multiplying on the face of the earth fulfilling that to my divine commission to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and You don't see Much Else in terms of the outcome of marriage until you come to the Song of Solomon and It is unique and it is set apart in that it depicts physical intimacy in marriage for joy for Unity for Relationship of a passionate kind for celebration for Just pure enjoyment of the attributes of your spouse reveling in their appearance and their characteristics and their presence in small details in in Being with them and being distressed when you're away from them.

We'll see this in the course of the of the Collection of songs here. There's a song where this is how I feel when he's away We've had even modern love songs, you know wishing you were here

and Things that that describe the distress of being apart, you know What's his name there had that you please come to Boston? I'm traveling all over the place and I'm not happy because you're not here It's a common theme of love and wouldn't it be something of an omission if one of the most central relationships in human life Wasn't tackled head-on. Well, that's what this book does.

So Karl Barth There's a lot of things you can say about Karl Barth but one of the things he said had to do with this book and he said it is it is eros without shame and that goes back to our quotation from Genesis the man and the woman were Transparent to each other and there was no shame and this is the this is the ideal It's as close as we're going to get to the garden until the Lord. Jesus returns is in this wonderful arena of married love so there is a This strong suggestion in this book that you have the king involved Solomon is the king at this point He is wealthy. He has a palace.

He's got vineyards We'll we'll see this in the course of the book and there is this Entrance into royal Environment by this girl who is the story such as it is the viewpoint is from her perspective and She is not accustomed to this. She's from the fields. She's from a Rural environment and she is brought into these palatial Splendiferous accommodations and Now she's going back and forth with the daughters of Jerusalem You know, this is sort of the the group that's on the inside and is accustomed to wealth and splendor and there's there's a little bit of Almost snippiness from time to time on the part of the daughters of Jerusalem looking at this Gal with a good tan from working outdoors coming into where the royalty is is feted and and provided for so This is a sort of an echo of the Sovereignty that is expressed the dominion that God gave to man in the garden and to Adam That he is to take charge of that post and all government property in view and He naming the animals is an expression of that sovereignty.

And so in the very first marriage you have this expression of responsibility and authority commensurate with carrying out that responsibility and There is authority of parents over children to carry out the responsibility of training them up in the way that they should go In any Relationship of people it's going to function best when it's not a a Committee with nobody in charge But where there is a hierarchy where there is a structure and along with authority comes accountability now there is responsibility there your feet are going to be held to the fire for production or performance or whatever it may be and there is responsibility to look out for those who have been placed in trust and It's not a question of inferiority or superiority it is a question of function we talked about this many times it's no less true in marriage and ever since the Breaking up when when Adam and Eve first disobey and eat of the fruit of the tree What's one of the immediate consequences? at First they were naked and in each other's company and not ashamed But what's one of the first symptoms that something has gone wrong? Now they know that they are naked They are self-conscious and they begin to even before The the sound of the Lord walking in the breeze of the day in the garden. They've already done the fig leaf thing. Why? They are no longer transparent open and unashamed with each other And they hide themselves

and this Brokenness in the marriage relationship is a direct result of breaking their relationship with God himself through disobedience so Ever since then there has not only has has soul intimacy and heart intimacy been more difficult, but physical intimacy and the Nature of that within the bounds of marriage has been broken and corrupted and so you have everything from Abuse of Intimacy within marriage to exploitation and perversions of all different shape sizes and descriptions outside of marriage a corruption of that ideal that was designed to be an intimate connection between one man and one woman who are married to each other and no one else and with the Breaking of the vertical relationship comes the corruption of the horizontal relationship and it has been that way ever since so You can see this as you go through Genesis and and how that evil just multiplies and festers and instead of multiplying Godly children you have the multiplication of evil Along with that growth of the of the human race so when you come to this song The second thing to point out the first is this is about intimate passionate love between a man and a woman who are married to each other and It is of a piece with the picture of marriage that God uses throughout scripture for a variety of purposes and in a variety of ways the second thing to note here is this is a song the very first words of this book are this is the song of all songs and Written as I believe by Solomon who is an extremely intellectually capable guy There's a lot of double entendre in this book.

It's going to talk about one thing and be Suggestive of another that is more intimate and and it's it's tasteful in that if you look at some of the old black-and-white classic movies if if the Hero and heroine are going to go off and make hay with one another You see them arm-in-arm and then there's just a door that shuts Well the shutting door You can fill in the details with your mind You don't really need the camera to go through the door as it does in in modern entertainment and give you all of the gory details The closing door is enough Right. Well, you have a lot of wonderful beautiful Suggestive language in the song of songs Because it is poetry and it is poetry set to music. This is a song and not only is it The song of songs in the sense that If if Jesus is King of Kings and Lord of Lords He's the best King.

He's the best Lord and he is Over beyond and superior to all others. This song is presented as being over and superior to all other songs Solomon were told elsewhere wrote a whole bunch of songs and Proverbs and a whole bunch of things But we only have three That are directly attributed to Solomon We have Psalm I Think it's Psalm 72 Psalm 127. I'm going by memory here and this It says he wrote thousands But there are two recorded in the book of Psalms and there's one here and this is the song of all songs This is the keeper So not only is it the superlative song But it is a song composed of songs It is a song that's got several songs in it.

This is what people like Paul McCartney would do when They were so prolific and they were writing songs and they would write complete songs He and John Lennon would get together and write songs together And and that was all fine but every once in a while they would have a little musical idea or a little snippet and They would just set it down and it would just be it wasn't enough for a full song, but it was a great little catchy Piece. Well, these would accumulate and

eventually In order to make some use of them they would just stitch them together And so you have a song made of two or three other songs If you've ever heard that song that ends up with hands across the water and and then it's got Admiral Halsey and a bunch of it That's a song made of little scraps of song that Paul couldn't finish out So he just stuck them all together and they just come out of nowhere a day in the life John Lennon's thing about I heard the news today and a guy gets smashed in a car and How many holes would fill the Albert Hall and all the rest of it right in the middle? there's a little bit of a fugue scene and It's got a whole different beat and and a whole different Somebody's hustling to get to work on time. And and all of a sudden there's this Chorus and John Lennon singing this really kind of catchy tune and that well that that is a pastiche of about three different songs so there's plenty of precedent for different pieces You can think about Handel's Messiah.

There are a number of oratorios and and Smaller pieces within that I had a question Come into my email. Somebody said you've got this wonderful radio program and I really love listening to it, but I'm just curious What is that theme music? It starts with a big bass drumbeat and then I hear the choir singing worthy is the Lamb Where does that come from? And I said well That's that's the closing part of Handel's Messiah and I got a note back just this morning and the guy said I am so glad To finally find that out. I have listened to Handel's Messiah over and over again But I've only ever listened to the first two parts and when it gets to the to the hallelujah chorus I quit and I just I never did keep listening well, that's the very next thing worthy is the Lamb right after the hallelujah chorus and Handel thought worthy is the Lamb was the big finish Everybody else including the King of England thought well the hallelujah chorus is the that that's the big finish And he had never he said I can't tell you how many times I've listened to the Messiah and I never Listened to that part.

I'm so glad to find out, you know that that's that's the real finish. So It's a song composed of these various little oratorios and solos and and all of these beautiful pieces It is a song of songs. It is a piece of pieces, right? So that's what this is then these have been divided a lot of different ways in the initial introduction.

I gave you 14 different sections You can divide it differently and come up with with with six you can incorporate them just any number of different ways I'm going to Suggest to you that that There are some markers in the text Kind of like in Genesis where it says this is the book of the generations of thus and so that is the end note on an old clay tablet that Noah took a cross on the ark and When he gives the descendants of this one and that one and the other one the descendants of Cain he didn't have that all memorized He and Ham and Shem and Japheth didn't come up with a folk song and played on the banjo so they could remember all the verses And all the names it was written down. These are the generations is a marker, well, there are some markers in this text and You can decide for yourself what is and isn't a marker as I say it can be divided a number of different ways And we'll look at that as we go through but it is a song of songs and singing and music are Integral to the Bible look at all of the celebration songs

Remember once they got across the Red Sea in Exodus chapter 15 Moses and the children of Israel sang a song to the Lord Music is a part of human life. It's all in what you do with it Intimate physical contact is a part of human life.

It is where and how and why you do it that counts right Paul is going to go at great pains to explain to the Corinthians that all things are lawful, but not all things are edifying so whether you're thinking about music whether you're thinking about intimacy with Human being of the opposite gender that you are married to Whether you are thinking about any one of a number of different things. It can be eating. It can be drinking It can be celebrating it can be entertainment it can be various mundane pursuits It's not that there is intrinsic evil and many times we justify things because there's nothing intrinsically wrong with it It is the setting it is the context it is the purpose it is Who it's done with Having a jest is fine, but who are you jesting with is it coarse jesting are you with a bunch of Misbegotten sons of Belial or are you Enjoying fellowship with believers of like mind it makes a difference and it's no different with intimate physical relations There's nothing intrinsically wrong, but because it has been so misused and perverted Even people within the church have felt guilty about enjoying the manifold pleasures of intimate physical relationship and it's a shame because There's no need You just go back to the first marriage.

They were naked they were transparent and they were not ashamed and As a pastor that many of us listened to in the past often said Anything that a husband and wife find enjoyable together and neither one of them finds it offensive or off-putting is fair game a Married husband and wife can do whatever they want with and to each other as long as they are of like mind as long as there is no shame as long as it is done in the context of Enjoying what God has provided and enjoying that intimate passionate relationship in every different dimension Then there is no shame and should be no shame It's the one place where we can recover so much of what was lost in the disobedience in the garden But notice this is in the context of healthy relationship with God first Healthy relationship with each other second if there's a problem in the vertical relationship that other is not going to work and it's not going to happen and there will be some sort of Problem there will be abuse. There will be Limitation there will be angst there will be no end of difficulties Relationship with God comes first have to be in that place before partaking of the forbidden fruit Cleansed of sin cleansed of selfish motivation So this is a song it is a Superlative song and it is a song composed of songs and songs are used in celebration. I gave you exodus 15 Deborah and Barak you may not remember this but in Judges chapter 5 Deborah and Barak after the great You remember Sisera and the whole tent peg thing? Deborah and Barak saying on that day When leaders lead in Israel when the people willingly offer themselves bless the Lord and you could apply that to marriage It the very first verse of that song in a completely different context But look at the opening line of the song of Deborah and Barak when leaders lead When people willingly offer themselves bless the Lord That's a summation of what God designed marriage to be Hear O Kings give ear O princes.

I even I will sing to the Lord I will sing praise to the Lord God of Israel and so on. It's a wonderful beautiful song You think of all of the songs that David wrote in the Psalms the the most lengthy book in the Old Testament Is a song of songs it is a book of songs and David even in 2nd Samuel go to 2nd Samuel chapter 22 David spoke to the Lord the words of this Song on the day when the Lord had delivered him from the hand of all of his enemies When we are delivered from the hand of our enemies sin pattern sins evil corruption defilement Selfishness mental attitude sins sins of the tongue overt sins when we are delivered from those enemies We can sing this song this song of songs David sang one in 2nd Samuel chapter 22. He said the Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer The God of my strength in whom I will trust my shield and the horn of my salvation my stronghold and my refuge My Savior you save me from violence.

I will call upon the Lord who is worthy to be praised So shall I be saved from my enemies when the waves of death surround me and so on it is a song of celebration of relationship with God this song is a song of celebration of relationship with your God-given spouse and And Nothing to be afraid of nothing to be ashamed of when you understand its place in God's revelation and its purpose to celebrate what God has provided the man and the woman the husband and the wife who are to cling to each other and I don't even think it is until death do us part and more about that when we get to Matthew chapter 10 We have a very interesting study coming up when we get to chapter 10 in that gospel So That's the second main point. Our third main point is who is the cast of characters and as I've already alluded I believe you basically have three Speakers three sources of speech and that is Solomon This Beautiful intelligent woman and the daughters of Israel and that's it And why is it so many people say well, but there's the shepherd lover and I and all this thing about the shepherd There is an intriguing idea. It is not unique to me This is Gleason Archer's idea and I like it.

I like it a lot. I like it so much I'm going to share it with you and I'm going to give him full credit We Turn to the Song of Solomon and its lyric emotional imagery Which is constructed like a mood-creating symphony written by a musical genius and performed by a magnificent orchestra It is a heart-stirring account of Solomon's romance with a humble but surpassingly beautiful girl from the country Perhaps from Shunem up in the territory of Issachar When you get to Shulamite later in the book if you go to the Septuagint, it's not Shulamite. It's Shunemite And it may be that Solomon originally wooed her in the garb of a shepherd and Thus came to know her as she was tending her sheep in an adjacent field and there's evidence in the book It's going to later talk about About Solomon's land holdings, but this is this is Gleason Archer's idea It is quite possible that in the earlier part of his reign at least Solomon took time off from his official duties to enjoy a vacation in the country Apparently in an estate at Baal Hamon.

This is in chapter 8 verse 11 of this book Solomon had a vineyard at Baal Hamon. He leased the vineyard to keepers. Everyone was to bring for its fruit a thousand silver coins Well, Baal Hamon is thought to have been up in the north country.

That's also where Shunem is But Baal Hamon, we don't know exactly where it was, but it seems to have been up north It has been associated with Baal Gad which is up in the area of Mount Hermon Which is the northernmost reach of Israel This is as far as Joshua got in the conquest is Mount Hermon and at the foot of Mount Hermon is this Baal Gad Which could also be Baal Hamon, but anyway, it is somewhere up north. It's very fertile It's the northern end of that beautiful fertile valley that extends all the way down. It's eventually going to be Armageddon, but Here's here's Archer's idea quite possible that Solomon took time off and Would go to his land holdings get away from Jerusalem get away from the palace get away from all the trappings and go Travel the country and just dress as a shepherd to a place where he's not known go up north And so he would go to his vineyard up there and his preference was for the tending of sheep vines and flowers He's the son of a shepherd He's got the heart initially that David had and it's easy to imagine that he would love to just you know Put the viziers and the administrators in charge and leave Dress up in shepherds clothing and do a little bit of the family business His father had flocks David had flocks Solomon would go and tend these flocks and look look over these vineyards so He spent a few weeks away from Jerusalem incognito Some scholars prefer to introduce a local swain who was a shepherd by profession and who became a Successful rival to the king for the girls affections But this is very hard to sustain from the wording of the text itself And it is most unlikely that Solomon the apparent author of this production This is the guy who said it would have written up this episode as a monument to his own defeat in love Which I think is humorous as he picked up an acquaintance with this charming young shepherd as Solomon found himself Unexpectedly falling in love and she apparently became deeply enamored of him before she discovered his true identity as He secured her hand in marriage.

He took her off with him to Jerusalem and the splendors of his court there She was faced with the 60 wives and 80 concubines who already made up his harem and in these palace surroundings She felt abashed at the unfashionable deep tan She had picked up from her outdoor life to which she had been compelled by her own brothers and that's chapter 1 verse 6 We looked at that a couple of weeks ago The memoir Solomon wrote of this deeply meaningful episode in his life in which he experienced the most authentic Relationship of love he was ever to know has been recorded for us in an amazingly beautiful way by this consummately gifted poet Although through his foolish self-indulgence this misguided polygamist failed to live up to the exalted insights to which this lovely girl had brought him He gave us an unsurpassable expression to the glory of a love that reflects the incomparable love of God and I would add the love that was Originally found in the garden between Adam and Eve This is the one girl The only girl that Solomon ever needed as a wife and as a marriage partner This is the one that God had designed as his physical mate his soulmate his his heart's desire, but as the human race does in departing from God and eventually Breaking the marriage relationship. This is what happened with Solomon in my view and I would expand on Gleason Archer's idea. This may have actually been his first love but because he was the king and because it was customary he started accumulating wives and concubines which scripture itself warned against and This is what he broke.

This is what he lost and it started with his departure from God and Ended up with the wives and concubines. I think it's I think it's a valuable insight I think it works it explains so much of what you encounter in this book and It is Solomon and he did start out as a shepherd and then he does the big reveal and he says, you know I'm a little bit more than a shepherd and he brings her to the palace and she's impressed but she looks around and sees already the undermining of the character and the beauty and the grace that characterized Solomon because of God's gifts and God's grant of wisdom to him and That that explains a lot of the back-and-forth in the book. Well This concludes our introduction.

We're going to take a look at the songs that compose this Song of songs and That's the view we're going to take you've got three speakers you have this Girl, and it's told from her perspective and she's going to quote the daughters of Jerusalem and she's going to quote Solomon himself sometimes in the guise of the shepherds sometimes revealed as the king and in the palace and these are her thoughts and the joy that she and Solomon share When they get married which they do this is not a dalliance. It's not a failed try this is a Wonderful marriage It just we know from history Doesn't last and isn't it something when you look at as we'll see the incredible surpassingly great joy and Fulfillment in this relationship How could that ever? Be given up. How could it ever be abandoned? How could you ever sacrifice that on the altar of something else? But it happens You think well if I had a marriage like that, I would just be so blissfully happy.

I would never leave it I would never never compromise it never sacrifice it never depart from it Well, you want to talk about one of the applications that we're going to receive out of this book? It is not enough to to recognize the joy of our salvation It's not enough to recognize the surpassingly great promises and the riches of God's blessings on us in Christ And even to enjoy them you can still lose it How does Solomon lose this this is what he starts out with? How does he end up with all these wives and concubines? well, how do we start out with Christ and the joy of our salvation and Like the Ephesians in Revelation chapter 2 and 3 lose our first love and Have to be called back to it. How does that happen? Well, it's revealed in this book. The seeds of it are Visible in some of the back and forth in this book and that's why it's here.

It's so great It's so persuasive. It's so powerful. It's so passionate.

You can't imagine it ever being broken and yet it is well If I can find out how that happened I can find out how to avoid it, right? So that's what we'll be looking for as we travel through the book, but we'll close here tonight in a word of prayer father Thank you for the wonderful Comprehensive truth of your word that addresses us at so many levels and in so many different areas of our life We pray that as we reflect on this particular portion of your word that God the Holy Spirit will minister it to our hearts help us to Understand its purpose and to find its application in our experience. We pray these things in Jesus name. Amen