

SongOfSolomon 20-02-13a

This is Thursday, the 13th of February, 2020. We're continuing our study of the Song of Solomon, and I will confess unashamedly that the content of the book, the more that I've delved into it, has been a complete surprise, so much so that a lot of my early preparation, which spanned weeks, pretty much went out the window. And I apologize if some of the things I said, even the earlier part of this study, will have changed.

I'm not quite sure what I'm going to do about that. I've never had it happen before, where I learned so much between when I started and when I finished that I have to go back and pretty much say, sorry, disregard what I said earlier. But it's been a really fascinating study, and this book has opened up, at least to my eye, and yielded some wonderful insights and some great practical treasure.

And we'll continue taking a look at that tonight. I thought I might be able to conclude tonight, but again, this past week's study has just blinded me with science, so to speak. So I will update you on the things that have emerged, and we're just kind of exploring together.

Instead of me exploring the cave and coming back and handing you a map, I'm kind of taking you with me on my excursion here. So I hope that doesn't disconcert anyone. But we are going to be picking up, and we'll be in chapter two, we're going to look specifically at one of the thematic highlights of the book, and one of the keys, I think, to its interpretation.

That'll be in chapter two. So if you've got that page, you'll be in good shape. Let's take a moment as we begin to ask God's blessing on our fellowship and on our study, and we'll get started.

Father, it's such a wonderful thing to find that as we look into the storehouse of your word, we find things both new and old. We're encouraged to see the affirmation of the truths that we've long known and seen reiterated and emphasized across the Testaments, across the books, across the chapters. And at the same time, it is a never-ending wellspring of water of life for our souls, and we find new things to learn and new understandings, fresh appreciation for the Lord Jesus and for you as our Heavenly Father, for the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and for the tremendous and limitless riches of your word.

We pray that as we look at this portion of it tonight, that your Holy Spirit will guide us, illuminate our path, help us to understand it rightly and to find that applicable truth that will guide us and keep our steps on solid ground in the days and weeks and months ahead. We pray that in all things, the Lord Jesus will be glorified in our fellowship and in our lives. We pray these things in His name.

Amen. The portion of the book we're going to look at tonight, as I said, is in chapter two, and it is going to specifically be this charge in verse seven that is repeated two more times. I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or by the does of the field, do not stir up nor awaken

love until it pleases.

This has been quite the conundrum ever since this book came into view in the ancient world. It puzzled the scribes, it puzzled the rabbis, it puzzled interpreters in the early church, and opinions on its meaning and its significance hinge largely on what you understand the rest of the book to be saying. If it is merely a tribute to the fascinating nature of eros, inside or outside marriage, depending on who you talk to, then this has connotations about... I've seen applications, I think probably one of the more intelligible and perhaps understandable renderings of this has been, ladies, don't provoke a guy to undo physical intimacy unless you're in the right circumstance and ready to have it in the context of a commitment, et cetera.

But we're going to take a look at this in detail, and I'm going to basically bring you along the path that I myself have traveled here using scripture as a guide. There is a means of ascertaining what a difficult passage means and says that involves looking at immediate context, looking at other places where words and so on are used. And one of the things that I've been doing in this case is to use those tools to make sure we're understanding it correctly.

So if you look at this in Hebrew, the first thing I want to understand is what does this young lady mean when she's talking to the daughters of Jerusalem and she says, I charge you, I charge you. Well, this is from the Hebrew root shaba, S-H-A-B-A, and it is the word that is used for taking an oath, making a pledge to swear. And so I think, well, why does it get translated adjur here? Places this is used elsewhere.

You can go back to Genesis 21, 23 is one of the first occurrences. And, you know, just from the location in Genesis that this is going to be the time of Abraham. And so in 21, 23 of Genesis, Abimelech and Phechol, the commander of his army said to Abraham, God is with you in all that you do.

Now, therefore swear to me here before God, that you will not deal falsely with me or my children or descendants show to me and to the country in which you reside the same kindness that I have shown to you. And Abraham replied, I swear it. Well, this is the word shaba.

So this is a type of promise, making a promise. Pledging. I pledge allegiance to the flag, this sort of thing.

You can go down to verse 31 of that same chapter and find that the two of them took an oath, swore this oath at Beersheba. You find it in the mouth of the Lord God in the next chapter, Genesis 22, 16. The angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time saying, by myself, I have sworn declares the Lord that because you have done this and have not withheld your only son, I will surely bless you.

Your descendants will be like the stars in the sky, the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will possess the gates of their enemies and so on. God pledges, God swears, God promises.

So as we look at this, we say, well, what does the word mean in this context? We know that this is the Shulamite talking to the daughters of Jerusalem. And in this context, she's been talking about Solomon and his activities. And in that context, as we saw in recent weeks, verse five is very significant.

She says, sustain me with cakes of raisins, refresh me with apples for I am lovesick. So in finding out, does this mean a juror to charge? I want you to swear to me or I swear to you. What exactly is going on? Why does this suddenly come up? Well, this is the first of three times that this identical thing occurs.

And so if we look at the context, it's going to help us understand why out of the blue she says this. People say, oh, she's in the throes of love. Well, if we back up here to verse five, why is she calling for or making some sort of pledge or oath or swearing something in connection with the daughters of Jerusalem? And she puts it in the hyphial, this shavah word is in the hyphial.

Hyphial in Hebrew is the causative stem. It's the, I cause a promise toward you. And this is where they get the idea of charge or a juror.

I am calling for, I am causing a promise from you, oh, daughters of Jerusalem. And this, so this is the idea of, of urging, but not just, I suggest, I advise. You look at the seriousness in Genesis 21 and 22 of what that means.

The oath that is taken with Abimelech, the oath that God makes by his own self. The Abrahamic covenant is made with this word. So she says, I am calling for a, the deepest of commitments from you, oh, daughters of Jerusalem.

Does that make sense? It's not a suggestion. Although of course it only can be, she can't force them to do this, but this, she is calling for the strongest possible commitment to what she's about to say. Well, why is she suddenly calling for this commitment? You go up two verses to verse five.

And what does she say here? In verse four, he brought me to the house of wine. This, this is not an intimate little getaway. This is not a bungalow on the beach.

This is not a, a private chamber somewhere. The house of wine is a big place, flagons and wenches and music and, you know, good friends and feasting. And you've seen these sorts of scenes, uh, in the, in the past and in the present, the house of wine is a big place full of people, right? That's where he brought her.

Where does she want to be? Not, not there. His banner over me and notice if a banner is over you, you can't read it. If there was a banner over my head right now, could I read it? I could crane my neck around and say, oh, I see what the banner is, which is what she had to do.

But who is the banner for? Who's the sign for all the people in the room? So Solomon stands up, sloshes a bit of wine in his hand and says, folks, I just want to tell you the Shulamite is my O-A-O, my one and only. She's my love, my life, my night, my day, my up, my down. She's, she's my everything.

You know, you could use any number of, of, uh, of complimentary epithets to introduce her. I love her. She's my love.

She's my Ahav, my Ahava in the feminine. Okay. Got the setting, right? What does she say? She says, sustain me, strengthen me with apples and cakes of raisins.

Now this word for sustain means prop me up. I'm, I am, I am weakened to the point that I need support, support me, give me something to lean on, uphold me. Uh, I could give you lots of places where this is used, but basically, uh, I, if I don't get something to help me, I'm going to fall on the floor.

His banner is love and she's about to fall on the floor. Why is she not happy and strengthened and joyful? And we'll give me a flag and then I'll toast you right back. Um, the conceit here, the assumption has often been in standard interpretation that she just loves him so much.

She's weak in the knees and can hardly stand. I don't, I don't see that. And I'll tell you why.

And you're going to see it here with me shortly. So first of all, she is in serious need of support. And we've already talked about the apples and, and she has compared him to an apple tree and she wants to sit in his shade and be intimate and so on.

Uh, but then she says, for, I am sick due to love. Love is Ahava. Remember Ahab, oddly enough, wickedest King in the Northern kingdom, but his name means love.

It tells you something about the dangers of love. Ahab and Jezebel, that's, you know, a dangerous mix. So she says, sustain me with these pressed cakes and, and apples because I am sick Ahava, sick of love, sick from love, sick due to love.

Love has somehow made her sick. Now, is this a good thing or a bad thing? Well, it hinges on the word sick. Sick here is the word Kala, C-H-A-L-A-H.

It means to be weak, to be sick. What I'm interested in is where do we find it associated with love? You can find it used in Judges chapter 16. If you remember the, the geometry of Judges chapter 16 is the Samson and Delilah chapter.

So when Delilah says, Samson, tell me the secret of your power, your strength. And he says, Oh, if you bind me with cords that have not been dried, then I will become weak and be like any other man. And the word for weak is this word Kala.

I will be impotent. I will be helpless in the grip of the guys that are going to come in and arrest me. And in verse 7, in verse 11, in verse 17, each time she questions him, he says, my strength will leave me and I will become weak and be like any other man.

And it is this Kala word. More to the point in 2 Samuel chapter 13 and verse 2, please turn. If you don't want to turn to any others, you need to turn to this one.

2 Samuel chapter 13. When you know 2 Samuel, these are going to be the early chapters are going to be the days of David. And as soon as you get there, you'll see where we're headed.

So you have the birth of Solomon in chapter 12, verse 24. Coincidentally, perhaps Solomon first appears on the scene in the immediately preceding context. Shlomo is born.

That's 12, 24 and 25 called him Jedidiah because of the Lord. Then you have this a little kick out for the capture of Rabbah. And then in chapter 13, after this Absalom, the son of David had a lovely sister whose name was Tamar.

Amnon, the son of David loved her. Amnon was so distressed over his sister Tamar that he became Kala. And the word here is Ahav.

He's in love with her. This is a particular kind of love, isn't it? It is a lust love. It is a physical fascination love.

He doesn't admire her fine qualities and her inner beauty. He's not ready to stick with her till death do us part. He wants to have her in the physical sense of the word.

And he is so distressed over her that he became Kala, sick. She was a virgin. This is the physical side of the attraction.

It was improper for Amnon to do anything to her, but Amnon had a friend, you know, the rest of this story. And he says, pretend to be sick so that she will come and tend to you. So in 13.5, Jonadab says, lie down on your bed and pretend to be Kala.

He is Kala in the sense of his incredible sort of superficial desire for her. So Jonadab says, pretend to be physically Kala. And when your father comes to see you say, please let my sister Tamar come and give me food, prepare the food in my sight.

Give me food. I'm sick. Give me food.

You begin to see the commonality here. Do you not sustain me with food because I am Kala? Now she's talking about Solomon. These are in the days when Solomon was very small, but do you not think that these stories are current and fresh in the palace and in the currency of the day? Oh, David's family.

Let me tell you some of the interesting stories such as we find about Absalom and about Amnon and about the other brothers who preceded Solomon before he came to the throne. It's within recent living memory that these things took place. So if somebody is going to talk about being sick due to love and asking for food, what's the first story anybody's going to think of? Oh, there was a guy that was sick from love and requested food.

How did that turn out? The nature of that love gives away, you know, it's not a happy story. It's a negative story. So in 13.2, in 13.5, in 13.6, you have the threefold use of this word Kala in connection with Amnon's real and feigned illness that results in the undoing of a genuinely beautiful and caring young lady who is misused and horribly wronged by this, quote unquote, Ahav love.

So that is telling when we come back here to the sickness that the Shulamite has. Here she is in the house of wine, all through these early chapters, as we have seen now for several weeks, he seems to be everywhere except briefly in the chamber. She's the lily, but he's off grazing among other lilies.

She's in the bedchamber, he's out on the mountains. Um, so, uh, this call for commitment from the Shulamite to the daughters of Jerusalem, she says, I, I want to cause a pledge from you. He feel causative.

I, you know how they, they've tried to make these chastity pledges, get the young girls to sign cards saying, I'll be a virgin until I'm married. You know, there are varying degrees of success with extracting a promise from somebody that they may or may not have a deep seated commitment to. There are people who, who achieve this and, and do so, um, willingly and, you know, God's grace is upon them, but simply calling for it doesn't mean it's going to happen, but it does present the option in very clear cut terms.

Jesus said, come unto me, all ye who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest that created a very clear choice. And that's the nature of this call for a, for an oath or a pledge. And she basically says, if you're smart, you'll make this pledge.

Well, what is it? I charge you, daughters of Jerusalem chapter two, verse seven, by the gazelles or by the does of the field. It's interesting that it's not. And, uh, and the, the wording here is of interest.

Um, she says, I charge you. And between those two things, I guess we looked at verse five. I am lovesick.

His left hand is under my head and his right hand. Yamin Yad Yamin. Remember Ben Yamin son of my right hand.

Well, that's, that's the word there. His, his right hand, his right hand is embracing me. Um, so his

left hand is under my head and his right hand embraces me.

You think, well, what's that got to do with anything? Think about handedness and the implications in old Testament days in the ancient near East. If you had a choice, symbolically speaking, metaphorically speaking of which hand is supporting your head, your thoughts, your emotions, your cognizant, intelligent self, and which hand is wrapping itself around your body. There's, there's the body and there's the mind.

There's the thought life and there's the physical life, right? Which hand, why does she mention, why doesn't she say he has one hand here and one hand there? She specifies his left hand is under my head. His right hand is embracing my body. The right hand is the hand of intentionality of power of purpose.

I will strengthen you. I will help you. I will uphold you.

God says with the right hand of my righteousness. It's not just that it's a righteous hand, but God's purpose is to manifest righteousness, to make us righteous, to reflect and create righteousness in us by faith. And his right hand is involved with that.

It's the hand of purpose and the hand of power here. Suggestively Solomon's right hand is embracing her. The left hand, which is the, the offhand, you know, sinister versus Dexter is under her head.

And there is a connotation here that he's doing the minimal utility tasks. The left hand was the hand for utility tasks. And that's as far as I'll take that.

But in the modern Arab world, uh, there are certain tasks that are only performed with the left hand. And this has roots going back millennia centuries, at least in millennia of the left hand is, is the offhand. It's the less best hand.

It's the hand for, for cleanliness and so on. That left hand is under her head and the right hand is embracing her. And you get the idea that the physical embrace suggested here is more important to Solomon than supporting her thought life, her emotions, her inner self, which is in her head.

Anyway, you continue. Now I charge you a daughters of Jerusalem by the gazelles or by the does of the field. Well, why these two animals of all the, why not by the doves or the sheep or, you know, any number of things.

Uh, first of all, we have the word for gazelles here, and this is fascinating. The word is TSIV, T S I B. It's a soft B. It's a V almost. T S I V I or V I Y. David used this word famously in second Samuel chapter one, verse 19.

If you've still got a near second Samuel, go back to notice how these things are suggestive because they all seem to hook back into significant events in the immediately preceding time of

David and the early days of Solomon. Second Samuel chapter one. You remember at the end of first Samuel, what happens? Why do they even divide the book right there? It's one book in Hebrew.

Where does first and second Samuel divide right at the death of Saul and Jonathan, right? On Mount Gilboa, which of Endor, Gilboa. And it came to pass after the death of Saul. That's where second Samuel begins.

And you've got this, uh, guy that comes to David and prostrates himself on the ground and reports the thing. Um, and he's an Amalekite, but after the news and after the news, slaying the messenger, so to speak, uh, you begin at verse 17, David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan, his son. And he told them to teach the children of Judah, the song of the bow.

Indeed, it is written in the book of Jasher verse 19. Here's our word. Do you see it? The beauty of Israel is slain on your high places.

How the mighty have fallen our word Sivi is in that verse and it's translated beauty. Literally the gazelle of Israel is slain on your high places. It's pure and simple.

The word gazelle, why I, I charge you by the gazelles of the field by the does of the field. And then we have the, the content of the, of the charge, but she charges them by the gazelle by the beauty and by the fleetness of foot. They, you know, Saul should have been able to escape his head and shoulders taller than almost anybody in the land and the surrounding land.

And yet he is slain. He should have by normal standards been able to escape this fate, but he doesn't. And the gazelle has been slain on the heights.

Gazelles are famously great on the heights, but he's slain there. And it's, it's, and, and, and the implication there is that, that he's the gazelle of Israel. He's the best.

He's the most beautiful in the sense of leadership and so on. David pays a great tribute to him here, but let's see what Solomon has to say about the gazelle. We're just about to go to our break here, but turn to Proverbs chapter six, Proverbs chapter six.

You can imagine that if the Shulamite is in love with Solomon and she finds some stuff that he has either written or begun to compose or collect or whatever, she's certainly a literate gal. She wrote this book. She would have familiarized herself with some of what he has collected and put down.

So when you come to Proverbs chapter six, my son, if you become surety for your friend, if you've shaken hands in pledge for a stranger, this is from our same root, our same oath promise adjuration word here in pledge for a stranger. And you're snared by the words of your mouth and you're taken by the words of your mouth. You made a hasty intemperate Jephthah type of oath.

Do this my son and deliver yourself for you have come under the power of your friend. You're in the hand of your friend. Anything about hands in our context, anything about pledge in our context, anything about regret at being in the power or the hand of someone go and humble yourself, plead with your friend, give no sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids.

Deliver yourself verse five, like a gazelle from the hand and like a bird from the hand of the Fowler notice of the hunter is in italics there. She's in the grip of both hands. He's got the less great hand under her head and he's got the hand of power and purpose embracing her.

And what is Solomon say in Proverbs chapter six, verse five, if you find yourself in the, in the grip of an unhappy pledge that you made, that you reciprocated, deliver yourself like a gazelle. I charge you. I call for an oath from you.

Oh, daughters of Jerusalem by the gazelles of the field. That's the first part. And it's no accident.

There's, there's beauty. There's attraction. The gazelles are graceful and fascinating to look at.

They're, they're synonymous with beauty, but they're also synonymous with knowing how to deliver themselves from the hand of those who would take hold of them. So no accident. Well, what would we draw from just what we've seen so far? We've in our first session, we've made it through half of this verse, uh, looking at its context, understanding at least my perception of this book is that while things started out great, they very quickly begin to sour for the Shulamite because Solomon is not despite his protestations going to be a one woman, man.

Now he's already started building his harem and it is going to be multiplied several fold before he's done. And the Shulamite, as soon as she arrives at the King's palace and in the King's chambers begins to look around. And after a few days, he isn't there.

It was pointed out. I think Matthew mentioned this, uh, last time that, uh, remember in Israel, when a man got married, uh, what was his relationship to the army? As soon as he got married, what was the law in Israel? He was not to go out into battle for how long? A year. She's just gotten to the palace and she's looking next to her in bed and he's gone.

And he says, well, I've got business over the mountain. I've got business down the road. I'm riding in my Polanco and I'm here and there.

And the ideal according to God's law was that a man would stay home, not go out and come in with the army or anything else because he was to devote himself to his wife, develop cement and cultivate that close bond, that pledge that they had mutually entered into at marriage. And God warned Israel what would happen if they got a King and what he would multiply to himself. You find that back in first Samuel, in the, in the words of Samuel himself, the prophet, this is what's going to happen.

Give us a King. They say the law warned them, the prophet Samuel warned them, and they did it anyway. And Solomon, allegedly the wisest man ever is undone in this regard.

So what application having observed this and interpreted this portion of the book, what would the application be for us? Well, we can already see that great caution should be made. Anytime we enter into a pledge, Proverbs chapter six, verses one through five, you know, are you going to go bail? Are you going to cosign? Are you going to put yourself as a shoulder under the load of someone else in a commitment type way, a long-term promissory kind of way? If you find that this has any, any shadows in its vicinity, be the gazelle. You had better be dead certain that if you make such a commitment, you can keep it because otherwise you're going to sicken others that are involved.

She's not sick from happiness. She's not sick from having a chair in the house of wine. She's sick because she's arm candy.

She's a trophy wife. She's got a banner over her and she's being shown off in the house of feasting, but she herself isn't getting what was promised. And so she's going to warn the daughters of Jerusalem.

And this is a warning for every young lady in the specific area that this is happening in, which is romantic entanglement. And we're going to see in the second session tonight, what the last part of this means, what is it to arouse and awaken love? And what does it mean until it pleases? Um, similar illumination to what we've already seen in the first half of the verse is available in the word of God. And hopefully by the time we finish tonight, uh, we'll understand that, that the rest of the book is really a setting for these three identical warnings, if you will, calls for commitment from the Shulamite to the daughters of Jerusalem and by extension, daughters anywhere who are purportedly dedicated.

Why the daughters of Jerusalem? Jerusalem is God's capital. It's the place of God's presence. If there's ever a daughter that ought to be, uh, looking to and reflecting the glory of God, it would be daughters in Jerusalem.

So if you want to figuratively be a daughter of Jerusalem, uh, these are words to seriously. Let's pause here and take our break. When we come back, uh, if I could say we, we have quite a bit more in terms of revelation from the word of God to illuminate the last half of this verse, I'm sure you will not be disappointed, but let's pause here and take our break.