

SongOfSolomon 20-01-30a-new

We're starting a new study tonight in the Song of Solomon and there are some surprises in store, certainly surprised me working on it this past week, but I think it will be illuminating to say the least, challenging to say more. Let's take a moment as we prepare for our study to go to the Lord in prayer, remembering that the ministry of the Holy Spirit and the delivery and the reception of the Word of God is all important and very necessary for us to rightly divide the Word of Truth. Shall we pray? Father, it is a privilege and a blessing each time we meet together to seek to understand your Word better, to find the truth of it so that your Holy Spirit can use it to enable us and empower us for the supernatural life to which we have been called.

We know how easy it is to fall into human viewpoint and into the ways of the world, and it is only by your grace in illuminating our path and our hearts with your Word that we can rise above it and prepare ourselves not only for ministry function and opportunity in this life, but also in the age to come. We pray that as we look at this portion of your Word together, that the Holy Spirit will superintend ministry to each heart in a way that is meaningful and memorable as we look for its application in the time that remains to us in this life. We pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen. After surveying any number of commentaries on the Song of Solomon, I kept looking at the content of the book and not finding justification for most of the viewpoints expressed and comments that were made about it, both in history and all the way up to the present day. Context is always our interpretive recourse when there is a struggle to understand any particular passage, and that is one of the things that I certainly rely upon.

So in looking at the context, I've drawn some conclusions that were helpful to me and have convinced me that we need to take a slightly different tack than the traditional view in looking at this book. I think you'll see tonight that there is merit in this approach. I hope it will be helpful as we move through the content looking at it from this point of view.

First of all, I want to direct your attention to one particular passage that is almost an aside. It's found later in the book, and it has to do with Solomon's situation during the period when these episodes and events take place. So if you'll turn to Song of Solomon, chapter 6, verse 8. We're not anywhere near there, of course, but this is a helpful observation, and it was one of the led me to a better understanding, I think, in terms of perspective.

This is the section where Solomon is describing his beloved as a girl with hair like a flock of goats, teeth like a flock of sheep, one thing and another. But look at verse 8 of chapter 6. There are 60 queens and 80 concubines and virgins without number already in Solomon's harem. Now, what is the total of wives and concubines that we know Solomon eventually accumulates? You remember this.

You look in 1 Kings chapter 11, verse 3, and it tells us that he had 700 wives and 300

concubines. If you total them up, you get a thousand women in the harem eventually. But at this point in time, where we find Solomon in this book, it tells us that this is from an earlier period.

He's currently got only 60 queens, not 700. He's got 80 concubines, not 300. It's a point to bear in mind that as time goes on, he is going to accumulate a lot more women in the harem than there are when this particular snapshot is taken.

What I'm going to suggest to you is that the book is in fact a story told from a woman's point of view, the Shulamite woman. In fact, I would submit that there is any book in the Bible that you can more or less confidently claim was written by a woman. This is a fair candidate.

I think Solomon received it. I think he understood it. I think he collected it and added it to the corpus that would eventually become his portion, his contribution to Old Testament scripture.

I think the Shulamite composed it. I think she wrote the whole thing. It appears to me to be her words from her perspective, and she quotes Solomon.

She quotes others in the course of telling this story and composing this message, which is specifically addressed to the daughters of Jerusalem. That's who she has in mind. That's who she calls to application periodically throughout the book.

The target is the daughters of Jerusalem, daughters being virgins, unmarried girls, unmarried women who have not yet encountered what she is about to describe in going forward into a married relationship. So in the Hebrew superscription of the book, getting into verse one here, it literally says, the song of songs which is Solomon's. The which is there is the English translation they have adopted for a single letter prefixed to Solomon's name.

This is the letter Lamed. It's the letter L. It is used to indicate what is to or for. This is to or for Solomon.

And I think she, as the composer, had him primarily in mind as she delivers this warning to the daughters of Jerusalem. But it is to Solomon. It is for Solomon.

It is about Solomon. It doesn't say that it is composed or written by Solomon. So that's the Lamed.

So it will be interesting in the eternal future to find out who this lady was, this relatively young girl who comes to the palace and whose words I think this book so largely preserves. So as I said, if there ever was a woman's book, this is it. It's told from a woman's point of view.

It is her experience, her feelings, her ups and downs in this particular situation related to marriage and married love. So our first point is my suggestion as to who wrote it and composed it. I think it's the Shulamite woman.

What is it about? Her experience of married love. This is our second point. This is specifically looking at the problems that occur when there is a shaky foundation for the marriage to begin with.

I think she might wish that she had paid more attention to Solomon's situation, his predilections, his priorities when she agreed to enter into this marriage. So the story begins with the betrothal and marriage and all of it takes place within the proper bounds of marriage as far as the Shulamite is concerned. This is by no means Solomon's only marriage.

You remember in the Old Testament that there is not an explicit prohibition of polygamy or multiple wives. Many prominent biblical figures engaged in multiple marriages. You can think of Abraham, Jacob, Elkanah, who is Hannah's husband and he's the father of Samuel, David, Solomon himself.

There is not an explicit condemnation from God to any of these men regarding their multiple marriages. God seems to have incorporated Jacob's two wives and two concubines into the composition of the nation of Israel. But everybody you look at with multiple wives in the Old Testament has trouble.

It's not the optimum and ideal divine design that is spelled out in Genesis chapter 2 verse 24. Right after the words of Adam when he recognizes Eve as his help meet for him, he says, for this cause shall a man leave father and mother and cleave unto his wife, singular, and they too shall be one flesh. Jesus quotes this same scripture with approval in Mark chapter 1 verse 15.

He says they are not two but one. The two shall be one flesh. Old Testament and new, God's ideal is a marriage between one man, one woman, inseparably united.

So this book is about marriage, but not the ideal man and woman marriage arrangement. And that's where the tension is going to appear. Having said that, I'm going to back up a little bit and talk about the book's structure.

That is the theme. That's our second point. The third point is its structure.

Number one, the author. Number two, the theme. Number three, the structure.

As is so often the case in scripture, there is a symmetry, what we like to call a chiasm. The letter X in Greek is chi, and things at the top and bottom correspond. You go to the second point and the second to the last point, they correspond.

And there is this nesting effect, like Russian dolls, that leads to the heart, or the most important thing, the theme, that is at the center of the chiasm. So we'll have, in this book, 13 sections. There is what we can call A, B, C, D, E, and F, six sections that lead into the center, which is G. Once we see what is at the heart, then it is going to move back out in a symmetrical fashion.

So you could call it F prime. It is going to have material that alludes, corresponds, mirrors in some ways what we found in that section just before the center. So F and F prime will correspond.

And you move back out similarly, E prime, D prime, C prime, B prime, A prime. You don't have to get tangled up so much in the labeling as just recognize that this is a carefully crafted, beautifully organized composition. And the symmetry is going to help us with interpretation and with application.

So having said that, it divides into 13 sections. We'll identify these as we go. We're going to be interested particularly when we get to the seventh or central section.

But how do we identify a section? There will be clues or markers. And once you see these, it will be wonderful navigation aids in moving through the book. I keep a number two pencil and I label things out in the margin of my Bible.

If I learn something, improve my understanding later, I can always carefully erase and modify. But you may want to either in your notes or in your Bible, mark these just for ease of identification. But the clue is, they're twofold.

One of them is that the Shulamite will turn and address the daughters of Jerusalem. Anytime she does that, there is a section or a scene that is ending. She will deliver her words to the daughters, and then a new scene will begin.

Sections or scenes, I like to call them scenes because the other clue is a shift in the location or the venue. They will be in the chamber, then they will be in the banquet hall, then she'll be looking out at the fields. But anytime there is a shift of background or a shift of context in terms of the location, that is going to begin a new section or a new scene.

So I'm going to cover this a little bit more in the second section. But when you look at books and commentaries on the Song of Solomon, there is a plethora, a cornucopia, a superabundance of commentary and interpretive approach to this book. It's difficult to nail down and find common agreement.

This study is my contribution to those many approaches. If you don't find it helpful, there are many others that you can take a look at and they may resonate. We're looking for what God the Holy Spirit helps us by way of understanding and application.

Hopefully this will do that. I found it helpful, so you should find it helpful. At least that's my hope.

That's my view. So let me begin by reading the first verse, the superscription, the Song of Songs, which is Solomon. We already talked about the prefixed lamed, to or for, not necessarily by, but he is certainly the main subject and the warning and the application that we are going to see from this book centers on him, his attitudes, his words, his behaviors.

So some approaches say that this is a symbolic Solomon, that he is invoked as a figure, as a type, and that these are two unrelated people. Scripture says this is Solomon. It's the real, no kidding, son of David, king of Israel, last king of the United Kingdom before it divides into northern Israel and Judah.

There's a beautiful transition here. Hebrew is flexible in the way it uses pronouns, and until you spend quite a lot of time in observation, in translation, and in observing context, it can be confusing because you will find pronouns in the Psalms, in the Proverbs, and in this book changing even mid-sentence. It will start in the first person singular and move to the first person plural.

It will start with the second person and move to the third or start with the third and move to the second or the first. We do this in English unconsciously. If someone asks us, how do you change a tire? We reply, you go to your trunk, you do this, you do that.

And we use the second person when the person has actually never gone to a trunk and never gotten a spare tire and never changed it themselves. So we want to be a bit flexible in our understanding and watch these pronouns and figure out why they change, how they change, what is the purpose, what is the connotation as these pronouns change. This is useful in any Hebrew poetry you want to study, Psalms and Proverbs especially.

So we notice in verse two that it begins, let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth. And right in mid-sentence it says, for your love is better than wine, going from the third person to the second person. Why is that? Who is him? Who is you? Why does it change in the middle of the paragraph there? I'm going to suggest that there is a bit of wordplay, a bit of marital kidding back and forth in terms of what we now call the plural of majesty, the royal we.

And Solomon in his high and mightiness is a single first person pronoun, can't contain him. So we is what he will sometimes use. And she picks up on this and so she'll talk in the first person plural back at him, but she's still talking to Solomon.

And we need to understand that there are only two individuals in this story. Then there are some outsiders that will be addressed, the daughters of Jerusalem, her brothers late in the book. But this is primarily dialogue between two and only two people.

There are interpretations that say there's Solomon and then there's a shepherd lover and she's torn between the two. You don't find that in the context. You kind of have to import that from outside and then arbitrarily decide who is talking to whom about what.

We take the text as it lies and we have Solomon and we have the girl who is speaking to him having been recently married to him. So we're going to assume that there are two and only two individuals talking. And there is the group.

The Shulamite princess is talking here. She's going to address Solomon and she's going to quote Solomon from time to time. She'll say, you said this, I say that.

You say this. Here's my response. And sometimes she will match his plural of majesty in her reply.

It seems confusing. As we move through, you'll see how it helps everything make sense and kind of lie down and tell the story more easily. So you know that ladies do this in conversation.

They are quick to quote what someone else said. All of us do this, but it seems to be particularly a feature of ladies in their conversation. And so when she says, let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, him is Solomon.

You can circle him, circle Solomon. Him is Solomon. There is no other antecedent at this point where early in the book and the only male that has been referenced is Solomon.

So let him kiss me is him. And she says, let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth because your love is better than wine. And so she now shifts pronouns and she's addressing him more directly, or she is quoting him.

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, because he says that my kisses, I'm quoting Solomon. He says, your kisses are better than wine. Somebody's kisses.

Somebody has said these kisses are really tasty and sweet. And she says, if that's the case, let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth. And when she says this, this is something Solomon said.

She remembers him saying to her, your love is like wine. She's saying, well, if he likes tasting wine with his lips, let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth. He has said my love is better than wine.

So instead of using his lips to drink wine, he ought to use them to kiss me. This is the idea. And that's how this thing begins.

And it gives us an understanding, a paradigm for how these conversations and quotations are going to unfold as the chapters unroll before us. So at the beginning of this book and based on that pattern, I think she's, I think she's quoting him. And she goes on to say, because of the fragrance of your good ointments, your name is ointment poured forth.

Therefore, the virgins love you. Draw me away. We will run after you.

The second point I want to make here is not only does she quote Solomon in the course of her reflections, but she and Solomon both are going to use this, this plural of majesty from time to time. We don't need to introduce a shepherd lover and so on. And there's wordplay that emerges

once you realize that when she uses the plural, she means I, and when Solomon uses the plural, he means I. So again, my suggestion is if you're using a New King James like mine, right in the middle of verse four, for no apparent reason, it, it puts a superscript there and says that now this is the daughters of Jerusalem talking.

At this point in the story, we don't know that there are daughters of Jerusalem. We don't know why there would be a sudden quotation of a group using the plural, because there's not one in the context. And if you're familiar with the book and you're coming to read it for the 19th time, and you know they're daughters of Jerusalem, you could read this back into it.

But remember, the initial reading, the initial hearers, you only have the context that has been provided. And the best way to understand these plurals is as I have suggested in my opinion. Why would we switch pronoun numbers in mid-sentence? She's going to engage in this sort of playful mockery of Solomon.

She's taking him off his throne and reminding him that he ought to be her lover and not the king, referred to with this, this royal plural. So she says this ointment, this fragrance, this speaks of praises, of compliments. Solomon is a smooth talker.

How do you think he accumulated these wives and concubines? He knows how to make a young lady feel good about herself. And these praises and ointments, his smooth talk is why the girls love him, is basically what she's saying. The fragrance of your good ointments, your name is ointment poured forth.

Young girls think of Solomon and they just sigh at the mention of his name. So these aromatic oils, balsams, and so on, are what they made perfumes out of. And she compares his speech to that.

So she's not just saying everybody loves you because you smell good. She says your ability to compliment and make people feel good is a part of your reputation, your name. So because of the fragrance of your good ointments, your name is associated with that.

When people think of Solomon, they say, oh, he's always so kind. He's appreciative. He finds what's good about someone, always makes them feel good about themselves.

That's synonymous with you. Because of that, the virgins love you. Remember, virgins without number, in addition to the wives and concubines.

So she says to him, draw me away. Everybody appreciates you, but you and I should now have a special and unique relationship. I should overshadow and make no longer memorable all of these predecessors.

Draw me away. The many different ways this book has been understood, one of them is the notion that it speaks of seven days and this goes to the pattern of a Jewish marriage and that it's

broken into seven days. Again, I don't find the mention of days.

We see appeals to the daughters of Jerusalem and we see scene changes. So if you've heard that it's the seven days of marriage, there are commentaries that will elaborate that. We're not going to.

But the text goes on to tell us, the first chapter representing the bridegroom and bride as having now moved to the palace and they are ready to begin this new married phase together. They are engaging in this dialogue and that's the end of that section. And so now we have the start of this first night, if you will.

And the very next thing she says is the king has brought me into his chambers. That's our marker that we're beginning a scene. The rest of this, the end of the first section, the A section ends there and now we're starting the second or the B section here.

We've moved to a new venue. She says, I'm talking about Solomon. He's a wonderful guy.

He's so enchanting. He's so charming. The virgins know him because he's so kind and they love him.

The things that he says are like perfume. His name itself just suggests this wonderful fragrance. Draw me away.

Let's start the honeymoon and I will hurry after you. We will hurry after you. That's I. I can't wait.

We would say colloquial, let's get this show on the road. So then she says, and this is parenthetical. She says, the king has brought me into his chambers.

She was talking to him. Now she says in the third person, I want to tell you where we are now for this next section. She brought me into his chambers.

You can just almost put parentheses around that. And she says, I just want you to know the setting. It's a scene change.

So now he speaks and you can put quotation marks around this. This, I believe is Solomon speaking. It's not the daughters of Jerusalem.

Solomon says, we will rejoice and be glad in you. He says, I'm game. I'm going to draw you away and we're going to rejoice and be glad.

It's Solomon talking. She says, we will hurry after you. He says, we will rejoice and be glad in you.

They're exchanging these we's kind of in fun. And it's the two of them talking to each other in this way. And we will remember your love more than wine.

We're back to this word play earlier. You can see the reference back to verse two. Your love is better than wine.

He says, we, this is I, Solomon, will remember your love more than wine. All of this ties together. She responds, rightly do they love you.

Rightly do the virgins love you. Referring back to verse three, the virgins love you because you're so charming. So that's the introduction and the opening scene.

They're married. She says, you're such a great guy. Everybody loves you.

Let's get off by ourselves. Draw me away. And he says, I will be glad and rejoice with you alone.

That's the idea. And we, meaning the royal personage, will remember your love more than wine. There is this tight interweaving of wine and love and so on.

I'm dwelling on this and elaborating a bit because I believe this is the key to understanding the interaction, the dialogues, and not being scattered amongst different groups, chipping in observations that are difficult to interpret and certainly difficult to apply. So, so far, we're seeing these two. And giddy with love and newfound relationship and romance.

This is the way they talk to each other. Now there is an aside because who are they leaving? Draw me away. Who are they leaving? He's already got all of these wives and concubines.

We saw that in chapter six, 60 queens, 80 concubines, 140 ladies in the harem. Right? So when he says, she says, draw me away. She's thinking, who are we leaving behind? This is the first night of our wedding.

How am I going to stack up against all of these predecessors? Anybody that has dated someone and you know that there's a history and a past where they had some sort of relationship with someone before you, you inevitably wonder about comparisons. How will I stack up? What will they think of me with that frame of reference? And it's certainly natural to understand that in her case. So she addresses this in this verse and the following, she says, I am dark, but I'm still attractive.

But you know, you predecessors are classic beauties with milky complexions and you're in the Royal harem. I come from the fields, from the outdoors. I'm dark.

I'm swarthy. I've got a, got a tan. So she addresses the daughters of Jerusalem.

They are leaving to go by themselves, Solomon and the Shulamite. So she's got a bit of apprehension. Now's the time when she's going to be compared to her predecessors.

And she's reminding herself, she's giving herself a little bit of confidence. I'm, I'm dark. Yes.

But I'm, I'm not bad looking. I'm lovely. Solomon likes dark curtains.

I'm dark. So he doesn't seem to be bothered by things that are darker. This should be fine.

So you can see the feminine mind at work here and nothing against the ladies, but our minds do work somewhat differently. She's shoring up her confidence. So she says, don't look upon me because I'm dark because the sun has tanned me.

This wasn't my choice. It was my circumstances. This is something that arose due to my mother's sons and their tasks that they assigned me when I lived at home, being outdoors as a result.

I wasn't keeping my own vineyard. My brothers were keeping me working in the vineyard and out of circulation. They are protecting me from unwanted advances.

You remember how David wasn't available to be anointed as King? Why? When Samuel comes to Jesse and looks at the sons, where is David? He's, he's not among the sons and God tells Samuel, none of these guys. David is out in the fields. He's doing his, his job out in the fields working.

So in this chiastic structure of the book, there's going to be another allusion to these brothers and to these fields at the end of the book. We'll see it when it comes, but this is one of the ways we identify and appreciate and benefit from this chiasm or this symmetrical structure. These guys are going to return toward the end because we see them here at the beginning.

We'll see them again in chapter eight. Quickly, you can just glance at chapter eight, verse eight. There's a little sister and she has no breasts, i.e. she's not yet of marriageable age, right? What shall we do for our sister in the day when she does become a marriageable age? When someone decides to speak for her, you see this in chapter eight, verse eight.

If she is a wall, in other words, if she's not interested in a guy that wants to, to ask for her hand, well, we will reinforce the wall. We will second her in her wish to not go along with this guy. Not only does she not like you, we don't like you either.

If she is a door, she's opened to nuptial suggestions and the offer of betrothal, we will board her up. We'll turn the door into a wall, basically. We'll shut the door.

We don't want our sister getting married. We hope she says no, and we will second that. If she says yes, we'll board her up anyway, because we've got better judgment than she.

We know the ways of men and the ways of the world. We're not letting her out. We're not letting her go.

This is the attitude of the brothers. So what are they doing? Evidently the father is out of the picture and the brothers have taken up this responsibility. So they are putting her out in the fields

to keep the vineyards and do things like that to prevent her from being snapped up by some ambitious young man.

Solomon has somehow gotten around the brothers or has dazzled them with his royal self and he has betrothed and married her. But she says, you know, my appearance shows the effect of my brother's strategy to keep me from getting married. They thought if I was tan, nobody would want me.

Turns out Solomon doesn't mind. And so I've got a dark complexion, but that didn't stop him. My own vineyard I have not kept.

She is still under the umbrella of protection and authority of her family, of her brothers specifically. And that's why she says my own vineyard I have not kept. Having said this, she now turns to Solomon and she says, tell me, oh, you whom I love, where do you feed your flock? Where do you make it rest at noon? Why should I be as one who veils herself? Veils herself, I think may not be the best text here.

If you look at the Septuagint followed by the Vulgate, these are Greek and Latin translations of the Hebrew text that came later and had examples to look at and to translate that may have not had errors that crept into the Masoretic text. But that reading says, why should I wander? Why should I wander? And it's a slight difference in the way you read this. I think it makes slightly better sense.

Why should I wander by the flocks of your companions? Where are your flocks kept? I want to stay with you. If you're looking at flocks, I want to be there. Why should I go look at the flocks of someone else? So Solomon answers in verse eight and he says, if you do not know, oh, fairest among women, follow in the footsteps of the flock and feed your little goats beside the shepherd's tents.

This is the second time now that we have this little romantic back and forth in the first person, plural, little teasing conversation. The first one we saw was in verse three and four. So now there is an aside to the daughters of Jerusalem that is, I think, the Shulamite talking as much to herself as she is to them.

Then we return to the conversation between Solomon and the Shulamite and she addresses him saying, where are we going? We're leaving the group. And there's this vast palace that she is now being introduced to that belongs to Solomon. So as they're going through, she says, well, this is kind of like wandering in the pastures in the hillsides.

It's so big. Where are we going? Where do you keep your flocks at noon? This is like the pasture. Are we going to find herds and flocks in here? And he basically says, well, oh, fairest among women, if you don't know where we're headed, which of course is the honeymoon suite, then you can go inquire elsewhere.

But then he continues in verse nine and he says, I've compared you, my love, to my filly among Pharaoh's chariots. Would be kind of a backhanded compliment now. But your cheeks are lovely with ornaments, your neck with chains.

You notice it says of gold in your New King James text, for example, but it's not in the original. He compares her to a horse among chariots. And there's evidence from the ancient world that for chariot pulling, ancient armies preferred mares over stallions or geldings because they were more steady, more reliable, and they didn't spook and start.

And there were often mares that would be used therefore to pull these chariots in the army. So he says, you're a prize filly among the chariots. You are desirable because of your character and your steadiness.

It would be an awkward compliment, as I say today. But he goes on. He's still talking in verse 11 now.

If in your New King James, you've got another one of these little inserted superscriptions about the daughters of Jerusalem, my suggestion is line it out. This is Solomon once again reverting to the plural of majesty. And he says, your cheeks are lovely with ornaments, your neck with chains.

And he says, you will make your ornaments of gold with studs of silver. We will make them. We will adorn your beauty even more.

We being Solomon and we of the royal household, my workmen, my staff, we will do this for you. Your beauty is great. We're going to make it even greater with adornments.

She responds and says, while the king is at his table, what just happened? We've moved from the trip to the bedchamber. We've omitted that scene. And now we are moving to the banquet hall.

So while the king is at his table, this is a scene marker. The first scene marker was where she said, the king has brought me to his chambers. That's scene one.

Now she says, while the king is at his table, this is a new scene. You can draw a little line across. Fresh topic of conversation, fresh ideas here.

And she says, my spikenard sends forth its fragrance. A bundle of myrrh is my beloved to me. It lies all night between my breasts.

My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blooms in the vineyards of Engedi. Henna blooms in the vineyards of Engedi. When it says henna blooms, this word translated henna may actually refer to Cyprian grapes, grapes from Cyprus.

And they were greatly prized in the ancient world because they were plump. They made great

wine. We're back to this wine idea.

They would export and transplant these Cyprian grapes to other places and try to get them to grow so they didn't have to buy them from Cyprus. In Engedi, they had really fertile soil and evidently they transplanted these grapes from Cyprus and they were growing in great abundance. And she says, my beloved is to me like a cluster of Cyprian grapes in the vineyards of Engedi.

And something from the outside, something from another world has come in and is a joy and a wonder. Tightly interwoven here with previous ideas, but it is a new scene. The king is at his table and she's remembering the previous night, the honeymoon night.

And this is very tactful. It's very elusive without being specific. So these Cyprian grapes, it's everything you could hope for in a grape, everything that you could hope for in a husband, she thinks Solomon is.

So she's now going to quote Solomon. And I will, in my Bible, I've put quotation marks around starting in verse 15. Behold, you are fair, my love.

Behold, you are fair. You have dove's eyes. She's remembering saying this from the previous night.

He's now sitting at the table and he is surrounded by people that he has known far longer than he's known her. There's familiarity. You know what this is like if you enter into a new relationship and you suddenly go meet the family or you meet the person in the context of friends that you don't know.

And you almost are envious of that background and that experience and that that past association. So she's thinking about this as she sits perhaps alone at the king's table. He's busy talking and otherwise occupied.

She's not so much daydreaming, but she's recalling when I had him to myself, it was really great. So she remembers Solomon saying at that time, you are fair, my love. You are fair.

You have dove's eyes. She says in reply, behold, you, Solomon, are handsome, my beloved and pleasant, and our bed is green. I'm going to suggest that the chapter two interruption that you find at this point, I would line that out also.

There were no chapter and verse divisions in the original. These are helpful aids that we've inserted centuries after the fact. But to maintain the flow here, we're still in this scene and starting a new chapter, in my view, isn't helpful.

So I've got it marked out in my Bible. And so she's reflecting on things, remembering these little exchanges, as we saw earlier in the chapter. And Solomon has now gotten her to the king's chamber in her memory.

And she says, our bed is green. You're handsome, my beloved and pleasant, and our bed is green. It's fresh.

There's the promise of spring and fruitfulness and so on. Our bed is green. It's a very, very deft, very careful allusion to things to come.

Our bed is green. He says the beams of our houses are cedar and the rafters are fir. This is a typical guy failing to catch the drift.

Yeah, isn't this a great room? I really built this thing to last. He's gotten her to the inner sanctums of the palace. He says, look how well constructed it is.

I've got these big beefy trees of cedar and fir. And she basically says, I'm not interested in your rafters and your beams. I'm the rose of Sharon.

I'm the lily of the valleys. She's saying, look, forget the architecture. I'm here.

And this is our wedding night, so to speak. You want to talk about rafters, or do you want to talk about roses and lilies? Get your mind off that construction project. This is our wedding night.

So now the third quote from Solomon in this section begins in verse two. And he says, you are like a lily among thorns. He's trying to reassure her that all of these people I talked to, all of these predecessors, they're thorns compared to you.

You are a lily. And I get that. My love among the daughters, he says.

And he may have sensed that she's a little bit insecure with these other queens and concubines around. So he says, listen, compared to you, all the rest of these are just thorns. And you, among the daughters, you are just a consummate lily.

She says, I am the lily of the valleys. I'm not a lily of the palace. I come from the fields.

I come from the valleys. I come from the wonderful outdoor creation that God has surrounded us with. And he says, you absolutely are.

You're right. So you can put quotation marks around verse two. That's Solomon talking, in my view.

Then she responds and says, like an apple tree among the trees of the woods, so is my beloved among the sons. All the other sons in Israel, all the other previous guys that might have wanted my hand and been fended off by my brothers, they're just trees. You're like an apple tree in the midst of them.

You are a special, fruitful, desirable tree. You can't help but think of the common misconception that in the Garden of Eden, Eve ate from an apple tree. It's not in this text.

It just comes to my mind. But you're an apple tree. That's how you are among the sons.

Comet Solomon makes her response back and forth, back and forth. We're beginning to see this pattern. This is all in that second scene that begins while the king is at his table.

While he's busy, she's thinking about the previous night, the trip to the bedchamber, getting there, their little intimate conversation back and forth. And then you have a note, if you've got a New King James that says, or a heading that says, the Shulamite to the daughters of Jerusalem. Now we have the daughters of Jerusalem explicitly mentioned, and she is, in fact, talking to them.

So this is actually a helpful heading. It says in mine, the Shulamite to the daughters of Jerusalem. He brought me to the banqueting house.

His banner over me is love. Sustain me with cakes and raisins. Refresh me with apples, for I am lovesick.

His left hand under my head, his right hand embraces me. I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles and by the does of the field, do not stir up nor awaken love until it pleases. This is a warning note.

This isn't, O daughters of Jerusalem, shouldn't you be envious and jealous of my wonderful marriage and the royal privileges and the intimacy and the favors? You think Solomon talks a good fight in conversation with his fragrant ointments associated with his name when you're married to him because she's talking to the virgin daughters. You can't imagine how great it is. That isn't what she says.

She says, O daughters of Jerusalem, as I tell you this story, I charge you by the gazelles or by the does. It's a warning. And she's not feeling that great.

She's weak. And it isn't from such a pleasant set of exertions the previous night that she's just needing a nap. She says, I am sick from this love.

I'm not feeling well. I need sustenance that will get me back to a good place. Sustain me with cakes of raisins.

Refresh me with apples, for I am lovesick, sick from love. We'll talk about this a little bit more after the break in the second session. His left hand is under my head.

His right hand embraces me. But I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles and the does. If you read the first chapter, Solomon has stirred up and awakened love in her.

And she has, for the moment, stirred up and awakened love in him. So she's telling the daughters of Jerusalem, be careful when that happens. Be careful when you do that.

I am now needing sustenance. I need cakes of raisins and apples. If Solomon is the apple tree among the sons of men, why does she need apples? Bring me some apples, because the apple tree I am so fond of isn't providing them.

Raisins are dried grapes. You're like the wonderful Cyprian grapes, but I need somebody to bring me some raisins, because I'm not being sustained and fulfilled by the grapes and the apples that she associates with Solomon. So why is she appealing to the daughters of Jerusalem to bring her sustenance? Something has happened.

There is a shadow. She is beginning to realize that all is not as she hoped and expected. She doesn't say, oh, I'm just exhausted with this wonderful love.

She's no longer talking to him. She's looking to the girls who have not yet crossed the threshold that she has done at this point. And she's giving them a warning.

So that's the first two scenes. They are marked by location. The king takes me to his chamber.

The king is at his table. It ends with this appeal to the daughters of Jerusalem. That's the first two sections, A and B. It divides at chapter one, verse 12, while the king is at his table.

And at the end of that, you have this coda, this turning to and charging the daughters of Jerusalem. So stopping at this point, we don't have time to get to the second session. What is the application? What is it that we should understand? This is a woman.

She's looking intensely and intimately at married love. It's a wonderful, blissful thing. She's looking to her husband, who is initiating, and she is responding.

But there is a shadow that is cast. He brought me to the banqueting house, but I still need food. I'm thinking about the previous night with talk of wine and grapes and apples.

And I told him what a wonderful apple tree he is amongst men who are just mere non-fruiting trees. But look at me. I'm sick and not well.

I'm depressed and not happy. She's looking at him in the banquet hall. He's put a banner over me that says love, but I'm not feeling it.

So what is the application that she suggests? What do gazelles and does do at the first sign of trouble? They are notoriously difficult to take pictures of for those who hunt to hunt them at the first sign of something abnormal. Gazelles and deer flee and they use their speed and their agility to escape. They are very fidgety.

They are very flighty. And if anything doesn't seem quite right, they are gone in a flash. So she charges the daughters of Jerusalem, you need to be as wary and as ready to flee as a doe or a gazelle.

Be careful if you stir up love and it starts to build on itself until it acquires what it pleases, what it wants, what pleases it. It won't let go until it has its objective. And those of you that have moved through early adult life and have had friends and acquaintances and have seen situations know that young ladies can be dazzled by a guy with a smooth line of patter.

There ends up being illicit intimacy and the guy is now gone. He's off to other conquests. There's no loyalty.

There's no enduring relationship. And he inevitably leaves a deflowered young maiden in sorrow, wishing she had been more careful. Can't tell you how many times this can be observed.

So you see the does and gazelles when love awakens, take a lesson. We should be as harmless as doves, but we should be as wise as we can be. Look to the guidance of God, be careful, be measured.

Any time emotion is coming to the fore and we are about to make a commitment. Commitments shouldn't be made in the heat of emotion. And in our emotional heightened state of enjoyment, we have to be careful about believing everything we hear.

So it's a commitment. She agreed to become Solomon's wife. She's entered into it with her eyes open, but she turns to the daughters and says, I've got something to tell you.

She is going to return to them with this refrain after every two scenes in this book. So beautifully composed, beautifully constructed. She's going to talk to them.

They're going to start talking back in the last half of the book. We'll see this as this chiasm unfolds before us. And as this beautifully composed content is brought before us.

Once we see this symmetry, this book itself will unfold like the rose of Sharon. But we'll pause here and take our break.