

The Marriage of Solomon

Song of Solomon 3-4

Song of Solomon 3:1-4 - *“By night on my bed I sought the one I love; I sought him, but I did not find him.*

² *“I will rise now,” I said, “and go about the city; in the streets and in the squares I will seek the one I love.” I sought him, but I did not find him.*

³ *The watchmen who go about the city found me; I said, “Have you seen the one I love?”*

⁴ *Scarcely had I passed by them, when I found the one I love. I held him and would not let him go, until I had brought him to the house of my mother, and into the chamber of her who conceived me.”*

Background Notes

In our Talks on the Song of Solomon, we are presenting the “traditional interpretational view.” This view holds that the Song of Solomon was presenting the true account of the love relationship between King Solomon and a beautiful virgin known as “the Shulamite maiden.” This maiden lived in the north of Israel near Lebanon.

In this “two main characters” view of the Song, we have the historical account of King Solomon’s true love for the peasant maiden. Perhaps Solomon had observed this beautiful young woman while on a trip to visit his crown properties or vineyards in the northern territories of his kingdom.

Perhaps the Shulamite woman was working in her own family’s vineyard when Solomon spied her. She had no idea that she was soon to become a Cinderella! Rather than use his powers as king to abduct the maiden for his harem, Solomon decided to disguise himself as a shepherd and win her heart by slowly building a love relationship with her.

The plan worked! Shortly after Solomon revealed his identity to her, the couple was married. King Solomon, of course, spared no expense for the wedding. The marriage procession, in all its splendor, is described at the end of chapter 3. The wedding takes place within chapter 4, and the marriage is consummated at the beginning of chapter 5.

Doctrinal Points

1. God approves of courtship and marriage as He intended it.

In our first talk on the Song of Solomon we mentioned that God included this book in Holy Scripture to put His stamp of approval on love and romance - including “love talk” - within the boundaries that He has set up. As a beautiful love relationship between a man and a woman, the Song of Solomon also illustrates the love relationship that God has for His people Israel, and that Jesus Christ has for His church. But primarily the book is a God-given manual for human love and romance between a man and a woman. God approves this, and thus the theme of the Song is “Love and Marriage as God Intended It.”

In verses 1-4, as the courtship continued toward marriage, it seems that the Shulamite had a nightmare about losing Solomon when she didn't find him next to her after their marriage. In her dream, she went about the city seeking him. When she finally found him, she brought him to her mother's house, and would not let him go.

In verse 5, again we have the refrain that we saw in Song 2:7.

"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."

Again the idea was to let the courtship phase of the relationship develop slowly and naturally.

Verses 6-11 describe the wedding procession before the coming marriage:

"Who is this coming out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all the merchant's fragrant powders?"

⁷ *Behold, it is Solomon's couch, with sixty valiant men around it, of the valiant of Israel.*

⁸ *They all hold swords, being expert in war.*

Every man has his sword on his thigh because of fear in the night.

⁹ *Of the wood of Lebanon Solomon the King made himself a palanquin:*

¹⁰ *He made its pillars of silver, its support of gold, its seat of purple, its interior paved with love by the daughters of Jerusalem.*

¹¹ *Go forth, O daughters of Zion, and see King Solomon with the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of his wedding, the day of the gladness of his heart."*

In these verses Solomon was carried on his royal traveling throne, along with sixty chosen warriors, as part of the procession that was traveling from Jerusalem to the bride's home, in the north of Israel, for their wedding. These verses are quite descriptive of the pomp and splendor of the procession. Solomon was wearing a crown that his mother, Bathsheba, apparently gave him before (or during) his official coronation (1 Kings 1.) We can imagine the sixty men of the royal guard, decked out in their dress uniforms for the occasion. This royal guard would also protect the king and his new queen as they made their way back to Jerusalem.

This was a happy day for the people and for Solomon. The well-governed courtship was culminating in a happy marriage! God approves of courtship and marriage as He intended it.

2. God approves of sex within marriage as He intended it.

In Song 4:1-6, Solomon spoke to his new bride about her beauty.

"Behold, you are fair, my love! Behold, you are fair!

You have dove's eyes behind your veil. Your hair is like a flock of goats, going down from Mount Gilead.

² *Your teeth are like a flock of shorn sheep, which have come up from the washing, every one of which bears twins, and none is barren among them.*

³ *Your lips are like a strand of scarlet, and your mouth is lovely.*

Your temples behind your veil are like a piece of pomegranate.

⁴ *Your neck is like the tower of David, built for an armory, on which hang a thousand shields, all shields of mighty men.*

⁵ *Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle that feed among the lilies.*

⁶ *Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away, I will go my way to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense."*

This chapter should convince anyone that the Bible does indeed use figurative language! In fact, if you were to draw a picture of the Shulamite maiden based literally on the description here, you would have quite a monstrosity of a female. Hair like a flock of goats (v1), teeth like shorn sheep (v2), temples like slices of pomegranate (v3), a neck like the tower of David hung with shields (v4), breasts like young deer (v5)!

In verses 7-8, Solomon urged his bride to put away thoughts of home, and give full attention to their wedding night.

“You are all fair, my love, and there is no spot in you.

⁸ *Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon. Look from the top of Amana, from the top of Senir and Hermon from the lions’ dens, from the mountains of the leopards.”*

There is more love talk in verses 9-11, showing that God approves of sex within marriage.

“You have ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; you have ravished my heart with one look of your eyes, with one link of your necklace.

¹⁰ *How fair is your love, my sister, my spouse! How much better than wine is your love, and the scent of your perfumes than all spices!*

¹¹ *Your lips, O my spouse, drip as the honeycomb; honey and milk are under your tongue; and the fragrance of your garments is like the fragrance of Lebanon.”*

It’s important to notice that the Shulamite was a virgin when she and Solomon were married. Verse 12: *“A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.”* There is no idea here - or anywhere else in the Bible - that living together before marriage is acceptable, no matter what our secular culture says.

But once the marriage had taken place, the wife’s garden was fully open to the husband (v13-16). In figurative language, the Shulamite invited Solomon to enter her garden - which was now his garden:

“Your plants are an orchard of pomegranates with pleasant fruits, fragrant henna with spikenard, ¹⁴ spikenard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense, myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices.

¹⁵ *A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon.*

¹⁶ *awake, O north wind, and come, O south! Blow upon my garden that its spices may flow out. Let my beloved come to his garden and eat its pleasant fruits.”*

It doesn’t take much insight or knowledge of figurative language to see that the marriage was consummated on the wedding night. Song 5:1 says: *“I have come to my garden, my sister, my spouse; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk.”*

But what about the end of that verse? *“Eat, O friends! Drink, yes, drink deeply, O beloved ones!”* What does that mean? Who was speaking? We believe it was God Himself speaking, putting His divine stamp of approval on the physical aspect of the marriage. God approves of sex within marriage – marriage as He intended.

Practical Applications

1. Make sure your wedding is a special occasion!

The wedding of King Solomon and the Shulamite bride was a very special occasion. They didn’t elope; they didn’t get

married in the local courthouse; they didn't have a quick private wedding ceremony. No, this event was very special - because it was a **wedding of two lives!** A quick trip to a justice of the peace can detract from the significance of this important event.

The wedding of a man and a woman is a very significant event. It emphasizes that God ordained marriage. He performed the very first marriage! God intended that a marriage ceremony be significant and special. The Lord Jesus put His stamp of approval on wedding ceremonies when He attended the wedding at Cana of Galilee (John 2). He even helped make it a very special occasion by providing the best wine possible!

But you **don't** have to spend a lot of money and invite a lot of guests to make sure your wedding is a special occasion! No! But it should be special, not just a hurried affair where a few words are repeated before a minister or justice. Your marriage vows are important and serious promises taken before the Lord, family and friends. It's a wonderful opportunity for you to publicly show that you are committed each other, just as God intended! So make sure that your wedding is a special occasion.

2. Compliment the physical attractiveness of your spouse!

In our study of the Song of Solomon we've seen that both Solomon and the maiden complimented each other's physical attractiveness - including what they wore! This is good. This is not the only thing that couples should talk about, but complimenting how your spouse looks is biblical. And it's important for your relationship!

But if you're thinking, "But my spouse isn't attractive!" Well - if that's what you think - **you need to change your standards!** As the saying goes, "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder." So change your standards, and recognize that your spouse **is** beautiful or handsome in your eyes. And then remember to compliment the physical attractiveness of your spouse!