

Song of Solomon #1 - Four General Observations About Song of Solomon

by Ed Miller

The book of Song of Solomon is a love story that reflects God's love for us, highlighting the importance of marriage as a sacred institution that reflects God's love for us.

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Description

In this sermon, the speaker provides four general observations about the book of Song of Solomon. The first observation is that the book is a love story of two worlds, regardless of whether one takes a historical or allegorical approach. The second observation is that the message of the book is the climax of the redemptive experience on earth. The third observation is that the book is a record of the comings and goings of the groom, representing the progress of the bride in her union with the heavenly lover of her soul. The fourth observation is that there are various approaches to interpreting the book, but it is important to focus on the common denominator and the message of the book.

Transcript

Good evening, brothers. As we come to the study of God's Word, there is a principle of Bible study that's indispensable, absolutely indispensable. And I need to be reminded all the time of that principle.

We don't want to take it for granted. We don't want to substitute the helps for that which is indispensable. And I'm talking about total reliance upon God's Holy Spirit.

It's only as we come as little children that God, who alone can reveal God, only God can reveal God. He delights to do it, and He longs to show Himself to our hearts. Now, last time we gathered together in this place, we were looking at the book of Malachi.

And so I would like to begin with a verse from Malachi, sort of as a transition and an indispensable principle verse. So I'm going to ask you to turn, please, to Malachi chapter 3. Malachi chapter 3, beginning in verse 1, Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to His temple.

And the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he's coming, says the Lord of hosts. Once again, verse 1, The Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to His temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he's coming, says the Lord.

Now, for a moment, I want you to forget all that that verse has meant in the first coming. There are many times He suddenly came to the temple. The record is clear.

I counted five times He came to the temple in the New Testament. And I'm sure that verse has application to some of those. And forget for a moment all that that verse will mean in the future, in terms of the second coming.

No doubt in my mind it has a final application there. But for our purposes this evening and this weekend, I want to remind you of I Corinthians 6:20. Do you not know that you are, finish it, the temple of the Lord? You are His temple.

I am His temple. We are His temple. And according to this promise, this is the present foretaste of that principle, for those who seek Him, and for those who delight in Him, He will suddenly come to His temple.

Is that too much to expect of the Lord this weekend? That the Lord, because you're seeking, because you delight in Him, will suddenly come to His temple. And I'm talking about in the sense of John 14, 21, He who has my commandments and keeps them is the one who loves me, and he who loves me will be loved by the Father. I will love Him, and I will come and disclose myself to Him.

Isn't that a wonderful verse? I'll come and disclose myself to Him. So let's settle it right up front, brothers, before we open the Word and look in the Song of Solomon. The question this evening and this weekend is not, do you have the Lord? I trust that's been settled a long time ago.

And it's not even, do you understand your portion in Him and have full assurance of that? But the question is this, is He disclosing Himself to you? Is He manifesting Himself to you? Malachi 3:1, the Lord will suddenly come to His temple, and in the context there, that's the introduction to the new covenant. The disclosing of Christ, the manifestation of the Lord, is one of the promises that's secured by the new covenant. And so this is my prayer this weekend, and I hope it's yours, that we have come to so delight in Him and so seek in Him that He'll surprise us and suddenly come to His temple, disclose Himself.

And so with that as an introduction, I'm going to ask you to bow with me, please, and let's commit this time to Him. Our Father, how glad we are for that everlasting truth, that age-abiding principle that those who seek, that those who delight, they are visited. Lord, suddenly come to Your temple.

Surprise us. Meet us. Visit with us individually and corporately.

We thank You for every part of Your Bible in a special way this weekend for the marvelous Song of Songs. Guide our meditations, we pray. Deliver every one of these brothers from that which is flesh and blood.

Deliver us all from sermons. Give us a word from heaven. We ask in Jesus' matchless name, Amen.

I'll ask you to open, please, to the book of Song of Solomon. Song of Songs. Canticles, for those of you who like the Latin.

I think it's been announced already that we'll be meditating on this precious book. Now, because of the nature of this book and the many different approaches to this book, I'd like to take this evening the

introduction lesson. I'd like to take the opportunity to just sort of set it before you.

We're not going to start in chapter 1, verse 1, and go through some kind of an outline. I've gone through the book, and what I'd like to do is just sort of lay before your hearts what I think is the burden of God's heart and that has become the burden of my heart. And if we can just get that together this first evening, then Lord willing, tomorrow we'll begin looking at the book itself.

Now, God has given us analytical minds. Of course, that hurts when you come to a book like Song because that's poetry. And you can kill it.

You can take a song and then outline it. We don't want to do that. But so that we are all together and so that everything is as clear as clear can be, here's what I'd like to do tonight.

I want to give four general observations. So general. Nothing deep.

Probably nothing new. Just four general observations about the book as a whole, which I believe will help us as we get into the book to press to the heart of the Lord. That's what it's all about.

Now, I'm sure this book means different things to different saints. Maybe some of you, like one of my relatives told me the other day, I never read the book. I don't care about Solomon and his girlfriend.

I don't know if you have tried to read it, if you have been discouraged by reading it, if it has meant a lot to you. Different folks have entered into it in a different way. Now, by looking at these observations, what I'm trying to do is give us a taste for the book and call our hearts' attention to great principles that will be true as we study the book together.

My first observation has to do with the distinctive theme of the book. What's it about? What's the message? What's common denominator about the book? Now, I was amazed when I started to study for this, not recently, some time ago, how many different approaches there are to this wonderful Song of Solomon. And because there are so many different approaches, I think it's important to find what is common denominator in all of the approaches and home in, again, not on where we differ, but where we agree and what is common denominator.

I think, pretty much, there are two basic approaches. Let me set those before you and then try to give you what's common denominator. There's that approach which is called the historical approach.

In other words, this is actual history. It really happened. It's not a make-believe story.

There was a real man, Solomon, a king. Now, it depends on how you approach it. He either had a girlfriend and courted her and then later they got married or they're married early and it's this love affair, wedded bliss, but it's a real story.

Of course, it's told in poetry. And so there are those that say it actually happened. And among those that say it actually happened, there are two groups.

Some say it actually happened. It's the story of a shepherd king, Solomon. A wonderful king falls in love with this little country girl, this damsel, this Shulamite maiden, and he courts her and he finally marries her and the record is the courtship and the marriage of the king and this little maiden.

Some say that's what it's about. Some have a little variation of that and they say, yeah, it's history, but the lover is not Solomon. In fact, they say he's the villain.

You see, there was another shepherd and the shepherd loved the girl and King Solomon came along with all of his kingly wooing and he tries to win her affection. And for a while she's enticed, but in the end, she goes back to her shepherd lover and Solomon is the villain in that case. I noticed that Harry Ironside in his interpretation had a little variation of that and said, there is a shepherd lover, but it's the same guy.

And so Solomon comes first as a shepherd. She doesn't know he's a king. And he approaches her and woos her as a shepherd and then later she finds out that he's a king.

They get married and live happily ever after. Now why is that important? That's important because how you approach it, you're going to say, who's talking? Who's doing the speaking? Is this Solomon the king? Is this the bride? Is this the daughters of Jerusalem? Is this the other shepherd? Who's doing the talking? And so your approach is going to affect how you understand this particular book. Well, there's a second view.

And they say it's not historical at all. It's allegorical. It's not based on fact.

It's a poetic device. It's poetry picturing ideal love. It's just some poet that wrote this wonderful love song in order to portray ideal love.

There's no plot. There's no historical characters. It's just somebody's made up story in an oriental setting.

And the scenes change. Sometimes it's in a garden. Sometimes it's in a palace.

Sometimes it's a scene in the springtime, and then there's a scene in the summertime, and then there's a scene in the fall. Sometimes it's on the mountains. Sometimes it's in the valley.

Sometimes it's in the wilderness. Sometimes it's in the house. Sometimes it's out on the street.

It's in the city. Just a made-up story, not actual. Now, those who take the allegorical say it's an allegorical story to present dispensational truth.

And so it's all about God, and it's about Israel. And others say, well, yeah, it's allegorical, but it's not about God and Israel. It's bigger than that.

It's about God and His people. It's about God and the church. But it didn't actually happen.

Just a made-up story. Now, so that we can avoid all of the controversy. Someone believes in the shepherd there, and someone believes in Solomon the villain, and someone believes this one's speaking of that.

So we can avoid all of that. Say, I'm the historical. I take it to be a real story.

Well, then, which branch? King lover theory? Shepherd lover theory? How do you approach this particular book? Solomon the villain? Solomon the hero? The lover in the book? Is it about God and Israel? Is it about God and the church? Is it allegorical? Who's the speaker? Is it the groom? Is it the bride? Is it the shepherd? Is it the daughters of Jerusalem? The daughters of Zion? And so on. And we can fight over those details. Let me give you what I believe is common denominator, and for sure it is this weekend.

Because this is the basis, God helping us, on which we'll study this marvelous book. I am convinced, with the light I have, if it doesn't ring true, scrap it. But I am convinced that this is a love story of two worlds.

It's a human love story, and it illustrates a heavenly love story. It's both. And whether or not it's allegorical or historical is not going to affect the interpretation.

The point is, it's a love story of two worlds. Solomon pointed out, chapter 6 and verse 13, the damsel, the Shulamite, has the same name as the groom. Did you know that the word Solomon means peace? That's masculine.

Shulamite is the feminine form of the name Solomon. It's the same name. And it means peace.

And the son of peace has married the daughter of peace. And they've become one. I like to word it this way and say, I'm the low level of earth and in heaven's highest place.

That's marriage. When the son of peace has married the daughter of peace, and they're one. Don't answer, brothers, but does that describe anybody's marriage here? Come on to my house.

Watch the son of peace as he relates to the daughter of peace. It's a true earthly story. It's a true heavenly story.

And I'm convinced if all you get is the earthly side, you have an incomplete view of the song of Solomon. And I'm also convinced if all you get is the heavenly side, you have an incomplete view of the song of Solomon. Chapter 5, verse 10.

He's chiefest among ten thousand. You say, that's Christ. And indeed it is.

Let me ask you this. Are you the chiefest of ten thousand to your life partner? You see, it also has application there. Exactly so.

Without a doubt, chapter 5, verse 16. He's altogether lovely. Is that how she sees you? Chapter 7, verse 10.

His desire is all toward her. Chapter 6, verse 16. This is my beloved.

This is my friend. That's true upstairs on the heavenly level. Is your wife your best friend? Is there that union? His love is so exclusive.

Chapter 8, verse 6 says that He loves us with a jealous love. Those of you who are married, pray that God will give you a jealous love for your wife. A love that's intolerant of rivalry.

A love that is insisting on exclusive devotion. See, that's how God loves you. It's on both levels.

We need to see it on both levels. One of the things I did, and I won't have time to do as we meet together, there's just not enough time to look at these eight chapters in our sessions. But one of the things I will encourage you to do is just go through the book and find characteristics of love.

Apply it on the human level. Then multiply it by infinity and apply it to the Lord. I won't develop this, but let me give you five characteristics of love that I find in this book.

I'm just throwing this out for this is suggested. True love, according to this book, is always initiated by the man. Caesar responded.

Trace that out. You can't read this book and not know true love is intimate. This is a book of intimacy.

True love is exclusive. It's jealous. True love is intense.

The intensity of the love, especially as you get to chapter 8 and you read some of those descriptions, true love is unselfish. Go through the book and study some of those characteristics. You know, here's an interesting fact, brothers.

This book is all about the heavenly groom and how much He loves you and how much He loves me. Just for interest, does anybody know how many times the name of God is mentioned in Song of Solomon? Depending on which version you use. If you have the King James Version, it's not mentioned at all.

If you have some of the other versions, if you have Darby or the New American Standard or the American Standard, it's mentioned one time. The name of God is only mentioned one time in chapter 8, verse 6. Put me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm. Love is as strong as death.

Jealousy is as severe as shale. Its flashes are flashes of fire. The very flame of the Lord, there it is, Lord of Jehovah, though His name is only mentioned one time, the Lord is in every syllable of this book.

And as you watch the groom, you're going to see your heavenly lover. So that's the first characteristic. It's a love story of two worlds.

Now, don't answer this, but let me ask this question. How many of you married men? I know there's a lot of single men here. I'll address you in a minute.

How many married men here prayed to the Lord, maybe not in so many words, but it's your heart's prayer that your earthly love affair will reflect your heavenly love affair? See, that's what this is all about. That's what marriage is all about. That's why Satan hates a real marriage grounded in the Word of God.

I couldn't believe what I read the other day. Somebody actually took out... wanted to get a divorce. He couldn't afford the divorce.

Talk about irony. So he took out a home improvement loan to finance his divorce. Home improvement.

If my union with Lillian is what it ought to be, people should be able to look at us as we relate to one another and say, now I know how much God loves me. They ought to be able to look at her and say, now I know what it means to surrender to the Lord. That's one of the prayers that we're going to pray as we go through this book.

This common denominator approach makes marriage a sacred thing to the nth degree. Very, very precious thing. Now because we only have limited time, you know where my emphasis will be.

We're going upstairs. We're going to look at the groom as he relates to the church, as he relates to the bride. I'm going to also pray that God will help you translate that as you go home and as you relate to your life partner.

It's a love story of two worlds. Now some of you young guys that are not yet married saying, what am I doing here at this conference studying Song of Solomon? Saying, this won't apply to me at all. Yes it does for this reason.

And one of the wonders of this book, I love to relate this to Isaiah 54-5. Listen carefully you single men. Just for interest.

How many single men do we have here? Listen up. Isaiah 54-5 Your maker is your husband. What a verse that is.

Your maker is your husband. And so whether or not you're married to a woman, if you're a Christian, you're married to the Lord. And that's what we're going to be talking about.

Some say that the prophet Daniel was never married. Yes he was. He trusted the Lord and Isaiah 54 says that his maker is, he's wedded to his maker, his maker is his husband.

Every believer is married to the Lord. We talk so much about the New Covenant and how we love the New Covenant. Check the background of the New Covenant.

It's a marriage covenant. It's a marriage covenant. Daniel was married to Christ while he lived on the earth.

Daniel is married to Christ right now in heaven. Daniel will be married to Christ through all the ages of eternity. So in that sense, there's no such thing as an unmarried Christian.

I know some people say don't read Song of Solomon until you're married. I say read it right away. Get into it.

Learn how much your heavenly groom loves you. It applies to all of us. It's a love story of two worlds.

So what's the thing? Brothers, may God help us with this. We're not here to play a game. I know I handed out that thing and I'll tell you why in another connection.

But it's not a game. If I were to tell you the theme of Song of Solomon is God loves you, I would not be going far enough. That's not the theme.

It's not the theme of Song of Solomon, God loves you. Now only God can teach you this, but let me give you the theme. God is in love with you.

That's not the same thing. God not only loves you, He's in love with you. He's in love with me.

And if we're going to enter into that, we need to see that common denominator approach. God chose the sweetest of all unions, marriage. He chose the sweetest of all affections, love.

He chose the most intimate side of the most intimate relationship on the planet earth, the physical side. God chose the most profound expression of the heart, poetry, in order to tell us that He was in love with us. Tremendous book.

And may God give us eyes to see it, not only as it relates to us in the Lord, but as it relates on the level of earth. Hold that. That's the first principle.

Common denominator. Whatever your approach, you can take this too. This is a love story of two worlds.

It doesn't matter if you're the historical approach or if you're the allegorical approach. We're studying a love story of two worlds. The second principle can be stated in these words, and every word in this statement is thought out.

Every word is important. The message of the Song of Solomon is the climax of the redemptive experience on the earth. And so let me talk about climax and redemptive experience and on the earth.

It's a climax of the redemptive experience on the earth. Now what do I mean by that? Let me try to illustrate it for you several ways and then may God apply it to our hearts. As you know, Solomon wrote three books in the Bible.

Proverbs, or most of the Proverbs. Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon. Some people try to say, well, which one did he write first? All that kind of thing.

Let me just say it right up front, nobody knows. Nobody knows. You've got godly people taking all sides saying that he wrote this in early life and he wrote that in middle life and that in late life.

And others will switch the whole thing around. Nobody knows what order he wrote those books. Some get pretty hung up on the fact that God chose Solomon, of all people, to be the human author of one of the greatest love songs ever written.

And they say, I don't understand that. Solomon was guilty of so many illicit love affairs. If you ever had an unworthy instrument to write a book like this, why didn't God use the sweet psalmist to write Song of Songs? That would make more sense on the level of earth.

1 Kings 11, you don't need to turn to it. You can if you'd like. 1-8 tells us that Solomon had many, I won't call them love affairs, lust affairs.

700 wives. According to the Bible, every one of them were princesses. They all come from royal families.

All 700 of them. 300, one brother calls them porcupines. 700 wives and 300 concubines.

Deuteronomy 17 warns the kings to avoid three things. Do not multiply wives. Do not multiply horses.

Do not multiply gold and silver. Solomon did all three. You know, we usually think about Solomon in terms of the temple.

We say Solomon's temple. Singular. But when you read 1 Kings 11, you're shocked to find out he built many temples.

Not just Solomon's temple. He built temples for the false gods of his many wives. Solomon's temples.

How can a man guilty of so many lust affairs write such a book that God has used to purify the love affairs of God's people through the years? I'm not sure I can give an answer to that. One answer I'll give is this. It certainly shows the sovereignty of God in the inspiration of Scripture.

And I'll tell you this. Aren't you glad God uses unworthy instruments? Oh my! Where would we be if God did not use unworthy instruments? I read one commentary that said, this is an impure book. Then why isn't it popular among impure people? I don't see sinners reading Song of Solomon.

You go to some den of iniquity, they don't say, let's look at Song of Solomon. Why do those who have loved the Lord the most? Why are they the ones that have loved this book? It's not an impure book. It's a very pure book.

And God has used an unworthy instrument to give us this pure book. I believe that the Bible is providentially guided by God and is in its proper order. That He's overlooked the canon of Scripture.

And that every book is in its right place. I think He gave us Proverbs first. Not chronologically, but logically.

Redemptively. Because in Proverbs, Solomon tells us there's two ways to live. You can live wise, or you can live foolish.

And then He gives us Ecclesiastes and says, if you live foolish, that's what your life will look like. And then He gives us Song. And He says, if you live wise, that's what your life will look like.

Song is supernatural life. Ecclesiastes is natural life. Life under the sun.

And under the sun, everything is vanity apart from fellowship with God. The Song of Songs is above. It's a heavenly book.

And nothing is vanity in the Song of Songs. Everything is satisfying. When we study Song, we're studying poetry.

How many poetical books are there? There's a section called Poetry. How many poetical books? It begins with Job. Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song.

These five poetical books follow the 17 historical books. That's not an accident. That's how God does it.

He gives you the history first, and then He explains the history. He did the same thing in the New Testament. He gave you the Gospels and Acts.

That's the history. And then He gives you the Epistles. And that explains the history.

The difference is this, that the books of poetry in the Old Testament are the explanation of redemption in seed form. The Epistles are the explanation of redemption in fully developed form. But it's the same thing.

Poetry, God used, because it's the language of devotion. It expresses the heart, the spirit. You say, Song is one of the poetical books.

It's not one of the books. It's the last book. It's the climax of the explanation section in seed form.

It's the book that takes the redemptive experience as far as it can go on the earth. When you begin to see Song of Solomon, you begin to see the climax of the redemptive experience in Christ. It's not only the explanation, but it's the climactic explanation.

It's exhaustive treatment in seed form. Many think, if I really enter into redemption, the climactic expression of that is missions. Soul winning.

Evangelism. No, that's not the climax of redemption. See, that's an outworking of the climax.

Some say, holiness! That's the climax of redemption. If I really enter in, holiness! I'll be transformed. I'll be like Him.

That's not the climax either. What's the climax of the redemptive experience? Brothers, may God write this in our heart. Your love affair with Jesus is the climax of the redemptive experience.

My love affair with Jesus is the climax of the redemptive experience. 1 Kings 4.32 says of Solomon, he spoke 3,000 proverbs and his songs were 1,005. Solomon wrote 1,005 songs.

Where's the 1,004 of those 1,005? We don't have them. It's because of all the songs. This is the superlative song.

That's why it's called Song of Songs. That's superlative. We say holy of holies.

What do we mean when we say holy of holy? We mean of all the holy places on the earth, this is the holiest of all. We say He's King of kings. What does that mean? It means of all the kings on the earth, He is the King of the kings.

He's Lord of lords. What does that mean? It's a superlative. It means that of all the lords, He's the Lord.

Vanity of vanities. What does that mean? It means of all the emptinesses on the earth, there's no emptiness like walking on earth apart from fellowship with God. That is the vanity of vanities.

The heaven of heavens can't contain Him. What does that mean? Heaven of heavens. It's the superlative.

You say, well, this is the Song of Songs of all 1,005. This is the greatest. Better than that.

Of all songs. Not just Solomon's 1,005. This is the greatest.

Remember the angels sang at creation? That's not like this song. You know Hannah sang? 1 Samuel 2? It's not like this song. You know Deborah sang, Judges 5? It's not like this song.

You know Miriam and Moses' song in Exodus after they crossed the Red Sea? It's not like this song. You know Luke 2 and the five songs in Luke 2? The Ave Maria, the Magnificat, Benedictus, Gloria in Excelsis Deo, Nunc Dominus, those wonderful songs. This, brothers, is the Song of Songs.

Of all the songs ever written, there's nothing like this book. It's the climax of the redemptive experience. It talks about God's love affair.

He's in love with you. And He sings it out as He explains it in the final book. This is the redemptive experience.

Now let me say a word about the word experience because, you know, we're so grounded and we're so deep in the things of God, we tremble when someone says experience because we say, now let's not get subjective and let's not get emotional. We don't want to get emotional even though the word beloved that's used 60 times in the book means to boil over. That's the Hebrew word.

Experience. It's a redemptive experience. Now I know it's poetry and we've got to get beyond the poetry.

We're not used to speaking so freely in a wholesome way as some of the Orientals are about love and love affairs and that kind of thing. What's a high compliment to the Oriental mind might come across even

as an insult to the Occidental mind. That's why I handed out that particular picture.

Because if you just look, that's poetry. There's meaning behind it. If you just take it all literally, I don't suggest when I say take some of these principles home to your wife.

Don't tell her, my darling, you remind me of a horse. I wouldn't do that. Or you see how ugly that thing would be.

The bride in this book is beautiful. It looks nothing like that on that paper. But if you told your wife that her hair is like a flock of goats or that her neck is like the Tower of David or her nose like the Tower of Lebanon or that her belly is like wheat and her belly button is like a goblet, don't do it.

It's poetry. We've got to get beyond the poetry. But it is describing a redemptive experience.

Don't be afraid of the word experience. It's a reality. This is far more than some mental assent and acknowledging some idea and saying, I believe all that.

I have it positionally. I have that in the heavenly places. I'll tell you, I know the pain of seeing something positionally and having no vital experience of that in my heart.

I know the despair and the hardness of heart that comes with thinking it's all up there. Someone says, yeah, but what about your life? And I say, yeah, I know, but it's up there. And I have it.

And I believe it. But in reality, my heart is dead. And my heart is cold.

And my heart is dark. And my heart is weary. And I know I have the fullness of truth and it's all positionally, but there's emptiness in here.

I'll tell you, brothers, may God help us with this. I've tasted it. I know what it means to appeal with pathetic logic to say there's nothing wrong when everything's wrong.

Say, well, the Bible says it's all up there and you're in Christ and you're in the heavenly places and indeed that's so. But is that our experience? This is a redemptive experience. It's something that God wants us to enter into.

And I know a little bit of the hardness and the cynicism that results to appeal from an empty heart to a perfect position. May God help us as we study this book. God does not tell us about our perfect position in Christ so we can have some kind of a spiritual excuse for a lack of joy in our hearts and a lack of a union and a relationship with Him.

This is a book of experience. This is a book that we are supposed to enter into and not just say, well, I've learned all that wonderful truth and it's all mine in Christ Jesus up in the heavenlies and then go out dry and dead and barren and hurt and weary. May God help us.

I am convinced that God did not tell us about our glorious position in Christ Jesus so that we can announce everything's right when it's not. The message of song, I believe, breaks through that crust of excusing our real lack by bringing us into a union with Christ that is actual, that is real. And that is the climax of the redemptive experience.

And so that's my second observation. Don't be afraid of experience. May God deliver us this weekend from all pretense and all artificiality and grant us a vital, climactic, redemptive experience so that as we seek the Lord and as we delight in Him, He may suddenly come to His temple.

That's why we're here. It's a glorious book. And it's not just theory.

And it's not just doctrine. And it's not just positional truth. It's real.

It's experience. Love story of two worlds. The climax of the redemptive experience on earth.

I add on earth because you know this will not be, to use a Song of Solomon word, consummated until He comes again. But this is the climax of the experience on the earth. Here's my third observation.

As you go through the Song of Solomon, you're going to see that it is a book of the many comings and goings of the groom. He keeps on coming. And He keeps on going.

I introduced this lesson with Malachi 3.1. He'll suddenly come to His temple. The coming of Christ is the theme of all Bible prophecy. He has come.

He will come. He will come again. He keeps coming.

Now there's a time in your life. I know there's a time in my life when He came for the first time. And in that sense, He'll never come again.

But He's going to keep showing up. And as we trace and we're going to look at the progress of the bride as she goes forward in union with the groom, He keeps coming and coming. He manifests Himself.

And next thing you know, He's gone. Follow these verses. Or just glance at them.

Verse 4 of chapter 1, the king brought me into his chambers. Well, that's one thing. Verse 8, Listen, my beloved, behold, He's coming, climbing on the mountains, leaping on the hills.

Then go to 12. Well, now He's at the table. Chapter 2, verse 1, On my bed night after night I sought Him whom my soul loves.

I sought Him, but didn't find Him. He's gone. He's there.

He's gone. Verse 2, I must rise now and go about the city in the streets, in the squares. I must seek Him whom my soul loves.

I sought Him, but did not find Him. Verse 4, Scarcely had I left them when I found Him whom my soul loves. I held on to Him, would not let Him go.

Chapter 2, verse 6, What is this? Coming up from the wilderness? Chapter 3, verse 8, Now where is He? Come with me from Lebanon, my bride. May you come with me from Lebanon, and journey down from the summit of Ammanah, from the summit of Sinai and Hermon, from the dens of lions and the mountains of leopards. Chapter 4, verse 1, I have come into my garden, my sister, my bride.

Chapter 4, verse 6, I opened to my Beloved. My Beloved had turned away, and had gone. My heart went out to Him as He spoke.

I searched for Him, could not find Him. I called Him. He did not answer me.

You go through the Song of Solomon. He's there. He's not there.

Oh, there He is. Coming over the mountains. He's gone.

Oh, He's in the garden. Oh, He's in the wilderness. Alright, here He comes.

Where did He go? I look on the street. That's what the Song of Solomon is. Chapter 5, verse 1, Where is your Beloved gone, most beautiful among women? Where is your Beloved turned? Chapter 6, verse 11, Come, my Beloved.

Let's go to the country. Let's spend the night in the villages. Let's rise early.

Go to the vineyards. Chapter 8, verse 5, Who's this coming up out of the wilderness? The book ends. Hurry, my Beloved.

Be like a gazelle or young stag on the mountains of spices. May I suggest, and this is just the observation, as I go forward in the Lord and as you go forward in the Lord, every forward step is a fresh coming of the groom. He comes.

And then after a while, you look around, He's gone. And all of a sudden, He shows up again. And He shows up again.

And that's the Christian life. Jesus showing up. Jesus coming and coming and coming.

He's always here and He's ever coming. And just when He arrives, He comes again. Marvelous book.

Let me give one more observation and then we'll wrap it up. Not only is the common denominator principle of this book that it's a love story of two worlds, not only does this book present the climactic, redemptive experience on this earth, not only is this book a record of the comings and comings and comings and goings of the groom, but this is the story of the progress of the bride in her union with the groom, but the heavenly lover of her soul. Now when I say bride, that's a singular word, but you're a Christian.

And you're used to thinking of bride. That's not a singular word. You say the church is the bride.

And it's sort of a collective word. Great company of people make up the bride. And yet as you read the Song of Solomon, you're struck with the fact that there's only the groom and the bride.

Now am I saying that there's only two people in the Song of Solomon? No, the church is there. You read and the church is there. Glance at these verses, please.

In chapter 3, verse 4, we read about the house. In 8, 2, the mother and her house. Chapter 1, 6, the mother's sons.

Chapter 8, 8, the bride's brothers and the bride's sister. Chapter 1, 7, about the groom's companions. Chapter 8, 13, about the bride's companions.

Chapter 1, 7, about the flock. 1, 8, about the shepherds. The most mentioned group are these daughters of Jerusalem.

I'll mention those in another connection. 1, 5, and 2, 7, and 3, 5, and 5, 8, and 8, 4, the daughters of Jerusalem. 3, 3, the watchmen.

5, 7, watchmen. 6, 8, the virgins. 8, 11, the caretakers of the vineyard.

I'm just calling attention as you go through the Song of Solomon. There's a lot about the group. About the church.

About the body. About the mother's house. About the flock.

The vineyard. The brothers. The sisters.

The companions. The shepherds. The daughters of Jerusalem.

The daughters of Zion. The virgins. The watchmen.

The caretakers of the vineyard. It's all part of the body. But then there's the bride.

And she steals the whole show. I'm not saying the church is not in there. I'm just saying the way the story is told, it's as if there was nobody else.

I have an idea. Each one of those that are mentioned, the watchmen and the daughters of Jerusalem, each represent a different branch in the body in terms of their maturity in the Lord. I don't even have the ability to lay that before you.

I don't even have time to give you the little bit I think I know about that. But I know this. It's all about the bride and it's all about the groom.

His sister, his bride, his garden, his perfect one, his unique one, his darling, his lily among the thorns. Let me illustrate this and then we'll wrap it up. In 1 Kings chapter 4, we read about Solomon's table.

He had a strange table. Listen to this. 1 Kings 4 verse 22.

Solomon's provision for one day was thirty cores of fine flour, sixty cores of meal, ten fat oxen, twenty pasture-fed oxen, a hundred sheep, beside deer, gazelle, roebucks, and fatted fowl. That's every day. That was at his table.

1 Kings 10 describes the Queen of Sheba when she came and she saw his table. When the Queen of Sheba perceived all the wisdom of Solomon, the house he had built, the food of his table, the seating of his servants, the attendance of his waiters and their attire, his cupbearers, his stairway by which he went up into the house of the Lord, there was no more spirit in her. One translation said, she fainted dead away.

She saw that table with all of that food. You say, who's at the table? Just the bride and groom with all that food? No, I tell you, there's a lot of people at the table. 1 Kings 4 verse 27 says, Everybody who came to his table, he fed.

So many people at the table. But read Song of Solomon. When you come to chapter 1 and you look at chapter 12, verses 12 to 14, we're at this table.

This is a table that is spread. And everybody's around it. But you read the record.

Only the groom. The way the story's told, it's just told in terms of her. The church is there, but they're in the background.

They're all around. And especially these daughters of Jerusalem. They're everywhere.

But it's about the bride and the groom. Who was it? Augustine? That said that God loves you so much, if nobody else, how did He word it? If you were the only one that ever lived, He would have come just for you. Well, the Song of Solomon is written as if there's no group.

There's no body. It's just you and Him. Now listen, we're studying the Song of Solomon.

We're a bunch of men. We've come together this weekend. We're serious about seeking the Lord, delighting in the Lord, longing that He would suddenly come to His temple.

We're here on purpose. You paid to come here. We're here as a body.

We're here as a group. Our brother read the Scripture. How precious for brothers.

This weekend, may God help you. You're the only one here. It's just you and Jesus.

That's what this book is about. If you don't study it that way, you're going to miss the book. You're going to miss the heart of God.

That's what it's about. It's about you. It's about the Lord.

Song chapter 1 verse 4, draw me and we will run after you. There's the we. There's the plural.

But it's draw me. Everything is so personal. It's just you and Jesus.

It's just me and Jesus. It's a personal draw me, but the pursuit is collective. 400 people respond to Jesus.

They didn't come as a group. One person came 400 times. That's how He deals with us.

It's always the individual. As we read this book, brothers, we're going to get into a lot of love talk as God talks to us. But He's talking to you.

He's talking to me. You'll notice if you respond when He talks to you. First thing you'll notice, and that's what she noticed, draw me, we'll run.

If you respond to the Lord, just you, you'll notice you're not alone. That's the glory of this thing. You respond as an individual and suddenly you're not alone.

The very moment you start getting involved with Jesus, in that moment you start getting involved with those who are involved with Jesus. It's just the nature of the thing. It's a very, very personal book.

And so those four things, brothers, I hope will prepare our hearts. This is a love story of two worlds. This is God inviting us to the very climax of the redemptive experience that we might know in experience, in reality, that He not only loves us, but He is in love with us.

We'll see the progress as He keeps coming and going. And we'll trace it out. You'll be able to see it in your life.

And if you're going to understand the book, you're the only one at this conference. Nobody else came. It's about you.

If God can dawn that on us, I have an idea, the Song of Solomon will make a major contribution. May God help us. Let's pray.

Father, thank You for this book, not for what we think it's about, but for all that You've inspired it to be. Prepare our hearts, Lord. We do seek Thee.

We do delight in Thee. Suddenly come to Your temple. We ask in Jesus' name, Amen.

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