

Calvary Chapel Modesto, Ca 1 2 of 3

by William MacDonald

William MacDonald shares keys to effective Bible study and the importance of understanding Scripture in its context.

Duration: 1:33:18

Scripture: Psalm 119:33

Topics: "Gods Guidance", "Biblical Symbolism"

Description

This sermon delves into various passages from Psalms 119, discussing the importance of seeking God's guidance, understanding His law, and walking in His ways wholeheartedly. It also touches on the significance of not getting caught up in trivial matters but focusing on mercy, grace, and compassion. Additionally, the sermon explores the use of irony in the Bible, referencing 2 Corinthians 11:8 as an example. The significance of numbers in Scripture is highlighted, showcasing how numbers can carry symbolic meanings throughout the Bible.

Transcript

Thank you very much. Seems rather unusual for dear brother Damien and myself to be here at the same time. In fact, when I came in the back there and was speaking with him, a young lady went by and said, I've never seen you two in the same room before.

Well, that's my joy tonight for that to be so. So please turn in your Bibles to Psalm 119. Psalm 119.

We'll begin reading in verse 33. Psalm 119, verse 33. Teach me, O Lord, the way of your statutes, and I shall keep it to the end.

Give me understanding and I shall keep your law. Indeed, I shall observe it with my whole heart. Make me walk in the path of your commandments for I delight in it.

Incline my heart to your testimonies and not to covetousness. Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things and revive me in your way. Establish your word to your servant who is devoted to fearing you.

Turn away my reproach, which I dread, for your judgments are good. Behold, I long for your precepts. Revive me in your righteousness.

I'd like to spend a little time tonight just sharing with you some keys to Bible study that have been helpful to me. Somebody has said better than to be a preacher is to make a preacher. And I would like to adapt that tonight.

Better than to be a Bible student is to make a Bible student. We'd like to multiply the number. Toward that end, I'd just like to give you some simple keys, some of which you already know, no doubt, and others which might be new to you.

I'd like to start off by saying that obedience is the organ of spiritual knowledge. The people who do the best in growing in the word of God are those who see what is written and have an earnest determination to do what they see. They have great faith in God.

They believe his word. They said, if God says it, that's what I want to do. Those are the people who advance the best in the things of God.

It's good in studying the word of God to know the author, isn't it? Good to know the author. Have a personal relationship with the Lord. That doesn't mean if you're not a Christian that you shouldn't read the Bible.

For any who do not have assurance of salvation, there's a guarantee in the word of God. Did you know that? It's found in John 7, 17. And if I could just paraphrase that verse, it says, if you really want to know, God will show it to you.

I have never known that verse to fail. I've known many people who came to the Lord in desperation. They really wanted to know the truth.

Some of them were on the verge of suicide. They cried out, oh, God, if there is a God, show it to me. And they started to read the word of God, and God spoke to them through the Bible.

I've never seen it fail. So if you're in that category tonight, if you do not know the Savior, if you do not know your sins forgiven, if you don't have peace with God and are sure of a place in heaven, I take you to the word of God and say, believe it. Ask him to speak to you.

I tell you, he can speak loudly through the scripture. If you are a Christian, it should be your greatest joy in life to get into the word of God and hear God speaking to you and then build your life upon that basis. Let me give you some keys that have been helpful to me.

In your study of the word of God, follow the literal interpretation of the Bible, the literal interpretation. If it says that Jesus Christ is going to reign a thousand years on the earth, Jesus Christ is going to reign a thousand years on the earth. It's just that simple.

You say, well, what else could you believe? Well, there are a lot of dear Christian people who allegorize the Bible or spiritualize the Bible so that the millennium is taking place in your life right now. When you trusted Christ, the millennium begins in your life. Or maybe the millennium is taking place in heaven.

My attitude is cream lies on the surface. And if the first sense of the Bible makes sense, don't look for any other sense. It's not hard, is it? If the first sense makes sense, don't look for any other sense.

Now, there are some passages in the Bible that you don't have to take literally because the word of God explains what they are. Revelation chapter 120. Revelation chapter 120.

And this is clear on the face of it. The mystery of the seven stars, which you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches.

And the seven lampstands, which you saw, are the seven churches. So you have many things in the Scripture that are explained by the Scripture. And sometimes a literal interpretation of the Bible would be inconsistent with the rest of the word of God.

Jesus said, if your right eye offends you, pluck it out. If your right hand offends you, cut it off. But that would be in conflict with the word of God that this body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

I'm not to desecrate this body. I'm not to mutilate this body. So that passage of Scripture, what does that mean? If your right eye offends you, it means there come times in life when you have to take strong, resolute action when there's a temptation in your life.

That's what it means. Joseph is an illustration. When that woman sought to seduce him, he put a few healthy miles between him and her.

So I take a verse of Scripture like that and say, yeah, I know what that means. And I have to practice that in my life. We all know there's one correct interpretation of a verse of Scripture of many applications.

This is wonderful about the word of God. Not all the word of God was written to me. Some of it was written to Israel.

Some of the promises are written to Israel. But I can extract honey from them and use it in my life. We must study a verse of Scripture in its context.

You've heard that before. Study a verse of Scripture in its context. Turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 15.

And I'm going to read verses 29 through 34. 1 Corinthians chapter 15 and verses 29 to 34. And I'm looking for that expression, baptized for the dead.

Baptism for the dead. 29. Otherwise, what will they do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead do not rise at all, why then are they baptized for the dead? And why do we stand in jeopardy every hour? I affirm by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.

If in the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me if the dead do not rise, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die? Now, I ask myself, what is the context here? Well, of course, the context of the chapter is the resurrection. And incidentally, when you come to that word resurrection, it always refers to the body, never to the spirit. The word resurrection always refers to the body.

This chapter has to do with the resurrection, the resurrection of Christ, the resurrection of believers. But there's another emphasis in these verses that is quite strong. And if you want to understand that expression, baptism for the dead, whatever the interpretation of this verse, it must take into account that other background.

Can you see it? What's he talking about here? He said, why do we stand in jeopardy every hour? What's that referring to? It's referring to the persecution he underwent as a servant of the Most High God. I affirm by the boasting which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. What's that referring to? It's referring to his afflictions and persecutions for the namesake of the Lord Jesus.

If in the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me if the dead do not rise, let us eat and drink for tomorrow we dine? He's talking about the great fight of opposition which those early Christians went through. Whatever your interpretation of baptism for the dead is, must take that into account. That is the context of the verse.

Okay, what does the verse mean? In those days, people were crowding to Christ and they were not only trusting Christ as they were being baptized. And that was the signal for persecution and martyrdom. And martyrdom.

Did that stop people from getting saved? Did that stop people from moving forward and taking the place of those who had been baptized? No. Today those martyrs would be laid away, their bodies would be laid away in the grave. Tomorrow a fresh group would step forward and say Christ for me.

I am Christ and Christ is mine forever and ever. And they were baptized for the dead in the place of the dead. To fill up the ranks of the dead.

That's why they were baptized. It's like an army marching into battle. I don't know whether they do this anymore with all the smart bombs they have, but a man out front, a flag bearer, you know.

And he's marching forward with the flag of his country and he's shot and he falls to the ground. But the flag doesn't fall to the ground. One of the other soldiers rushes forward and grabs that flagpole and marches on with it.

He's carrying it for the dead. And that's what was happening in the early days of the church. Baptism was and still is in many countries a signal for persecution and in Muslim countries and other countries a signal for martyrdom.

More Christians have been martyrs in recent years than in all the history of the Christian church. We don't realize it. I hope you pray for the suffering church here in Calvary Chapel.

I'm sure you do. What I'm emphasizing in there is baptism for the dead. Whatever the interpretation of it, it must take into account Paul's teaching here that those who were baptized were killed, they were martyred, and others stepped forward to be baptized for them in their place to fill up the ranks.

Now, you know that the Mormon people baptized for the dead, but their baptism has nothing to do with persecution. It has nothing to do with martyrdom for the name of Christ. I'll just do one more, 2 Peter 1.20. Study it in the context, 2 Peter 1.20. Verse 19, and so we have the prophetic word confirmed which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this first that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, but prophecy never came by the will of man, but by holy men of God as they spoke, as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

Well, it's that expression, no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation. Now, whatever your interpretation of that passage is, it has to agree with the next verse, doesn't it? For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. That verse is interpreted in so many different ways.

First of all, you mustn't interpret any passage of Scripture without taking the rest of Scripture into account. There's no private interpretation, you can't make it stand alone. Well, I think that's kind of a good rule in general, although there's only one passage in the New Testament dealing with the virgin birth, isn't there?

It is supported by Isaiah in his prophecy.

But is that what the passage is saying? Or those who teach that only a particular church has the right to interpret the Word of God, is that what it's saying? I don't know what it's saying. What's it saying? Peter here is talking about the origin of the Scriptures, how we got the Scriptures, not how we interpret them after we got them, but how we got the Holy Scriptures. So how do you know? Because verse 21 bears it out.

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scriptures of any private interpreting, for prophecy never came by the will of men, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. It's the origin of the Word of God that's in view here. In other words, God didn't say to Jeremiah, Jeremiah, you write this out as best seems to you.

You give a Dan Rather interpretation of what's going on in Israel at the present time. He didn't say that. The very words that Jeremiah wrote were the words of God.

So just let me say before we go on that when it says the interpretation of Scriptures, it's not how we interpret them, although if you want to make an application, that's all right, the interpretation has to do with how we got the Scriptures and the way we got them was that God gave the very words to the men to write down. I hope this is clear. Notice in your study of the Bible, notice to whom a passage is written and about whom it's written.

Notice to whom it's written and about whom it's written. Acts chapter 2 and verse 38 can be quite a difficult little verse. Acts chapter 2 and verse 38.

The folks in the Church of Christ like this verse. I don't think you'll ever talk to a person in the Church of Christ that the denomination of the Church of Christ, it doesn't quote this verse. Acts 2, 38.

Then Peter said to them, repent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Notice that. Repentance first, baptism second, reception of the Holy Spirit third.

Wow. Is that the gospel you preach at Calvary Chapel? I don't think so. Well, it's basically the same gospel but it's a different administration of the gospel.

Let me explain that. I said, be careful that you see to whom the book is written. Verse 22 of that same chapter, men of Israel.

Men of Israel hear these words. These words weren't spoken to Gentiles in general. They were spoken to the men of Israel.

And what is God saying to them through this verse? He's saying, the nation of Israel was responsible in a very special way, not exclusive, in a special way for the crucifixion of the Lord of glory. And I will not send my Holy Spirit upon you when you repent and believe. I will not send my Holy Spirit upon you until you've been baptized.

Why? Because baptism took them off Jewish ground and put them on Christian ground. That's why. Baptism dissociated themselves from the nation of Israel that crucified the Lord of glory.

I hope that's clear. There are four different communities of believers in the book of Acts, and the order and the reception of the Holy Spirit is different in each one. First of all, you have Israel here.

You have the Samaritans in Acts chapter 8. You have the Gentiles, and that's where we come in. That's where most of us here tonight come in. And what was the order there? Believe, receive the Holy Spirit, and be baptized.

And then, of course, you have John's disciples later on in the book of Acts, and they had to have the apostles' hands laid on them. Let me say that again. There are four communities of believers in the book of Acts, and the order of reception of the Holy Spirit was different in each case.

What's that say? It says to me, God is sovereign. But here's a good reason for each of those, and I've tried to show you what the reason here is. Later in this same chapter, Peter said to the men of Israel, save yourselves from this perverse generation.

What perverse generation? The generation that had the blood of Christ on their hands. How could they save themselves from that perverse generation? By believing on Christ, the Messiah, and by being baptized in Christian baptism. Does that mean that baptism had the power to save? No, it didn't have the power to save.

Only Christ has the power to save. But that took them, as I say, off Jewish ground and put them on Christian ground. To whom a passage is written.

Okay, about whom a passage is written. Acts chapter 2. Notice carefully when you're studying the word of God about whom the author is writing. Ephesians 2.1. Ephesians 2.1. And you, he made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked, according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

Notice, in verse 1, you. In verse 3, we. There's a change in pronoun there.

Is it accidental? There's nothing accidental in the Bible. The Holy Spirit writes for special care. What is the thought here? Well, he's speaking to Gentiles.

The letter was written to the Ephesians. They were Gentiles before they were saved. And he says, you Gentiles, he made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, among whom we also, we of Jewish background.

It helps you in your understanding of the word of God if you watch for those pronouns and watch about whom Paul is speaking. Another key to understanding the word of God, the law of agency. I call this the law of agency.

Sometimes a person is said to do something when it's actually one of his agents who does it. That's not difficult. We say that today.

Actually, when the president of the United States signs a bill, he's really signing it for you and for me. He's an agent for you and for me. And you have that in the word of God, the law of agency.

Turn to Deuteronomy chapter 27, 14. Deuteronomy 27, 14. And this is about the pronouncing of the curses on Mount Ebal, how the children of Israel would have the curse pronounced on Mount Ebal and the blessings on Mount Gerizim.

Deuteronomy 27, 14. And the Levites shall speak with a loud voice and say to all the men of Israel, Cursed is the one. And it goes on to list a whole group of curses there.

But notice, the Levites shall speak with a loud voice. Okay, now turn to Joshua 8, 35. Joshua 8, 35.

There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel with the women, the little ones, and the strangers who were living among them. Joshua was there renewing the covenant. Who read them, Levites or Joshua? Well, Joshua was an agent, wasn't he? He was the agent of God for the Levites in reading to the people from the mount.

The law of agency. The law of prior mention. The law of prior mention.

This is interesting to me. Sometimes things are mentioned in the Bible that weren't in existence until afterwards. Have you ever noticed that? It's really quite exciting.

For example, in Psalm 5, 7, David speaks about the temple. But the temple didn't come into existence until the time of Solomon. David had passed off the scene.

Solomon built the temple, and here David long before that talks about the temple. The law of prior mention. This past week I was studying in Isaiah, and you know, God calls Cyrus the king of the Persians, king of the Medo-Persians.

He calls him by name 150 to 200 years before the man ever appeared on the scene. I tell you, the liberals and the modernists don't like this. No, they don't.

They try to assign a late date to Isaiah. He couldn't have known. He did know.

He did know. And all through the book of Isaiah, God is appealing to the fact that fulfilled prophecy is one of the great proofs of his deity, and it is. Fulfilled prophecy is one of the great proofs of the deity of God, the true God.

And he contrasts himself with idols who can't predict the future. I'll say that again. And he pours scorn on those idols.

Here are men looking to a piece of wood. They've carved it out themselves. They carry the idol.

God carries his people, but they carry their God, and they have all these shavings, you know, and sawdust from the making of the idol, and they use some of it to bake bread and some of it to bake meat and some of it to warm themselves by the fire. Scorn, God pouring upon it. So he is the God of prophecy.

A great proportion of the Bible is devoted to prophetic scriptures. Law of first mention. That's another law, the law of first mention.

That means that oftentimes you get something of the meaning of a word by the way it's used first in the Bible. I like that. The law of first mention.

It's not the same as the law of prior mention. Prior means before the thing ever happened. First mention means the first time.

The first time the word worship appears in the Bible is when Abraham is going to Mount Moriah with his son to offer him up as a burnt sacrifice to God. And he said to the young men that were traveling with him, look, you and the donkeys stay here, and my son and I will go yonder and worship and come back to you. That's wonderful.

Come back to you. He was going to offer his son as a burnt offering. Come back to you, come back to you.

Faith. What did worship mean for Abraham that day? I and the young man will go yonder and worship and come back to you. What did it mean? Worship to Abraham that day meant offering that which was dearest to his heart to God.

That's what it meant. It's lovely, isn't it? What did it mean to Isaac? Because he didn't struggle. He allowed his father to bind him and place him up there on the altar.

It meant giving the Lord his heart, his life, his all. That's worship. I think as John MacArthur says that offering ourselves as a living sacrifice to God is the purest form of Christian worship.

I think that's true. I beseech you therefore brethren by the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice wholly acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service. Be not conformed to the world but be transformed by the renewing of your minds that you may prove what is a good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

I love that. Think of that father and son going up there and their hearts were filled with worship already. Not that I have my own I'd call.

I'd hold it for the giver. That's what they were saying. Here's a key to the understanding.

God is often said to do in the Bible what he only permits to be done. This has solved some difficult problems for me in the Bible. God is often said in the Bible to do things that he only permits to be done.

A good illustration of course is found in 1 Samuel 16, 14. 1 Samuel 16, 14. Says, but the spirit of the Lord departed from Saul and a distressing spirit from the Lord troubled him.

But I think in the King James version it says an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him. Does anybody have the King James here tonight? It says an evil spirit. Thank you.

An evil spirit from the Lord. Dear friends, I don't believe anything evil comes from the Lord, do you? I don't believe anything evil. I don't think sickness, tragedy, sorrow, I don't think they come from the Lord.

They're often said to come from the Lord because he allows it. This is an illustration of that. Another illustration is found in Job chapter one and verse 21.

Job says, verse 20. Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped. And he said, naked I came from my mother's womb and naked shall I return there the Lord gave and the Lord has taken away.

Blessed be the name of the Lord. Who took away? The devil took away. But God permitted it.

And God is here set to do what he only permits to be done. Are you with me? I think that's very, very helpful. Sometimes a verse in the Bible states a truth, but there may be exceptions to it.

There may be exceptions to it. In Ephesians six, one to three, it says, honor your father and your mother that your days may be long upon the earth. This is the first commandment with promise.

Dear friends, you live long on the earth. This is the first commandment with promise. I've known some wonderful fellows and girls who lived for the Lord and they died young.

I talked to Ed McCulley's father. Ed McCulley was one of the martyrs of Ecuador and after they had been killed, his father, C. McCulley said to me, and Bill, he said, Ed was a son that never caused his parents a moment of anxiety, he said. He was a fellow that honored his father and his mother and yet he died young for the cause of Christ down in Ecuador.

Oftentimes there are statements in the word of God and they allow for exceptions. Train up a child in the way in which he will go and he will not depart from it. But how do you explain the fact of two boys brought up in the same home and they had the same training from their parents? Godly home.

And while them does well, goes on for the Lord. And the other one is blotto as far as the things of God are concerned. Accurate definitions are terribly important in Scripture.

Accurate definitions. There was a theologian years ago, his name was Bengal. And he had a list of 20 words and he said, if you know the definition of these 20 biblical words, you're well on your way to becoming a Bible scholar.

He said, I've never found his 20 words, so I made 20 of my own. And I'll read them to you, I'll read the words. Atonement, atonement.

It's a difficult word to define, I'm pretty, I'm serious. A difficult word to define, atonement. Election.

Faith. Yeah, we use them all the time. We should have an accurate definition of them.

Foreknowledge, forgiveness. Glory. That word glory has, I don't know how many different meanings to it.

I wrote a few down. Radiance, bright shining honor, God's perfection, moral glory, et cetera. Gospel.

Well, we know what gospel means. It means good news. Grace.

Grace, undeserved favor to those who enjoy the very opposite. Justify, be careful, justify. Justify doesn't mean to make just, it doesn't mean to make righteous, it means to reckon it to be so.

It's important, it's a courtroom word. The law, the 10 commandments. Predestination, propitiation, reconciliation, redeem, to buy back.

Repentance. There's difference of opinion among evangelicals today about that word repentance. Some think it means to change your mind about God and Christ.

Other means to change your mind about sin. To be walking towards sin one day with God at your back and to turn around, to walk toward God with sin left behind you. I like the second one.

Thomas Watson, one of the great old Puritans, said that repentance is the vomit of the soul. That's kind of crude, but it's good just the same. It is, it's good.

Repentance is the vomit of the soul. Doesn't that say something to you? It does to me. Sanctify.

Sanctify doesn't mean to make holy. It means to set apart. Jesus sanctified himself.

He says in John 17, for their sake I sanctify myself. He didn't make himself holy. He's always been holy and couldn't be anything else but holy.

But he could set himself apart for the work at Calvary's cross. Be careful of your definition. Sin.

What is sin? Well, basically it's missing the mark, but there's a lot more to it than that. If I were to give you two keys to understanding, for the right understanding of the New Testament, I would say one of them I've already given you. Adopt a literal interpretation of the word of God.

The second is distinguish between Israel and the church. We hear so much today that the church is just a continuation of Israel in the Old Testament. It's not.

The church was a secret hidden in God before the foundation of the earth and was not revealed until the apostles and prophets of the New Testament period gave it to us. Absolutely new. It's a new society that never existed before the church.

That'll help you in your understanding of the scripture if you keep that in mind. Be familiar with figures of speech. This almost sounds like back in school once again, but never mind.

Similarly, one thing compared to another using the words like or as. His face was like steel. A metaphor doesn't use the word like or as.

His face was steel. And yet when you use that figure of speech, nobody thinks his face was metallic, do they? Hard, stiff, unbending. Metonymy, one word is used for a related one.

Jesus said, this cup is the New Testament in my blood. Drink ye all of it. Drink a cup.

You don't drink the cup. Metonymy, you drink the contents of the cup. But we know what that meant.

Nobody ever stumbled over that, did they? We know that when the Lord said, drink ye all of it, he didn't expect us to be drinking cups. Anthropomorphism. This is interesting where God is said to have human qualities.

His eyes search among the sons of men. Beautiful. I tell you, if you get into the study of figures of speech, it gives you a new love for the word of God.

I think. Parable is a short narrative with a meaning underneath the surface. Matthew 13 has seven parables.

You read the parable, it's a story in itself. But you can tell when you're reading it that there's something under the surface there that's telling you. Allegory is an extended parable.

John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress is an allegory. You read that beautiful story. A Christian on his way to the Celestial City, and you say, oh, yeah, I can see what Bunyan was getting at here.

And so you can. Hyperbole. I like this because, and the Bible has hyperbole in it.

What does that mean? It means an exaggeration. But it's so clearly an exaggeration that nobody has stumbled by it. Jesus said, you strain out a gnat and you swallow a camel.

It's beautiful. That's lovely, isn't it? Did he mean you swallow a camel? No, it doesn't mean that. It means that you're punctilious about the little things in life, the little trivia in life.

But you miss the important things like mercy and grace, compassion shown to others. That's what he meant. But once you hear it, you never forget it, do you? You never forget it.

Imagine a camel going down past your Adam's apple. It's ridiculous. Irony.

Well, the Bible has a lot of irony in it. Just let me show you one passage. 2 Corinthians 11.8. 2 Corinthians 11.8. I already gave you an illustration where God was using irony with regard to the idols.

2 Corinthians 11.8. Paul says here, I robbed other churches taking wages from them to minister to you. I robbed other churches. The great apostle Paul, we know what that means.

He was supported elsewhere when he was working among the Corinthians. And he's using irony. They were doubting his apostleship.

They weren't receiving him as they should have received him. And so he wasn't depending upon them for his support. He got it elsewhere.

And so he says, I tell you, that has a bite to it. Imagine when this letter was read in the church in Corinth. I robbed other churches taking wages from them to minister to you.

Ouch. I hope they felt the force of it. The Bible often uses the language of human appearance.

This is good, too. The Bible often uses the language of human appearance. From the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, the name of the Lord is to be praised.

Good. We all know what that means. People say, well, the Bible has scientific inaccuracies.

Really? No, the sun doesn't move. The sun's always in the same place. It's the earth that moves in relation to the sun.

Of course, that's true. That's true. But if you go to the Chronicle tomorrow, it'll tell you what time the sun rises and what time it sets.

The Bible isn't inaccurate. It's the language of human appearance. It seems that way to us.

We watch that globe dip down in the west there, and it seems that the sun is setting. The sun is still in the same place. People shouldn't have trouble with these things.

They make mountains out of molehills. Learn to recognize types in the Word of God. Typology is a great study as long as you don't carry it too far.

Noah's Ark is a beautiful type. The whole way of salvation is given there. Melchizedek is a beautiful type of the Lord Jesus.

Moses, type of the prophet that would come. The Passover, the priests, the Levites, the offerings, the veil of the temple, the tabernacle. And some of this is brought on in Hebrews.

The manna, the rock, the serpent. Joseph, the son of Jacob. There are over a hundred correspondences between the life of Joseph and the life of the Lord Jesus.

And yet he's never spoken of as being a type of Jesus. I think that's beautiful. Joseph is my favorite Old Testament character because he makes me think of Jesus.

You can't read his story without that. Recognize symbols in the Bible. Land speaks of Israel.

The sea often speaks of Gentiles. Egypt speaks of the world. And Canaan speaks of our present position in Christ in heavenly places.

It's marvelous to me that numbers have meanings in the Scripture. Numbers have meaning. Not always.

Don't press these things too far. But they do have meaning. Number one, exclusive and supremacy.

One God. One God. Two, confirming a testimony.

In the mouths of two or three witnesses shall everything be established. Three. Well, three has to do with the Trinity.

And it also has to do with resurrection. He rose on the third day from the tomb. Four, universality.

The four corners of the earth. The four winds that cover the earth. Four beasts comprise Gentile world domination.

And so it goes. You can say that these names. Six, the number of man.

The antichrist will be six, six, six. Number of man. Six, one less than seven.

Man has fallen short. Seven is the number of perfection. Six is short of perfection.

All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Eight, new beginning. The first day of the week.

New beginning. The Lord's day. Beginning.

And so for 40, a number of testing so we could go on. Colors have spiritual meaning too. You know, here are men, over, I think over 40 men that have written scriptures.

And they never got together at a convention or a men's retreat to decide about these things. And yet all of them down through the years, they follow these patterns that I'm talking to you about in the Bible. Colors.

Purple is the color of royalty. The kings of Midian were robed in purple. Scarlet, sin.

Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow. Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. White, purity and righteousness.

Clothed in white garments, which are the righteousnesses of the saints, it says. Blue, the heavenly color. Of course, the names in scripture have a meaning too.

And I think this is lovely. Israel means prince with God. I love Jesus, the sweetest name that ever reached my ears.

Jesus, Jehovah, is the savior. Turn to Luke 1. My time is getting away from me, but it hasn't gone yet. Luke chapter 1. I think I'll just close with this.

The names here. First of all, you have the name Zechariah here. Zechariah.

Verse 5. Zechariah. That means the Lord remembers. Elizabeth, mentioned here too, married Zechariah.

Her name means the oath of God. And they had a boy, and his name was John. It means the favor or grace of Jehovah.

Look, God remembers his oath or covenant. And a boy is born, the favor of God. I think that's lovely.

I think I'll just stop there. We could say much more, but these are just little keys that have been helpful to me in studying the word of God. And I tell you, the more you see things like the scripture, the more you stand in awe of the word of God.

Really do. There's no book like the Bible. A lot of the books we devote our attention to these days will have no significance in heaven at all.

But anything you learn about the Bible today is an investment for eternity. May the Lord make us diligent students of the word of God. Well, thank you very much for a very warm welcome.

I must say I feel very much at home here. This is not my first visit, actually. I love you all because you love my Savior.

And because you love the word of God. I really appreciate the emphasis on the scriptures that you have in this fellowship. That's what we want to look into tonight.

I brought along a friend with me, a friend and brother. His name is Eric Shorkin. He's been serving the Lord down in Brazil for the last nine years.

Eric, would you just rise, please, and let the folks see who you are. I know you won't have to make him feel at home because I think he already feels at home here as I do. I just wish Damien could be here and that I could sit and listen to him.

Last time I was here, he was speaking about the lost sheep. If you'd like to hear the message, I could give it to you over again. Would you turn in your Bibles tonight to the Song of Solomon? We're going to be just giving an overview.

I know you're studying in the Old Testament. I know you're in the Psalms. I didn't want to interrupt that, so I thought I'd just move ahead a little to the Song of Solomon and we could think of it together.

Wonderful to hear the rustle of the leaves of the Bible. Song of Solomon, chapter 1 and verse 1. The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's. Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for thy love is better than wine.

Because of the savor of thy good ointments, thy name is as ointment poured forth. Therefore, the virgins love thee. Draw me, we will run after thee.

The king has brought me into his chambers. We will rejoice and be glad in thee. We will remember thy love more than wine, the upright love thee.

I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon. Look not upon me because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me. My mother's children were angry with me.

They made me the keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard have I not kept. Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon. For why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions? If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock and feed thy kids beside the shepherd's tents.

I think you know that the usual interpretation of the Song of Solomon is that it pictures the love of Christ for the church and vice versa, the church for Christ. I have problems with that. The problem is that the truth of the church is not found in the Old Testament.

The truth of the church was a secret hidden in the mind of God from ages past, but then was revealed by the apostles and prophets of the New Testament period. But the Song of Solomon is found in the Old Testament in a cluster of books dealing with the nation of Israel. And so I would suggest to you that the major interpretation of the Song of Solomon has to do with the nation of Israel, not the church.

That doesn't mean that we can't get applications from it. Of course we can. Not all the Bible is written directly to us, but we can get good out of all the word of God.

Every word of God is pure. I would like to suggest to you that there are four main characters or groups of characters in the book. There's the Shulamite maiden.

We've been listening to her talking tonight in this first chapter. There is Solomon in the book. There's the daughters of Jerusalem.

And there's a fourth person whom I call her shepherd lover. Just let's keep those four in mind and see if we can pick them out as we go along. The Shulamite woman, Solomon, the daughters of Jerusalem, and the Shulamite's shepherd lover.

Also at the beginning, let us realize that in the original language of the Old Testament, if you knew it, I don't, but if you knew it, you could tell whether it's singular, whether one person is speaking, or whether several are speaking, or whether it's a male who is speaking, or a female who is speaking. And that's why in some of the modern versions of the Bible, I think if you have the New King James Version here tonight, you'll find that they've tried to break it up. Is that right? Anybody have New King James here? Do they have Shulamite or daughters of Jerusalem or he written? So that they've tried to break it up and show you what they don't distinguish is between Solomon and the shepherd lover.

They don't distinguish between them. As we go through, I think you'll find that when Solomon is in view, the conversation is all about the splendor and majesty of the palace. There's a lot said about gold and silver and wealth.

But when the shepherd lover is in view, you don't have that at all. You have some very rural scenes. You have agricultural talk.

You have a pastoral landscape, and we'll see that too as we go along. I would suggest to you that the major theme of the book of the Song of Solomon, it's a protest against unfaithfulness in the marriage relationship. Solomon, you know, many wives, many concubines.

And in this book, he tries to win another to his harem, the Shulamite maiden. But the marvelous thing about this book is this girl has a heart that beats true to her lover. And even the advances of a king, a wealthy king and a wise king, even his advances fail to move her.

You wonder what kind of a paragon of virtue she is. You wonder how many still exist in the world today when you hear all the statistics about divorce and breakups of homes and of marriages. Well, let's look at it with that in mind and see if we can get the drift.

It's a protest against unfaithfulness in the marriage relationship. Why is that? Well, because God had married the nation of Israel. The nation of Israel was in a very close relationship with God, with Jehovah.

But Israel turned her back on God, and she went after other gods. Really, it's unthinkable. She went after idols with all of the immorality and loose living that goes with idolatry.

Idolatry and immorality are closely linked, you know, in life as well as in the Scriptures. And so, here's a woman that's a protest against that. And you'll find the key verse in the book as we go through is what she says to the daughters of Jerusalem.

I charge you that you awake not love until it please. Not my love until he please, but since you awake not love. In other words, Solomon was coming by artificial means, and he was trying to awaken love in her.

But he utterly failed. With that in mind, let's look at the Scriptures. In verse 2, she's thinking about her shepherd.

She actually talks to him. Well, that's kind of real life, isn't it? When a person's really in love, a lot of the things that happen in this book happen in life too. Her mind is always on her own lover, the one who is nearest and dearest to her.

And he says, let him kiss me. She says, let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for thy love is better than wine. First of all, him, and now thy love is better than wine.

You say, well, that's not very logical English. Well, love isn't always logical, is it? It's romantic. And anyway, this is poetry, and it's beautiful poetry at that.

Thine ointments, because of the savor of thy good ointments, thy name is as ointment poured forth. Therefore do the virgins love thee. Draw me, we will run after thee.

She says, the king has brought me into his chambers. That's what happened. The king was out there one day traveling along in his entourage, and he saw this beautiful maiden working in the vineyards.

And he said, stop the chariot. And he came, and he sought to bring her into the palace and to woo her with all kinds of offers. Follow me, and you'll be working wearing pearls, that sort of thing.

She says, the king has brought me into his chambers. We will rejoice and be glad in thee. In thee, not in the king.

No, no. In the shepherd. We will remember thy love more than wine.

The upright love thee. Then she goes on to give a little illustration. She says, you know, my brother's put me to work out there in the vineyard, and that's why I'm swarthy.

You know, in those days, it's wonderful today for a young lady to have a tan, isn't it? I mean, people pay great sums of money for that, to have a tan. But it wasn't considered the greatest in that day. And so she's apologizing for that tan that she has.

I am black, but comely. O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the courts of Solomon. The tents of Kedar.

Kedar was a place famous for its black goats. And you can just picture the goat skins from which they made the tents. They went together.

The curtains of Solomon. Look upon me. Look not upon me because I am black.

Because the sun, she became sunburned and then heavily tanned, right? My mother's children, that is her brothers, were angry with me. They made me the keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard have I not kept. The expression my own vineyard there is a figurative speech for her own personal appearance.

Her own personal appearance. She said, they put me to work out in the vineyard, but my vineyard have I not kept. Well, you know, you can think of all kinds of applications for this.

We can be so busy in the work of the Lord, for instance, that we neglect our own family. Something like that. My own vineyard have I not kept.

We can make those applications to it. Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon. Solomon? Solomon didn't have a flock.

He had thousands of them probably. But, I mean, he wasn't out there in the fields tending his flock, was he? He was in the palace ruling over Israel. She says, why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions? Well, the daughters of Jerusalem step in here and they say, well, if you don't know where he is, go forth thy way by the footsteps of the flock and feed thy kids beside the shepherd's tents.

Solomon appears on the scene. And Solomon really has a gift for great language, especially when he's trying to impress a young woman. He says, I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of horses in Ferriot's chariot.

Well, don't tell that to a girl today. She won't be exactly flattered by it. Whatever the meaning of that is, it was beautiful.

Let me tell you. We don't know exactly all that was involved in that. But you know very well that it was beautiful because his language is lovely.

Thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels, thy neck with chains of gold. We will make thee borders of gold with studs of silver. He pictures her with all the jewelry that he can put upon her, you know, and he could put plenty upon her.

And this is his way of trying to win her heart to himself. Now, listen to what she says. While the king sits at his table, my spikenard sends forth the smell of the road.

I have my own lover. I'm not swayed by him. Isn't it great to find a young woman like that? I think it is.

I think it is. A bundle of myrrh is my beloved unto me. Shall lie all night betwixt my breast.

It shall, that is the bundle of myrrh, a little keepsake, fragrant with herbs of the field, reminding her of her beloved. My beloved is unto me as a cluster of henna flowers, a campfire in the vineyards of Enchanted. Notice that when she's speaking about her lover, it's all rural, isn't it? It's all in the great out of doors.

Nothing about the splendor of a palace or anything like that. Solomon appears in the scene again, and he says, Behold, thou art fair, my love. Behold, thou art fair.

Thou has dove's eyes. And she says, Behold, thou art fair, my beloved. Her beloved, not Solomon.

Behold, thou art fair, my beloved, yet pleasant, and our bed is green. Well, you say, what does that mean, our bed is green? Well, once again, she's an out of doors, and they've been out together, and they're sitting on the grass under a tree. That's it.

That's it. Our bed is green. The beams of our house are cedar.

In other words, she's under a cedar. They're under a cedar tree, sitting on the grass under a cedar tree, and our rafters of fur. So, it's a rural scene.

It's a country scene, and she's out there. She's reminded of times when she was out there with her beloved. Now, in verse 1 of chapter 2, it's still the Shulamite who's speaking.

It's still feminine. And she says, I am the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valley. Now, just let me say something.

We have lovely hymns. He's the lily of the valley, the bright morning star. He's the fairest of 10,000 to my soul.

Don't let anybody rob you of that. It's okay. You can make that application.

You can take that verse and apply it to the Lord Jesus, and it's ever so true. But in the context, it's the Shulamite maiden who's speaking in verse 1 of chapter 2. And what is she saying? She's saying, incidentally, when you think of a rose of Sharon or the lily of the valley, you think of flowers that you might buy down in the local flower shop, right? She's speaking about wildflowers, wild anemones that grow in profusion on the hillsides of Israel. And she's saying, I'm just an ordinary wildflower.

That's all she's saying. She's just taking that place of humility. And Solomon says, huh, as the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.

He doesn't give up easily, does he? But I tell you, he's met somebody who, he's met his match when he meets her. Now, notice she says in verse 3, as the apple tree among the trees of the woods, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.

Now, there's a verse that we can apply, not interpret, apply to us today. I sat down under his shadow with great delight. When I think of that verse, I think of the shadow of the cross, don't you? Beneath the cross of Jesus, I feign would take my stand.

Shadow of a mighty rock within a weary land. But, once again, I want to emphasize, it's out of doors. We're out of doors.

He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love. Stay me with flagons or raisins. Comfort me with apples.

I am sick of love. That's beautiful. I am sick of love.

You know what she's saying? She's saying, I'm so full of love for that dear shepherd fellow, that if I had any more, I'd burst. That's what she's saying. Isn't it wonderful, really? Really wonderful.

In the book of Ecclesiastes, all the world is not big enough to hold, to fill the human heart. All the world is not big enough to fill the human heart. But in the Song of Solomon, the human heart's not big enough to hold the love of the Lord.

The very opposite. They're placed right beside each other in the sacred scriptures. His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me.

And then she strikes the keynote of the book to the daughters of Jerusalem. I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the rows and by the hinds of the field, that you stir not up, nor awake love until it please. That's what Solomon was trying to do with his blarney, with his soft-soaked talk, with his flattery.

He was trying to awaken love artificially. Let God awaken it. And then it will stick.

Then she says, and once again, it doesn't fit Solomon when she's speaking here. The voice of my beloved, behold, he cometh skipping upon the hills. My beloved is like a leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.

My beloved is like a roe or a young heart. Behold, he standeth behind our wall. He looketh forth at the windows, showing himself through the lattice.

Now, that doesn't fit for Solomon. Can you picture Solomon the king skipping over the hills? I can't, but I can picture the shepherd doing that. It fits perfectly into the picture.

My beloved spake and said to me. And then you have what he said. Rise up, my love, my fair one.

Come away. Lo, the winter is past. The rain is over and gone.

The flowers appear on the earth. The time of the singing of birds has come. And the voice of the turtle dove is heard in our land.

And the fig trees, everything has to do with trees and flowers and herbs and fragrance of the great out of doors. The fig tree putteth forth her green figs. And the vines with the tender grapes give good smell.

Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away. Why don't we just go off and get married is what he's saying, really. And she's saying, the time hasn't come.

She's saying, yes, but later. In the rest of this chapter. Oh, my dove, he says, thou art in the cleft of the rocks, in the secret places of the stairs.

Let me see thy countenance. Let me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voice and thy countenance is lovely. And in verse 15, the brothers.

I think she's there and she's kind of lost in a world of love for her beloved shepherd. And they say, hey, you, you better get to work. They say in 15, take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines for our vines of tender grapes.

She hasn't been tending to her job up there. She's been distracted. And they get after her and tell her to get to work.

She says, my beloved is mine and I am his. He feedeth his flock. It should be among the lilies.

Until the daybreak and the shadows flee away. Turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young heart upon the mountains of Bithyr. Until the daybreak and the shadows, until the right time comes.

And it'll come. It'll come to like thyself also in the Lord and he shall give thee the desires of thy heart. Now, in the first part of chapter three, she's speaking and she's telling probably about a dream and about a rendezvous that she had with her lover.

Is that unusual for a person who's madly in love to dream about her lover at night? It's not unusual. And that's what you have in the first four verses of chapter three. And then again in five, she charges the daughters of Jerusalem by the rose and by the hinds of the field that they stir not up no awake love until it please.

Now, in verse six of chapter three, notice the picture changes completely now. It's no longer agricultural. It's not rural.

It's not pastoral. It doesn't have to do so much with the outer door. It's a scene of splendor.

What is it? Well, Solomon. It's a parade. And Solomon is coming along in his throne car.

And everything speaks of majesty. Everything speaks of wealth. Everything speaks of luxury.

Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke perfumed with myrrh and frankincense with all powders of the merchants? I guess there were men there holding incense bearers as the parade moved along. Imagine. And Solomon is riding in his chariot.

Behold his bed. And the bed there doesn't mean a bed as we think of it. It means where he sat in the chariot.

Behold his bed, which is Solomon's. Threescore valiant men are about. That's his bodyguard, right? His bodyguard.

He wouldn't travel without that. Threescore valiant men are about it of the valiant of Israel. They all hold swords.

Of course, they need swords. Being expert in war, every man has his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night. King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon.

That's what he's riding in. He made the pillars thereof of silver, bottom thereof of gold, covering of it of purple, midst thereof being paid with love for the daughters of Jerusalem. Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion.

Behold King Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, in the day of the gladness of his heart. Pretty fantastic, isn't it? Can you imagine a girl refusing somebody like that? Yeah, I can. Her name was the Shulamite.

Makes me think of Ruskin the poet. Ruskin the poet was not a believer, and he fell in love with a girl who was a Christian. Fell madly in love with her, and he proposed to her.

He asked for her hand in marriage. You know what she said to him? She said, Do you love me more than you love Jesus Christ? He said, I would have to say that I do. She said, I couldn't marry you.

And you know, she was smitten with tuberculosis, and it was terminal. They didn't have the drugs that we have today. And he still loved her, and one day he sent word into her that he would like to have a visit with her.

And she sent out word. She said, Do you still love me more than you love Jesus Christ? And he sent back word, Yes, I do. And she said, No good could come from an interview.

And she went home to be with the Lord. I tell you, that's great, isn't it? That's great. Men here tonight, if you have a wife who loves you, who loves Jesus Christ more than she loves you, you've got the right kind of a wife.

And wives, if you have a husband who loves the Savior more than he loves you, that's the kind of a man to have. And I think that's part of the message of the book, of the song of Solomon. Well, Solomon has come by in his chariot, and he sees her working in the field.

Oh, stop the chariot, you know. Behold, thou art fair. Chapter 4, verse 1. Behold, thou art fair, my love.

Behold, thou art fair. Thou hast dove's eyes within thy locks. Thy hair is as a flock of goats.

Well, that sounds funny to us, doesn't it? But it really helps to have the soul of a poet when you study the Bible, especially the poetic sections of the Bible. And this is poetry. And so what does that mean? Well, picture a hillside.

Picture a hillside with these black goats up there, and they're moving along, and the sun is glistening down on their hides. And as they move along, it looks like waves, like curly hair, curly black hair. At least, this is the way I see it.

I try to picture it this way, and it makes good sense to me. He's not saying you're like a goat. But he says your hair is black and curly and beautiful as the rippling of the goats as they move down the hillside.

Huh? Beautiful, isn't it? Was your husband as romantic as that when he talked to you? He says, thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which came up from the waters where every one hath twins, and none is barren among them. What he's saying there is she has beautiful teeth. She has uppers and she has lowers, and for every upper, there's a lower.

None of them is missing. That's what he says. It's lovely.

It's really lovely. That's poetry. And it's very picturesque.

Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet. Thy speech is comely. Thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate.

Well, I think that's beautiful. You know, the red of a pomegranate is different from other reds. Did you ever notice that? Next time you see a pomegranate, I don't know how to describe it, but I can just imagine her working out there in the sun.

And these two just look like a section of a pomegranate with that beautiful shade of red. I'd rather admire the color of a pomegranate than eat it. I think it's beautiful, really beautiful.

And that's what he's saying here. Thy neck is like the Tower of David built for an army. Well, you know, some of this sounds bizarre and grotesque to us.

But, you know, it means how fitting it is for necklaces around her neck. Whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men. Thy two breasts are like young rose that are twins which feed among the lilies.

And she says, she's impervious to it all. I mean, she sheds it like a duck sheds water. She says, until the day breaks and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of Myrrh and to the hill of frankincense.

She's back in the out of doors again. He's not even touched by what he's saying to her. He says, thou art all fair, my love, and there is no spot in thee.

That is, I think this is the shepherd speaking. Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon. Look from the top of a manor, from the top of Shinar and Hermon, from the lion's dens, from the mountains.

See, everything's out of doors, huh? Everything. He's a shepherd, and he's been looking at all of these things. And as he looks at them, he sees how he can weave them into the tapestry of his love for her.

And so, from verse 7 to verse 15, the shepherd lover is telling how very much she means to him. And she says in verse 16, awake, O north wind, and come thou so. Blow upon my garden that the spices that rub my flow out.

Let my beloved come into his garden and eat his pleasant fruits. What she's saying is, look, I'm all for you. Yeah, that's what she's saying.

But the time hasn't come yet, that's all. The time for them to get married hasn't come yet. How do you know? Because the rest of the book makes that clear.

He says, I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse. I've gathered my myrrh with my spice. I've eaten my honeycomb with my honey.

I've drunk my wine with my milk. Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved. Once again, in verse 2, let's see, down to verse 8, she's telling about a dream she had.

And in this dream, she was just longing for her shepherd. And she got up and she went out at night in the city. Well, that's not good, is it? I mean, that creates a false impression when a woman gets up and goes

out and walks on the streets alone at night.

And the watchmen see her, and they think, well, this is not very good. And so it says in verse 7 that the watchmen that went about the city found me. They smoked me.

They wounded me. The keepers of the wall took away my veil from me. And then she says to the daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved, that you tell him that I am sick of love.

Not Solomon. Not Solomon. She's deflected everything that Solomon has said to her.

And her heart beats true for one, her one and only. Well, by this time, the daughters of Jerusalem are getting interested, aren't they? They're saying, who is this paragon of beauty that you're all talking about, always talking about? You've only got one string in your violin, and you only play one note on that string. That's all you talk about is your beloved, and that's good.

And I said, we were like that with the Lord Jesus. They said, what is thy beloved more than another beloved, although fairest among women? What is thy beloved more than another beloved that thou dost so charge us? And she says, in effect, thank you very much for the opportunity. I'd like to tell you what my beloved is like.

My beloved is quite and ready, the chiefest among 10,000. Boy. His head is as a most fine gold.

His locks are bushy and black as a raven. His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk and fitly set. His cheeks are as a bed of spices and sweet flowers.

His lips like lilies dropping sweet-smelling myrrh. Can't you see that both she and her lover are rural folks? And they've had their eyes open. They've studied God's creation in rural life, haven't they? And they can just reel it off about the flowers and the trees and the herbs and the spices and all the fragrances.

That's what she's doing here. His hands, verse 14, are as gold rings set with the barrel. His belly is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires.

His legs are as pillars of marble set upon sockets of fine gold. His countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars. His mouth is most sweet, yes.

He is altogether lovely. This is my beloved. This is my friend.

Oh, daughters of Jerusalem. Now, you know, that's beautiful when you take that and apply it to the Lord Jesus, isn't it? That's marvelous. Although when we think of the Lord Jesus, we don't think of his physical beauty so much, do we? We think of his spiritual glory and beauty, but his physical would be true as well.

When I think, for instance, of his head, I think of that head that was crowned with thorns. To dare such joy and sorrow meet, or thorns compose so rich a crown. His locks, they plucked his beard.

They plucked out his beard. His eyes, eyes filled with compassion. He looked on the multitude and had compassion upon them.

And so you can go down. His lips, never a man spoke like this man. His hands, nail-pierced hands of Jesus.

You can go down the list, and you can make spiritual applications to it all. Well, once again, the daughters of Jerusalem come upon the scene in verse 1 of chapter 6. And they say, whither is thy beloved? We're kind of interested in him. We'd like to see him, you know.

Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? Whither is thy beloved turned aside, that we may seek him with thee? Her answer, I think, is kind of funny. She said, my beloved has gone down to his garden to the beds of spices to feed in the gardens and to gather lilies. She's kind of vague.

Doesn't tell the street or the number, does it? She's kind of vague. She said, you just keep out of it. I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine.

You just keep a respectable distance. That's what she's really saying to them. I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine.

He feedeth his flock among the lilies. But I don't know that they got enough information to be able to go and find him from there. Solomon speaks again.

And once again, you'll find the background is altogether different. Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Terza. Comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners.

And a lot of what he says is repetition. I think he's running out of steam. In verse 5, he says, thy hair is as a flock of goats that appear from Gilead.

Thy teeth are as a flock of sheep which go up from the washing, whereof every one beareth twins, and there's not one barren among them. Thy temples, we've had it all before, haven't we? My dove, my undefiled, is but one. She is the only one of her mother.

She's the choice one of her that bare her. The daughter saw her and blessed her. Yea, the queens and the concubines.

And they praised her. It will help you in understanding the transition between verse 9 and verse 10 if you supply the word saying. They praised her saying, who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners? She says in verses 11 and 12, I went down in the garden of nuts to see the fruits of the valley, to see whether the vine flourished and the pomegranates budded.

Wherever I was aware, my soul made me like chariots of a Minidet. I want to tell you, there are a lot of things in the book that really we don't understand. This is a good example of it.

I don't know what that means. I don't know what it means when she speaks about the chariots of a Minidet or, as it were, the company of two armies in verse 13. There are things we don't understand.

All I'm trying to give is kind of an overview of the whole book tonight. Solomon says to her in chapter 7 verse 1, how beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O princess daughter. Joints of thy thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of a cunning.

And so he goes on and speaks to her, telling her all her beauty. But there's something very cute here. And you would never know it from the English, but from the original language of the Old Testament.

Verse 9. Let me go back to verse 8. I said, I will go up to the palm tree. I will take hold of the boughs thereof. Now also thy breast shall be as clusters of the vine, and the smell of thy rose like heaven.

And he says, and the roof of thy mouth like the best wine for my beloved. And you don't know it from the English. But she interrupted him there.

After he said, for my beloved, she says, that goeth down sweetly, smoothly for my beloved. Not for you, for my beloved. I mean, he's a lavisher with all his praise and flattery and all the rest.

And he says, the roof of your mouth is like the best wine that goeth down. She says, it goeth down for my beloved, not for you. Gliding through the lips of those that are asleep.

And then she says to the shepherd, I am my beloved, and his desire is toward me. Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field. Let us lodge in the villages.

Let us get up early to the vineyards. Let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grapes appear, the pomegranates bud forth. There will I give thee my love.

The mandrakes give forth a smell. And at our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, which I have laid up for thee. Oh, my beloved.

I can hear wedding bells as I read that. Can't you? The time has come. The time has come for her to be released from the work with her brothers in the vineyard.

And she's saying, look, isn't it time for us to go now? Go where? Go back to our childish childhood home. That's where. How do you know? Because it says so in the next chapter.

She says to him, oh, that thou wert as my brother that sucked the breasts of my mother. When I should find thee without, I would kiss thee. Yea, I should not be despised.

I would lead thee and bring thee into my mother's house, who would instruct me. I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine, of the juice of my pomegranate. His left hand should be under my head and his right hand should embrace me.

I charge you, oh, daughters of Jerusalem, you stir not up your awakened love until it pleases. Now, in verse five, you have the village folks talking. The folks are there in her home village.

And they're looking down the road and they see this little cloud of dust coming. Who is this that comes out of the wilderness, leaning her beloved, leaning on her beloved? Well, it's the Shulamite, leaning on her shepherd lover. That's who it is.

Verse five, the first part of the verse. Who is this that comes up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved? And then as they walk along, he's talking, he's reminiscing with her. I raised thee up under the apple tree.

I awakened thee. I think that's where they had their first date, under the apple tree. Their first date.

There thy mother brought. Oh, they're passing the house where she was born. There thy mother brought thee forth.

There she brought thee forth that bare thee. And she says to him, set me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thine arm. For love is strong as death.

Jealousy is cruel as a grave. The colds are rubber, colds are fire, which hath the most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench.

Well, that's true. That's true. All of Solomon's talk didn't quench her love for her beloved.

I tell you, she was steadfast. She was true. She was not like Israel, who ran after other gods.

Terrible gods, as a matter of fact. The gods of the heathen. It was just terrible.

If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would be utterly contemned. Now, in verse eight, it takes you back a little while to when she was a little girl. And the brothers were talking among themselves.

And they say, what are we going to do for our sister when she becomes mature and eligible for marriage? What are we going to do for her? Well, it says we have a little sister and she has no birth. She wasn't mature yet. She was still a child.

What shall we do for our sister in the day when she shall be spoken of? Spoken for. Well, they decided this. If she'd be a wall, we will build upon her a palace of silver.

What does that mean? It means if she was true, steadfast, unshakable in her love, we'll give her a tremendous dowry of silver. That's what it means. It says if she be a door, we will enclose her with boards of cedar.

You know, just swinging back for any guy that came along. That's what it means. Just swinging in the breeze, as it were.

Open to any fellow that came along. She'll live the life of a nun. That's what it means.

We will enclose her with boards of cedar. Separate her from the rest of society. She answers and she says, I'm a wall.

And she can well say that, too. Verse 10. I'm a wall and my breasts like towers.

I have reached my maturity. Then I was in his eyes as one that found favor. Solomon had a vineyard at Baalhamon.

He let out the vineyard unto keepers. Every one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand pieces of silver. My vineyard, which is mine, is before me.

For shepherd lover. Thou, O Solomon, must have a thousand. Well, you can say that again.

And those that keep the fruit thereof, two hundred. The shepherd says, Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice. Cause me to hear it.

And she says, Make haste, my beloved. Be thou like a roe or a young heart upon the mountains of spices. You know what that is? They get married.

They exchange vows. That's what it is. And they live happily ever after.

And this is a rebuke to the nation of Israel. For the fact that they so sought after other gods that God divorced them. He's going to take them back again.

Going to take the nation back again. But he divorced them. Jeremiah chapter 3 says that.

What a lesson for us. Let's be true to Jesus. Though a thousand voices from the world may call.

I often think of the story of Spurgeon. You know, one night he came to a meeting. He went and got his girlfriend first.

And they had a, you know, horse-drawn vehicle. And they drove up to the front of this great tabernacle in London. And all Spurgeon could think of was the souls that needed Christ.

And he was just absorbed with the message of the gospel. He was going to preach. And when the chariot, when the carriage stopped, he jumped out and went into the auditorium and left her sitting there.

And when he was up preaching, he looked around and he couldn't see her. She wasn't there. And so, after the meeting, he went home.

And he went to her home. And the parents said she was upstairs. And she didn't want to see him.

She was pouting. He said, I insist on seeing you. She finally came down and he said, Well, look, I'm sorry for what happened tonight.

He said, I want to tell you something. If you and I are going to get married, you have to take second place in my life. Christ must have first place.

And she said at the end of his marvelous ministry, and it was a marvelous ministry, too. She said at the end of his marvelous ministry, she learned a good lesson that night. In Charlie's life, there was someone who had precedence over her.

And it was the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, I hope this will be helpful to you. You'll hear other interpretations of the Song of Songs.

This is just one. It may not be the right one. It may not be the right one.

But consider it. Read it over and see if the parts fit together.

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