

Song of Solomon

Much of the content of these notes has been modified, derived or sourced from the *ESV Study Bible*.

Introduction

The **Song of Solomon**, or “**Song of Songs**” stands alone as one of the most **unique** books included in the **ancient Hebrew Bible**. This, of course, is because of its **unique content** which contains **beautiful** and **sensuous poetry** expressing **romantic love** between a **young man** (a shepherd, [1:7](#)) and a **young woman** (a shepherdess, [1:8](#)) in **ancient Israel**. Thus the **text type** in the book is **Poetry**, putting it in a class with the Psalms and Prophets. Yet, it is distinguished from other **types** of Scripture as its poetry tells a **narrative story** of **monogamous marital** and **romantic love**. This makes it **truly unique** compared to other books of the Bible.

Author and Date

There has been some controversy over whether or not Solomon wrote the book. The *ESV Study Bible* comments.... The questions of who wrote the Song of Solomon, when it was written, how to read it properly, and what it means as part of Scripture are intertwined, and have occasioned many disagreements. Jews and Christians have traditionally taken [1:1](#) (“The Song of Songs, which is Solomon’s”) to mean that Solomon, the son and successor to David, wrote the entire Song of Solomon, pointing to [1 Kings 4:32](#) (“his songs were 1,005”) for evidence of Solomon’s authorial work. However, there are several reasons to hesitate on that matter. First, [Song of Solomon 1:1](#) is grammatically ambiguous: it need not mean that Solomon wrote the Song of Solomon, only that it was written in his honor. Second, what is known of Solomon himself from 1 Kings raises problems with the suggestion that Solomon was the author. For example, [1 Kings 2](#) gives a concise summary of how Solomon’s kingdom was established (cf. [1 Kings 2:46](#)), which is followed immediately by the statement in [1 Kings 3:1](#) that “Solomon made a marriage alliance with Pharaoh king of Egypt.” Pharaoh’s daughter, however, could not have been the country girl (a Shulammitte) who is the heroine of the Song of Solomon (though some hold that Solomon might have married the Shulammitte before he married Pharaoh’s daughter). Likewise, Solomon’s full harem ([1 Kings 11:1–8](#)) makes him a very bad example of married love for Israel (though some have replied that the Song of Solomon reflects

Solomon's wisdom that came from his chastened perspective as he reflected on his own life). Third, the book mentions Solomon ([Song 1:5; 3:7, 9, 11; 8:11–12](#)), but generally as a distant, even idealized figure.... If it is not entirely certain that Solomon wrote the book, one can still argue that the book was written during Solomon's reign (971–931 B.C.). The book mentions him and seems to assume his glorious reign as a known fact. At the same time, the heroine is a young Shulammitte woman ([6:13](#)); most take this to mean that she comes from the village of Shunem ([Josh. 19:18; 2 Kings 4:8](#)), which is in the tribal inheritance of Issachar. Furthermore, the town of Tirzah is mentioned along with Jerusalem in comparisons of beauty ([Song 6:4](#)). The towns of Shunem and Tirzah were located in what became the northern kingdom. These features make it likely that the book comes from the time before Israel was divided into the northern and southern kingdoms, which took place just after Solomon's death (931 B.C.). Thus, the book was probably written sometime between c. 960 B.C. (when Solomon's reign was well established) and 931, perhaps under Solomon's oversight. **End quote.**

Controversy aside, it matters **who wrote the book**, but it may not necessarily be easy to ascertain. Since it is in the **canon of Scripture**, the **content** becomes the **focus** for us, as the **author** is **Holy Spirit** who always **leads** into the **truth** for our edification and **His glory!**

Interpretations

Song of Songs has been subject to a **wide range of interpretations** maybe more than any other book in the Bible. There have been several approaches among **Bible-believing Christian interpreters** to understand the **purpose** of the **book** as well as **its place** in **Holy Scripture** as the **Word of God**. A few of these interpretations are;

- The **Allegorical** Interpretation.
- The **Anthology** Interpretation.
- The **Shepherd Hypothesis** Interpretation.
- The **Solomon-Shulammitte** interpretation.

One **key feature** of the book is the **discourse** between what appears to be **3 characters**, (Solomon, a young woman, and a young man), and the **settings** and the **speech** back and forth in **various places** of the book, make the **narrative difficult** to follow. This combined with **controversy** over **Solomonic Authorship** creates **significant differences** in the interpretative **approach**.

On the **Allegorical** Interpretation. The *ESV Study Bible* comments....

The Song of Solomon was first understood by early **Jewish interpreters** as an **allegory of God's love for Israel**; and then, through many **centuries of Christian interpretation**, as primarily an **allegory of Christ's love for the church**, or as Christ's love for the soul. In contrast to this, most Christian interpreters since the nineteenth century have understood the Song of Solomon as a beautifully crafted love poem describing either: (1) the relationship between King Solomon and his Shulammite bride, or (2) the relationship between a simple shepherd and the Shulammite shepherdess, or (3) a three-character relationship involving Solomon, a shepherd boy, and the Shulammite shepherdess. Still many others, since the **beginning of the twentieth century**, have understood the Song of Solomon as simply a collection of **sensuous love poems** on a common theme (Anthology), rather than the unfolding of a **single poetic love story**. Nevertheless the **allegorical view** dominated for **centuries**. The limitation of such an approach, however, is that it runs the risk of diminishing the wisdom character of the Song of Solomon and **its endorsement of God's good work of creation as evidenced in marital love**. But even though virtually all scholarly interpreters today see the book primarily as a **celebration of love and the gift of sexual intimacy**, some would add that the Song of Solomon—by showing the pure and passionate love of the man and the woman in the story—can also enable believers to **appreciate** more deeply the **intensity** of the **spiritual love-relationship** between **God** and his **people** (as, e.g., this is further reflected in the picture of marriage depicted by Paul in [Eph. 5:22–33](#)).

Ephesians 5:31-32 - 31 FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH. 32 This **mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church**. NASU

On the **Anthology** interpretation.... The *ESV Study Bible* comments....

This interpretation views the Song of Solomon as a **collection** or **anthology** of **interrelated love poems** or **lyrics**, arranged around a **common theme** of intimate love between a man and a woman—in celebration of **love's longing, ecstasy, joy, beauty, and exclusivity**. This understanding, adopted by many interpreters beginning in the twentieth century, rejects the idea that the book **contains a narrative plot**.

On the **Shepherd Hypothesis** interpretation... The *ESV Study Bible* comments....

In the nineteenth century the “Shepherd Hypothesis” became popular, whereby the young woman and the shepherd boy are **two simple country folk in love**, and **King Solomon** seeks to win the **woman’s consent to become part of his harem**. The **woman resists** all his flattery and **returns home to marry the shepherd**. Although this approach might be edifying and could account for the problem of fitting the song with **Solomon’s known shortcomings**, its weakness is that it does not supply any way for the reader to **know** when the **shepherd speaks** and when **Solomon does**. In fact, the **speech patterns** of the **main characters** (e.g., the descriptive titles they use for each other, the grammar by which they speak, and what they talk about) **favor** the conclusion that there are only **two lovers**, the **woman** and the **shepherd**. Another weakness of the Shepherd Hypothesis is that it seems unlikely that **Solomon the king** would be **treated** as an **interloper** in a work that is dedicated to **Solomon himself**.

On the **Solomon-Shulammitte** interpretation.... The *ESV Study Bible* comments.... This view sees the Song of Solomon as a **unified love** poem with a **two-character plot**, the **two primary characters** being **King Solomon** and the unnamed young **Shulammitte woman**. [Following this line of interpretation, [chapters 1–2](#) lead up to the wedding; [3:1–5](#) is a dream; [3:6–11](#) recounts the wedding procession; [chapter 4](#) praises the bride’s beauty; and the consummation of the marriage is reflected in [4:16–5:1](#), possibly followed by another dream in [5:2–8](#). The rest of the book is understood, then, as recounting first a period of separation and marital difficulty ([5:2–6:3](#)); which is then resolved, resulting in the reaffirmation of their love for each other ([6:4–8:4](#)); followed by a brief concluding section of reflections and affirmations ([8:5–14](#)).] Although [1 Kings 3:1](#) seems to indicate that Solomon married Pharaoh’s daughter immediately after he established his kingdom (see [1 Kings 2:46](#)), some advocates of the Solomon-Shulammitte interpretation suggest that the Song of Solomon is a **poetic retelling of the courtship and early days of Solomon’s first marriage**—after which, of course, **Solomon abandoned the monogamous standard** of Scripture, with **grave consequences**. In light of the way in which the rest of 1 Kings portrays Solomon, however, the **assumption** of an **earlier marriage** to the Shulammitte seems to **raise significant difficulties**.

A Better Alternative?

A better alternative is to simply view the book as a poem that tells a **narrative story of monogamous marital and romantic love**. If a **plot** can be **followed**

through the **course** of the **book**, with its **characters**, that shows a **courtship** between to lovers that ends in **marital union** with the **consummation** of **marriage** resulting in **sexual relations**, of itself this would be remarkable. In this way the book would serve as a **celebration** of **marital love** with **hearty approval** from **God** its **author**. In this view it would be preferable then, to **read** the Song of Solomon as a **single literary whole** (rather than a collection of love poems), **telling** the **story** of **two betrothed Israelites** who **look forward** to their **marriage** and the **pleasure** of their **union**. It would harken back with a certain **Edenic character** to it seeing and savoring the **beauty** of **marital love**, much like our first parents experienced since **before the fall**, something **God created** as **very good**. The fall of mankind damaged **every aspect** of **human lives**, and God's work of **redemption** aims to **restore** every aspect to its **proper functioning**. God's goal is that **romantic love**, with all its **potential pain** and **degradation**, should be an **arena** of **enjoyment** for his **redeemed people**, within the confines of the marital union. This view would then celebrate and express for us then **divine approval** of the **enjoyment** of **monogamous marital** and **romantic love**.

The **ESV Study Bible** actually arranges an **argument** for a **view** like this. It comments... One may organize the interpretative disagreements among the scholars around the questions of coherence, characters, and consummation. **Coherence**: *Is there a single plot line from beginning to end?* Traditional interpretations have said yes, the plot describes the love between the shepherd and his betrothed. Starting in the twentieth century, however, it became common for **some scholars to deny that there is a coherent story**, understanding the Song of Solomon as a **collection of love songs**. By this scheme, the title of the book means that it is a song composed of multiple songs. Rather we see there is indeed coherence: first, because one can follow the story of a romantic love from the initial longing right through to the marital enjoyment; and second, because the characters have consistent patterns in how they speak to and about one another. Hence, it is better to see the **title "Song of Songs"** ([Song 1:1](#)) as describing this as the **best of songs** (just as "King of kings and Lord of lords" refers to the best king and lord), rather than as a collection.

Characters: *How many are there, and who are they?* In the Song of Solomon there are four main characters: a young woman (*She* in the ESV headings); the shepherd boy whom she loves (*He*); King Solomon; and a chorus-like group (*Others*).

Consummation: *When does the couple engage in sexual relations?* Traditional readings have seen the **couple's love leading to marriage**, and only **after** that to

sexual relations, in accord with **biblical standards**. Thus traditional readings have understood the wedding procession and wedding day (cf. [Song 3:11](#)) to be described in [3:6](#) through [4:16a](#), with the sexual consummation of the marriage being reflected in [4:16b](#) and [5:1](#). In any case, the fact that the **Song of Solomon** is in the **canon of Scripture**, and the fact that it harmonizes with [Proverbs 5:15–19](#) in **commending sexual delight within marriage**, lends further support to the conclusion that the **consummation occurs** only after the **couple is married**.

Proverbs 5:15-19 - 5 Drink water from your own cistern And fresh water from your own well. 16 Should your springs be dispersed abroad, Streams of water in the streets? 17 Let them be yours alone And not for strangers with you. 18 Let your fountain be blessed, And **rejoice in the wife of your youth.** 19 **As a loving hind and a graceful doe, Let her breasts satisfy you at all times; Be exhilarated always with her love.** NASU

Examining the text

Considering the view then that Song of Solomon tells a narrative story of **two betrothed Israelites** who **look forward** to their **marriage** and the **pleasure** of their **union**, the following outline is helpful.

Outline

- I. Title: The Best of Songs ([1:1](#))
- II. The Lovers Yearn for Each Other ([1:2–2:17](#))
- III. The Shepherdess Dreams ([3:1–6:3](#))
- IV. The Lovers Yearn for Each Other Again ([6:4–8:4](#))
- V. The Lovers Join in Marriage ([8:5–14](#))

The Best of Songs ([1:1](#))

The text begins with.... “The Young Shulammite Bride and Jerusalem's Daughters” **Song 1:1** - 1 The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's. This of course is why most translations render the title Song of Solomon. As we noted above, the terms “**Song of Songs**” ([Song 1:1](#)) are describing this as the **best of songs** (just as “King of kings and Lord of lords” refers to the best king and lord), rather than as a collection.

The Lovers Yearn for Each Other ([1:2–2:17](#))

You don't have to get very far in the book to see its **romantic nature**.

Song 1:2-4 - 2 "May he kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! For your love is better than wine. 3 "Your oils have a pleasing fragrance, Your name is like purified oil; Therefore the maidens love you. 4 "Draw me after you and let us run together! The king has brought me into his chambers." "We will rejoice in you and be glad; We will extol your love more than wine. Rightly do they love you." NASU

This section of the book is describing the **two main characters**, a young woman and man, apparently betrothed, as they **yearn** and **sing** of their desire for each other. The **ESV Study Bible** comments... The Song of Solomon is most remembered for its **extravagant comparisons**—for example, the **woman** is compared to a **horse** in **Pharaoh's court** ([1:9](#)), and her hair to a **flock of goats** ([4:1](#)). The conventions within which the ancient poet wrote yield these ground rules for interpreting the comparisons: (1) the primary correspondence is not visual, and often there is no visual correspondence at all; (2) the comparisons are figurative rather than literal; (3) what the beloved has in common with what he or she is compared to is a certain *quality*—usually the quality of excellence, or of being the best of its kind; and (4) the carryover is the *value* of the two things that are compared (in [1:9](#), e.g., the woman is like a mare among Pharaoh's chariots in being the best that it is possible to be). The author has presented the Song of Solomon as a **series of exchanges, mostly between the shepherdess and the shepherd**, with the chorus-like "others" sprinkled in. These others usually pick up **items** from the **lovers' speeches** and **urge the two forward in love**.

There is also a refrain, "I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, ... that you **not stir up or awaken love until it pleases**" ([2:7](#); [3:5](#); [8:4](#); variation in [5:8](#)), spoken by the shepherdess, which is understood as **her urging the other women not to push this love too fast**, in order to **let it reach its consummation at the right time**.

The Shepherdess Dreams ([3:1–6:3](#)).... read chapter 4 aloud

Again the **ESV Study Bible** comments... The middle section of the book ([3:1–6:3](#)) **describes the shepherdess's dream**, anticipating the **consummation** of their **love**. This is suggested by [3:1](#) ("On my bed by night I sought him whom my soul loves") and [5:2](#) ("I slept, but my heart was awake"). The content is what one expects in such a dream: **sexual longings, fears of loss, nightmarish scenes** ([5:7](#)), and an imaginative transformation of the beloved into a Solomon figure ([3:6–11](#)). The

dream expresses the eager **romantic desires** that the young man and woman have for each other; within the **context** of **biblical morality**, this longing is a part of God's good gift, **looking forward** to the **consummation of their love....** The lovers speak in different ways, **reflecting the difference between how a man and a woman experience being in love.** The **man's speech focuses entirely on the woman:** he does not address anyone else in the Song of Solomon; he frequently addresses the woman directly, praising her admirable qualities; and though he does occasionally speak about himself (e.g., [5:1](#); [7:8](#); [8:13](#)), readers learn only how fully his thoughts about the woman have taken over his imagination. **The woman is not nearly as exclusive in her speech,** addressing "the daughters of Jerusalem" as well as the man. Of course, that does not make her distant: when she speaks to others, it is often about her beloved (e.g., [2:8–9](#)), his admirable qualities ([5:10–16](#)), and her desire for him ([2:5](#); [5:2–8](#)). She describes what her beloved means to her ([1:13–14](#)), and her desire to be with him and give herself to him ([7:12–13](#)). She finds pleasure in the way her beloved desires her ([7:10](#)).

The Lovers Yearn for Each Other Again ([6:4–8:4](#))

From 6:4 forward it appears the **dream is over** as the lovers yearn for one another again, but now in **each others presence.** The mention of **Tirzah dates** the book from before the **Divided Kingdom**, which of course happened under Solomon's son Rehoboam in 931 B.C. This section is again full of the symbolic comparisons extolling the qualities and beauty of one another.

Song 7:6 - 6 "How beautiful and how delightful you are, My love, with all your charms! NASU

Their passion and romantic desires seems to reach their apex as we hear the red hot expressions of romantic desire, which brings the narrative to a **resolution** and **consummation** of their **union**, in the following section.

The Lovers Join in Marriage ([8:5–14](#))

Again the **ESV Study Bible** comments.... [Song 8:5–14](#) The Lovers Join in Marriage. The Song of Solomon closes with a new stage in the relationship: the pair have gone from their yearning to be joined together, to actually being wed and consummating their union. The tension of the previous chapters—the anxious waiting, the concern for propriety—gives way to relaxed enjoyment.

Song 8:5-7 - 5 "Who is this coming up from the wilderness Leaning on her beloved?" "Beneath the apple tree I awakened you; There your mother was in labor with you, There she was in labor and gave you birth. 6 "Put me like

a seal over your heart, Like a seal on your arm. For love is as strong as death, Jealousy is as severe as Sheol; Its flashes are flashes of fire, The very flame of the Lord. 7 "Many waters cannot quench love, Nor will rivers overflow it; If a man were to give all the riches of his house for love, It would be utterly despised." NASU

Here the mighty power of love is extolled and celebrated. **"6 "Put me like a seal over your heart, Like a seal on your arm. For love is as strong as death, Jealousy is as severe as Sheol; Its flashes are flashes of fire, The very flame of the Lord."** These words seem to express the finality of a marriage covenant which binds or seals their hearts together from this time forward, describing the indestructible nature of the bond of love which is as, **"strong as death,"** and which fuels **"jealousy as severe as Sheol!"** One thing is surely **true** about **marriage**, it brings the yearnings and desires of the **pursuing partners** to a **climactic bond** together and seals their love with the **approval of God** for **uninhibited enjoyment** of one another in the **bonds of Holy Matrimony!** It is therefore a lifelong commitment **loyalty** and **undying commitment** to one another, which also, after it has enjoyed its **fill of love**, brings the **new life of children**, which God makes from their union, as **memorials** of their **love**. Such mysteries are so high, we scarcely know the beginnings of such deep and **profound realities**, yet they are on **full display** in the bonds of **marriage!**

Observations and Applications

A few applications.... the **ESV Study Bible** offers...

1. **God's covenant, which commands sexual purity**, provides just the **right framework (marriage)**, within which his people may **properly enjoy** the **gift** of sexual intimacy (cf. [Gen. 2:23–24](#)). Thus God's people **honor him** and **commend him** to the **world** when they demonstrate with their lives that obedience in such matters brings genuine delight.... Like other Wisdom Literature, the Song of Solomon assumes that the covenant God of Israel ("the LORD," [Song 8:6](#)) is the **one true God**, Maker of heaven and earth. The **purpose** of the **redemptive covenants** is to **restore fallen, damaged creatures** (mankind) to the **proper functioning** of their humanity. Therefore **obedience to the Lord's commands is the right way to enjoy the world God made**, and it also displays to the rest of the world how **refreshingly attractive it is to know the true God**. The picture of the two lovers in the Song of Solomon is an ideal one. The picture provides the **pattern into which God wishes to shape his faithful people**, which is also the pattern toward which they will **freely give themselves** to be shaped.

2. **Marriage is a gift of God, and is to be founded on loyalty and commitment** (see [Gen. 2:24](#), “hold fast”), which allows **delight to flourish**. As such, it is a fitting image for **God’s relationship** with his **people**, in both the **OT** and the **NT**. **Monogamous commitment** is motivated by **committed loyalty**, thus the traditional **vow** at the marriage **alter**. *“I, husband take you, wife, to be my wife (or husband), to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part, according to God’s holy law, and this is my solemn vow.”*.... Surely the **intense, all-in and permanent nature** of such a solemn vow is the most **fitting image** for **God’s relationship** with his **people**. This is why marriage must be **regarded and protected** as the **first institution** in **humanity**, and must be **vigilantly guarded** and **preached** in the **church** as the **rightful** and most **significant foundation** of healthy **human flourishing**.

I found some very **helpful observations** about the book from **Mark Dever**, in his book, **“The Message of the Old Testament.”** Here Dever draws some observations and how they should **apply to us Christians** from the Song of Solomon.

Enjoying Physical Intimacy

We do see in the scriptures that **the longing for physical intimacy is God-given and good**. There is a good longing for physical intimacy. God made us as physical creatures with bodies. We know that. Certainly, an appropriate type of physical intimacy can be shared between members of the same sex: handshakes, hugs, and high fives! And there are appropriate types of physical gestures among family members. In Song of Solomon however, the author has an even more specific physical affection in view; The sexual relationship between a husband and a wife. Of course Song of Solomon simply takes the message from the book of Genesis itself. In the story of creation in Genesis, God told Adam that it was not good for man to be alone, and so God made the woman. God said that his creation was good. Adam and Eve were then joined together. They knew each other. And that knowledge was physical, intimate, and good. The Song of Solomon does know that desire can be dangerous. Three times we read in this little book do not arouse or awaken love until it's so desires. There are times when such love is appropriately expressed in times when it is not. Christians have a positive message to teach, that God created us as male and female, that he actually calls us to have intimate relationships with our spouses, and that such intimacy is good! We may be

modest about the love of physical intimacy, and we should be, but we need not be ashamed. So throughout this book, the writer portrays and celebrates the erotic affection two married lovers have towards each other. The song of songs celebrates the pleasures of physical love God has given us in marriage.

Building Relational Intimacy

The Bible does not present the lone hermit as the model for human existence. God did not create us to be alone, as he told Adam in the garden. That does not mean it is never good for people to be alone, but that is the general rule. **We were made to know and to be known.** And in song of songs, we should not see merely physical attraction. Behind the unembarrassed, even rapturous descriptions of physical attraction, each partner clearly desires a real and full interpersonal relationship. They possess not only the physical desire to have and to be had, but the personal desire to know and be known. And once again this book reminds us that such knowledge is good. We do not need to maintain any false super spiritual ideas about going it alone with Jesus, and we must not regard the need for personal relationships as wrong or as a sign of weakness. This is natural, healthy, and good. It is part of being human..... Here in this poetry there are people communicating with each other. Verbalizing their desires, longings, needs, hopes, and even fears is a crucial aspect of the relationship between the lover and the beloved. We long for human relationships. That is how God made us. Notice, then, how this book propels us forward as readers with call and response; The lover calls in the beloved responds; The beloved speaks and the lover answers. There is a two-way relationship. There is a mutuality to their love, because God intends that our physical desires be met within the context of our communal, social, interpersonal desires. Good physical intimacy can only occur within the context of a good relationship, which is why sex must be reserved for marriage. To have sex without being married is like moving into a house you have not purchased. There is a tentative, insecure quality to it, like trespassing. This does not match what God intends for sex; A deep satisfying experience of physical and relational love. God intends for two married lovers to enjoy both the physical pleasure and the relational pleasure of their love and through the physical love in marriage God gives a deepened relationship.

Establishing Identity

The song of songs celebrates the person that physical love helps us to be, and the **identity that physical love helps us to find.** Much of who the lover and the

beloved are as individuals is tied up in their relationship. They know and define themselves according to their relationship with each other, as the lover and the beloved. I am my lovers and my lover is mine, **6:3**.

Song 6:3 - 3 "I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine, NASU
And I belong to my lover and his desire is for me, **7:10**.

Song 7:10 - 10 "I am my beloved's, And his desire is for me. NASU
Clearly This is why personal relationships can be so dangerous period if you enter one wrongly, outside the structures of the Bible has put in place, you are playing with the deepest things about yourself and the other person. On the other hand, when you enter 1 correctly, inside the structures the bible has put in place, you will find great personal fulfillment. Remarkably then, tremendous personal fulfillment is available through the exclusive, monogamous marital love described in this book.... This book is not about just any relationship. It's about exclusive married love. So the beloved promises she has stored up herself for her lover, **7:13**.

Song 7:13 - 13 "The mandrakes have given forth fragrance; And over our doors are all choice fruits, Both new and old, Which I have saved up for you, my beloved. NASU

And the book as a whole paints a picture not of lust and fantasy but of monogamous, satisfying love.

Finding Meaning

This book illustrates **God's goodness and love toward us**. So the apostle Paul uses the picture of in marriage to illustrate the love between Christ and his people, Ephesians 5:22-33. In that sense, the beauty and power of our longing for one another's love points to the relationship we are called to have with God, a relationship that signifies our completion, our contentedness, our place of true and eternal Shalom..... How can you know the love of God and have eternal peace with him? Repent of your sins and trust in Christ wholly for forgiveness. Do you need an illustration to understand what this looks like? Look to the man and the woman of song of Solomon, who forsake all other lovers and commit to one another exclusively. Look to how the man is called to lay down his life for his wife, and how she is called to serve her husband. It's this very concrete picture that the song of Solomon gives us. Like the lovers, we too must forsake our sin, our other lovers, our false gods, and look to Christ alone. He alone has laid down his life before the wrath of God for sin and has paid the penalty that we deserve, if only we will look to him as savior and Lord. End quote.

I would like to **add one last application.**

Marriage nor spouses are God

Dever comments.... “Christian do you recognize that the most zealous commitment shared by the world's most committed lovers is merely a dim picture of Christ's commitment to love us? Though God does offer some fulfillment in this life, but complete fulfillment comes later. None of our longings will be perfectly satisfied now, including our longings for love. But they will be. One of the last verses in the Bible reminds us of this promise; *“I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.”* Revelation 21:2. **End quote.**

Surely the blessing of **immortality and bliss** that Christians will experience and **enjoy** in the **eternal state** is beyond our ability to comprehend, and thus the Christian life is **fueled** and **fired** and with **hope!** But this should help us regard our marriage in its **proper state** and not take it **beyond its intention.** Let us **not expect more** from our **marital relationships** than they are able to give. This will lead to many **unrealized expectations** and **disappointment** which can be very destructive in a marriage. Your husband or your wife are **not God** and **cannot give** the kind of inner lasting **joy, peace** and **fulfillment** that only comes through spiritual intimacy with God.

Conclusion

When we read the Song of Solomon as a **single literary whole, it tells the story of two betrothed Israelites** who **look forward** to their **marriage** and the **pleasure** of their **union.** It would harken back with a certain **Edenic character** to it seeing and savoring the **beauty of marital love,** much like our first parents experienced since **before the fall,** something **God created as very good.** The fall of mankind damaged **every aspect of human lives,** and God's work of **redemption** aims to **restore** every aspect to its **proper functioning.** God's **goal is that romantic love,** with all its **potential pain** and **degradation,** should be an **arena of enjoyment** for His **redeemed people,** within the confines of the **marital union.** The book then celebrates and expresses for us the **divine approval** of the **enjoyment of monogamous marital and romantic love.** Let us **thank God** for this book in **Holy Scripture** for all that it expresses and teaches us. Surely the **intense, all-in and permanent nature** of such a marital commitment is the most **fitting image** for **God's relationship** with his **people.**