

Song of Songs

Introduction

1. All Scripture is to be interpreted Christologically. (CC p. 1)
2. The Song abounds with imagery reminiscent of Eden: the garden motif; fragrant and delicious fruits; graceful animals; a man and a woman who express love without shame despite nudity; and a pervasive delight in the sensual enjoyment of all God's good gifts. (CC p. 21)
3. While the Wisdom books are practical and down to earth, they are almost impossible to interpret if considered in isolation because they lack explicit hermeneutical indicators. Ecclesiastes and Job are similar to the Song in that respect. The reader is left to meditate, muse, infer, adduce, and conclude. All three books are perplexing and reach resolution and closure only toward the end. The issue of context is critical. (CC p. 34)
4. The Davidic kings, insofar as they remained faithful, were types of Jesus Christ. (CC p. 36)
5. Christ does not impart wisdom; He is wisdom. (CC p. 37)
6. The purpose of wisdom books is not to provide ten easy steps to victorious living, seven rules for achieving financial security, or twelve principles for personal happiness. To be sure, the third use of the Law – as a rule and instructive guide for the Christian life – is prominent in the wisdom literature, and the Song can be read for instruction for the Christian life. But the heart of biblical wisdom is not Law, but the Gospel, centering in Jesus Christ – the living and active Word made flesh, the Word who still today speaks to His saints and is reflected in their lives. (CC p. 38)
7. By God's grace, the ecstasy expressed in the Song is ours – now. That is because the love celebrated in the Song does not derive from the institution of marriage (which will pass away, Luke 20:35), but from the God who created marriage and who sent His Son in human flesh to atone for the world's sin and to reveal the love that surpasses all else and lasts for eternity (1 Corinthians 13). The great mystery of Christ's union with His church makes the Song supremely relevant for all believers, married and single. All members of Christ's body share the Song's passion – from their Lord, for their Lord, at the Lamb's High Feast now and in anticipation of the heavenly wedding banquet to come (Rev. 19:6-9) (CC p. 38)
8. In the Song there is a physical relationship of love between two human beings, Solomon and the Shulammitte, and there are correspondences between that relationship and Christ's spiritual relationship with His church. But it would be wrong to describe the former relationship as purely physical or the latter as purely spiritual. The lovers in the Song share a spiritual and emotional bond as well as physical union. And

- Christ's relationship with His church was established in a physical as well as a spiritual way through His incarnation, ministry, suffering, physical death, and bodily resurrection. Moreover, He continues to add members to His body and increase the number of people who comprise His bride, the church, through the proclamation of the Gospel and the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, and He sustains them in their earthly pilgrimage by the Sacrament of His body and blood, the Lord's Supper. (CC p. 39)
9. God in His grace desires His estranged creatures to be reunited with Him in His closest communion. Marriage may be the best earthly, human model of this communion. The analogy of marriage may be universally understood by all people because it is taken from the order of creation. God has also seen fit to endow marriage with some of the most intense pleasures known to human beings. Therefore it is a powerful vehicle for communicating the Gospel of God's love in Christ, and it invites the hearer or reader of the Song to desire this love. (CC p. 42)
 10. It is striking that marriage itself is a prominent element in the ministries of several prophets. The marriages of these prophets is a prophetic sign, a proclamation of Law and Gospel. In the cases of Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, it is important to note that the Scripture does not simply employ nuptial imagery, motifs, or marriages to historical wives (or in Jeremiah's case, his lack of a wife). This observation is in keeping with a Christological hermeneutic that sees God at work already in the OT through historical flesh-and-blood people. (CC p. 44)
 11. The Song and Ephesians 5 suggest that the "great mystery" of Christ and the church is not just a future promise and goal of striving; it is a present reality manifested in Christian marriage – at least to some extent. (CC p. 61)
 12. Throughout Scripture, spiritual unfaithfulness to God is portrayed through simile and metaphor as prostitution and adultery. (CC p. 62)
 13. The interpreter must avoid the temptation to equate Israelite and Jewish betrothal with the Western custom of engagement, which has no legally binding force. The Jewish institution of betrothal as practiced in the NT era is reflected in the narrative of Joseph and Mary. It is also implicit in the NT portrayal of the church as the betrothed and waiting bride of Christ. It usually lasted for about one year, during which "the betrothed girl was legally the man's wife even though she was still a virgin, since the marital relation did not begin until the nuptial ceremony. The betrothed could be abrogated only by a formal written divorce or death. (CC p. 119)
 14. The Song may well have been written early in Solomon's reign and Ecclesiastes near the end of his life. (CC p. 137)
 15. The message of the Song as a whole is this: remain faithful to the one to whom you are united by the love that is a flame of Yehweh. God's forgiveness, based ultimately on Christ's sacrificial atonement, covers our sins. Glory awaits those who remain faithful to Him. (CC p. 154)