

THE BIG READ (44)

Jesus in Song of Songs

A. Introduction

1. Every book of the Bible has one dominating theme – Jesus is the Christ.

“Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, ‘This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.’”
(Luke 24:45-47)

Jesus is the Christ who will suffer and die.

Jesus is the Christ who will rise from the dead on the third day.

Jesus is the Christ who will forgive the sins of all who repent.

Jesus is the Christ who will be preached to the nations.

2. The Old Testament that Jesus read contained the same 39 books as our English Bibles but was arranged in a different order.

It had three sections – the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings.

“Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.” (Luke 24:44)

The final section of the Old Testament is the Writings.

Whereas the Prophets looked back to what happened to Israel and why it happened in order to call the nation to repent and return to God, the Writings looked forward to the hope that was coming to those who repent, through a King like David, and showed those who did, how to live faithfully in all of life’s circumstances as they waited for His arrival.

This means that though the books found in the Writings sections were written at different points in Israel’s history, it was after the Babylonian exile was over, that they were collected together to give the remnant hope and guidance as they waited.

3. The next book in the Writings is Song of Songs.

Like in Ecclesiastes, Solomon in the book of Song of Songs, presses home our need to live wisely. But the way he does it is different.

In Ecclesiastes, Solomon, having realised the foolishness of his backsliding, urges the people of Israel, to do so as well and choose the path of wisdom. He does this by showing them that life under the sun is only worth living in relationship with God, otherwise it is meaningless.

Here in Song of Songs, Solomon describes the wonder of being in relationship with God through the King like David who was coming and warns the people of Israel about not waiting for Him and looking for what this relationship brings elsewhere.

“Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you by the gazelles and by the does of the field: Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires.” (Song of Songs 2:7)

B. Getting Started with Song of Songs

1. What is the Song of Songs?

It is a song – a poem set to music.

It is the best song.

"He spoke three thousand proverbs and his songs numbered a thousand and five." (1 Kings 4:32)

Of all the songs Solomon wrote, this one was his best.

"Solomon's Song of Songs." (Song of Songs 1:1)

It is a love song.

It describes the love of the Lover and His beloved, the Bridegroom and His bride, for each another.

2. Who is the Song of Songs about?

"The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?" (Acts 8:34)

The love between Christ and His church?

The love between a husband and a wife?

Which is it? Both.

But it is primarily about the love that Christ has for the church and how the church should respond to that love.

How do we know?

Every book of the Bible is about Jesus.

"And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself." (Luke 24:27)

"You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me..." (John 5:39)

Every marriage is supposed to point to the ultimate marriage.

"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." This is a profound mystery – but I am talking about Christ and the church." (Ephesians 5:31-32)

The lover is described in the Song as being a King, a Shepherd, and a Son of David.

"The Song is about Israel's shepherd King, a descendant of David, who is treated as an ideal Israelite enjoying an ideal bride in a lush garden where the effects of the fall are reversed." (Jim Hamilton)

So the Song is primarily about the love of Christ for the church.

"Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus." (Acts 8:35)

But because human marriage is meant to be a picture of Christ and the church, as we look at the relationship between Christ and the church in the Song, we are given a picture of what a marriage between a man and a woman should look like.

"Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her." (Ephesians 5:24-25)

3. How do we read the Song of Songs?

"Instead of parsing every word, every tree, every flower, and every body part under a microscope, we should take a step back, sing a few verses, and ask: What impression is this intended to make upon me? What emotion does this evoke? What feeling is this calling me to experience or enjoy? And as

"Come out, you daughters of Zion, and look at King Solomon wearing the crown, the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of his wedding, the day his heart rejoiced." (Song of Songs 3:11)

4. The second half of Song of Songs describes the blossoming of the love between the Bridegroom and His bride over three scenes.

The first scene (5:2-6:3) of this part of the Song describes the bride distancing herself from her Bridegroom and then returning to Him. He was with her but she was not with Him. But then she remembers who He is (that He is altogether lovely) and where He is (that He had been with her the whole time).

"He is altogether lovely. This is my lover, this my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem." (Song of Songs 5:16)

The second scene (6:4-8:4) of this part of the Song describes what the bride discovers when she returns to her Bridegroom. She discovers that His love for her is unchanging and that it is greater than she first thought and this changes her.

"You are beautiful, my darling, as Tirzah, lovely as Jerusalem, majestic as troops with banners." (Song of Songs 6:4)

The third scene (8:5-14) of this part of the Song describes the bride's love for her Bridegroom as we see her leaning on Him and waiting for Him.

"Come away, my lover, and be like a gazelle or like a young stag on the spice-laden mountains." (Song of Songs 8:14)

The Song ends with the lovers apart. The story is incomplete.

5. By telling this six scene story in the Song of Songs, Solomon wanted the people of Israel to grow in their love and their longing for the King who is like the Lover in the Song to come and to wait patiently for His arrival which will complete the story.

Three times he warns Israel about not waiting patiently.

"Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you by the gazelles and by the does of the field: Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires." (Song of Songs 2:7)

"Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you by the gazelles and by the does of the field: Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires." (Song of Songs 3:5)

"Daughter of Jerusalem, I charge you: Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires." (Song of Songs 8:4)

D. Jesus in Song of Songs

1. He is your lover.

His love brings security and satisfaction.

His love is unchanging.

His love is greater than you think it is because He will love you even when you reject Him.

So lean on Him – love Him, trust Him.

2. He is your bridegroom.

He will come for you.

So wait for Him to come – don't look elsewhere for the love He has for you, commit to Him.