

SEPTEMBER 7

Song of Solomon 5-8

I have to admit, I'm happy this book doesn't have 40 chapters. I doubt that many of us are going to get to heaven, run up to the Lord and say, "What were they *doing* in that verse?"

One thing to keep in mind is that all of the real events had to have taken place, before Solomon and his wife could sit down, compile thoughts, and put them in poetic form. So, in other words, the events here are not "real time," and artistic decisions are being made now to present their wedding and honeymoon. It is interesting in this to think that they included two very anxious dreams she had. Not only did this bride have anxieties, but she seems to have had some fears where things (foxes) were present that could ruin their relationship. Since Solomon wrote this, he must have known about the foxes too. Knowing truth doesn't make you immune to ruin. This is a very different Solomon than the one we just heard from in Ecclesiastes. I would say the deciding factor is that Solomon didn't write his own copy of the law and didn't read it every day as God had commanded. Had he done so, he would have avoided having 1000 wives; and maybe, if he had read in the law about Abe and Sarah every month, he would have understood this woman as the only one God had intended for him.

Song 5

V. 1 This (supposedly) is the consummation of their relationship.

Vs. 2-9 This is her second bad dream. Who knows when this happened? It could be this was her dream after they made love and fell asleep. Maybe it was sometime later on the honeymoon. There apparently was a lot on her mind that made her insecure. This entire reading today will be a kind of plea from her to Solomon.

Vs. 2-6 In her dream she is waiting and ready for him. I have heard this portrayed allegorically as Jesus calling to the church, but the church is too lazy to respond. Holy Moly! If you understand here, she is telling him through the door that she is naked and anointed, ready and willing. In those days, the doors had a hole so that a person from the outside could let themselves in. He was playing with her and she with him. Then she couldn't wait any longer and ran to the door.

V. 7-9 The fact that she searches for him again, but this time is beaten by the watchmen, signals an escalation in her fears. These daughters of Jerusalem are possibly the competition, or they are being used as a poetic device to move the poem along.

Vs. 10-16 Who knows what's happening here. Maybe she awoke and saw him lying next to her.

Song 6

Vs. 1-3 I don't know, maybe she woke him up and he's rolling over into the garden.

Vs. 4-10 I think he likes her. Verses 7-9 are interesting with the mention of queens and concubines. Since we don't really have much detail I wonder if this is a recollection of the wedding guests and these were queens and concubines of other kings, or if this was Solomon's current tally. Solomon would eventually have 700 queens and 300 concubines. (1 Kings 11:3)

Vs. 11-13 Somewhere in all of this it is suggested that during a day, on some day, they take a walk in a real garden. I find some of that hard to grasp, because his descriptions of her are not exactly what you'd see if she were clothed. It could be that he took her some place like a pavilion in the garden itself. I'm sure Solomon must have had places where he could relax and entertain guests in the vineyards and gardens he had made. Or maybe it is all poetic imagery and they never left the honeymoon suite.

Song 7

Vs. 1-9 Apparently she was briefly wearing sandals. This might suggest they went some place.

Vs. 9-13 It seems that she suggested taking a walk and having a roll in the pomegranates.

Song 8

V. 1 I think the idea here is that in her insecurity, she wished the bond was stronger than marriage or the sexual. It isn't a wish for something perverse, rather, for a very permanent, unbreakable relational bond. Solomon had a lot of other women, many of royal descent, vying for his attention. Somehow I don't think this girl lasted long.

Vs. 2-4 These verses give me the idea that they are still in the honeymoon suite or in some enclosed garden pavilion and she is lying in his arms. Here again she is telling of the wisdom of waiting for the Lord's appointed time to fan the flame of sexual passion. Apparently she was glad she had waited.

V. 5 This could be those daughters of Jerusalem asking the question and Solomon saying where he first noticed her, in the apple orchard.

Vs. 6-7 This is a very bold appeal from her to Solomon to make this a very strong relationship. She wishes to be a seal on his arm and to be loved in a very loyal and fierce way.

Vs. 8-10 On the other hand, she had determined to wait for love and to be loyal to her husband, even before she met him. Her brothers watched over her. Would she be a tower, firm in her convictions, or would she be a door? They would take appropriate action. She was a moral girl, and so, she would bring her husband peace knowing she would remain faithful. Too bad Solomon wasn't that faithful.

Vs. 11-14 Somewhere in all of this I think she's inviting him for a rendezvous in the garden. Again, I wouldn't be surprised if they never left the room.

It is sad to realize that her insecurities proved to be right. Solomon was a hedonistic workaholic. His harem became his pleasure garden as he spiritually, relationally, emotionally, and personally died. Was the love expressed here genuine? I'll bet it was. Almost all marriages begin with an intense love. So, the lesson would be that what is genuine today could be dead tomorrow, if we allow it to happen. It is no accident that in Genesis and in Paul's recounting of the fall in Romans 1:18ff, after the breaking of the relationship with God came the fracture in the relationship between man and wife. I think any married disciple who is serious about following Christ in the harvest will work hard to protect and grow the "garden" God has given to him/her. Particularly for a man, his relationship and love to Christ is "tested" in his love for his wife. *Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.* (Eph. 5:25) If we really had it right, we would love the Lord our God with all our hearts and soul and mind and strength, and then make sure our marriage reflects the devotion, blessing and pleasure of God. Marriage should add a fulfillment to us that is second only to our fulfillment in Christ.

2 Corinthians 9

Vs. 1-5 The occasion of this gift was a big deal. As a result of this conflict, we get some great verses and we see Paul gently encouraging the people to grow spiritually.

V. 2 Corinth had been an example to other churches. Now they were in danger of becoming a negative example of what division and infighting can do for you. The point here is not Paul's boasting or their reputation. The reality is that if they did not see this through, it would signify a step backward in maturity and growth in the church, probably leading to further disappointment and disunity in Corinth. If indeed they were healing from whatever malfunction they had had, finishing this project would be evidence of that healing.

Vs. 6-11 It is only through real faith that real giving occurs. We give for many reasons, but on the spiritual level it is because of our gratefulness to God and our total trust in Him. For the

church in Corinth not to give, this would signify their disunity and then, too, their lack of gratefulness and their lack of trust.

V. 10 I think this is a reference to Isaiah 55:10, *For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater.*

Vs. 12-15 They would also be a blessing to others and bring glory to God.

There is a level of "material abandonment" that Jesus demands of His disciples. When Jesus told a man to sell all he had and give it away and follow Him, Jesus meant it. The man failed to respond because he was actually a slave to what he owned. Jesus also taught freedom from stuff when He told His disciples not to be anxious about food or drink or clothing, but to seek first the kingdom of heaven. Jesus doesn't demand every disciple to sell everything, but on the spiritual level He really does. Our home is in heaven not on earth, so our stuff and our money can go to the harvest and to all those people our Lord puts in our path who need His money.

Psalm 51

Reflecting on this psalm, what if it was still sung by David long after Ahithophel, Absalom, and the others were dead? What if David still labored under the guilt of what he had done? What if all the apologies had been made, but the memories remained? I wonder if this was a daily prayer for David. I wonder if Paul had this kind of prayer in those dark nights when he could close his eyes and see the faces of those he had beaten, those women screaming for their husbands, pleading for the mercy of Christ after Paul had them thrown in jail and had assented to their deaths?

Our guilt has a hard time dying, and many of us have prayers like this that we regularly bring before the Lord. Our hearts keep accusing us, but He is greater than our hearts. We are wholly accepted and forgiven in the blood of Christ.

Vs. 1-3 The desperate acknowledgement here is that David's sin was ever before him.

Vs. 4-6 Even after all the people were dead who could have been apologized too, David still had to deal with his heart before God. The effect of his sin had been devastating to his family and to his nation. More than that, it had to have made a deep mark on his heart. Only God could soothe his heart. Only God's truth could give him the confidence to follow every day.

Vs. 7-12 Notice all of the things David begs for here. Look at all the things that had been lost. David prayed for restoration.

Vs. 13-17 David vowed not only to give testimony of God's deliverance, but now he would be a teacher of transgressors, leading them back to the truth of God and to obedience. Verse 17 would be the greatest lesson he could give, and it was the deepest lesson he had learned.

Vs. 18-19 Maybe David had seen the damage he had done to Israel. This prayer was not for him or for the city per se. It was for the glory of God, God being exalted in His city and in the worship He received.

Proverbs 22:24-25

Amen, and beware of men who are given too easily to "righteous anger." God isn't fooled, but we are.