

Step Into the Heart and Emotions of God

For many years I couldn't get past what felt like significant barriers to my understanding and appreciation of the Song of Songs. I wondered: Does Jesus really want to know us the way a groom knows his bride? How can I see this theme as something healthy instead of something weird? Does the rest of the Bible affirm this kind of intimate relationship with Jesus, or is this message isolated to the Song of Songs? In other words, how seriously should I take this perspective? And how do I apply a seemingly allegorical love poem between a man and a woman to my everyday walk with Yeshua (Jesus)? What, if anything, does the Song have to do with my life today?

Before encountering the Song afresh, I certainly knew Yeshua as my Savior, Redeemer, Messiah and friend. But I didn't understand the deeper mystery of His relationship with me as expressed in this book. Serious questions and reservations stood between me and the Song, and I'm sure this is why it has been one of the most neglected books in the Bible throughout history and still today. Some Bible students and scholars even wonder why it is in the Bible! Aside from the fact that they don't find its flowery, poetic language appealing, they question whether King Solomon can teach us about pure marital love or even divine romance for that matter since he had hundreds of wives and concubines. For these reasons and many others, some sincere believers simply leave the book alone—or just read it through quickly in their Bible-in-a-year plans.

My view of the Song changed rather suddenly, however, when the Lord knitted my heart to this book in a way I never expected. In December some years back, I asked the Lord what I should focus on in His written Word in the coming new year. I was looking to Him for the next level of revelation He wanted to bring into my life. At that time, I sensed the Lord beckoning

me to give myself entirely to the study of the Song of Songs. I felt He was going to open up a new mystery to me. So, I studied the book every day for 52 whole weeks.

Through the Song I have come to understand Jesus' love for me in a way I didn't truly see before. The Song of Songs shined a great deal of light on the kind of relationship God created for me—and you—to have with Him.

Jesus is on a journey of love with each one of us. His deep, personal interest in His beloved ones is never casual or offhand. He has committed Himself to having the closest fellowship imaginable with us individually and corporately. While we may be inclined to keep Jesus at arm's length, He is content with nothing less than communing with us in the deepest ways possible. The good news is that He is totally committed to helping us love Him as fully as He loves us. This is the purpose of the Christian life—and the Song of Songs.

Our Prophetic Destiny

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The rabbis have taught for centuries that among the wisdom books of the Hebrew Bible, Proverbs is like the outer court of the temple, Ecclesiastes is like the inner court and the Song of Songs is like the holy of holies, meaning it reveals to us the deepest mysteries of divine love. The rabbis also teach that there are many different levels of understanding Scripture: the surface understanding, which is the purely natural reading, and other layers of revelation as you keep digging. This is certainly true when it comes to understanding the prophetic revelation of God's Word. Without forcing anything, we search for meanings beneath the surface.

On its face, the Song is simply a love letter or love poem Solomon wrote to the woman he was about to marry, called the Shulammite bride. But of course, we are not looking at it

simply in the natural. We are interpreting it prophetically.

My belief, and the belief of many others, is that the Holy Spirit gave the Song of Songs to the church to help us understand Jesus' love for us. It uses the marriage relationship as a paradigm for the relationship we have entered into with Him both corporately and individually. As poetry, the Song cannot be interpreted literally, and I don't consider my view to be a "Thus saith the Lord" word. But I believe the Song is ultimately a picture of Christ and the church. How can I say this with confidence? Let's look at 2 Peter 1:20–21 (MEV), where the apostle Peter writes this: "But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God."

Peter affirmed that all Scripture is written by the Holy Spirit. The primary role of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Messiah Jesus and disclose the deep things of Yeshua to us. So it is inconceivable that the Holy Spirit would have given us a book in the Bible that was only about King Solomon's natural relationship with his wife. Rather, everything in Scripture speaks of Jesus.

Yeshua affirmed this in Luke 24, lending further confidence to our view of the Song as a prophetic book. At that moment in history, Jesus had been crucified and the disciples were downcast, not really understanding what had happened to Him. As best they could tell, Messiah Jesus was gone, and their plans had fallen to pieces. Then Jesus appeared to two of His disciples on the road to Emmaus without them knowing who He was. This tells us plainly that not only is all Scripture written by the Holy Spirit, but all Scripture is about Jesus! The entire Word of God finds its ultimate purpose in Yeshua. He is the center focus of the whole Bible.

The Song of Songs must be about Messiah Jesus or it would not

be in the Bible. Yes, it is different from other types of books in Scripture. Some biblical books are meant primarily to convey history, lay a foundation for doctrine, to impart wisdom and to teach us proper relationships. But Song of Songs reveals the heart and emotions of God more fully than any other book in the Bible.

Jesus foretells this in John's Gospel, saying that after He departs, He will send the Holy Spirit—the *Ruach HaKodesh*, who will then take the deep things of Yeshua's heart and reveal them to us. (See John 16:13–15.) So the Song of Songs is given to us by the Holy Spirit, its main subject is Jesus, and we must interpret it with Him foremost in mind. What, then, is Song of Songs telling us about Yeshua—and ourselves?

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Heading for a Wedding

I do not believe Solomon knew when he wrote the Song of Songs that he was bringing forth a revelation beyond the natural one he had in mind. We find many instances in Scripture where people were moved by the Holy Spirit to speak and write in an inspired way—and didn't even know it.

We see an example of this in John 11 when Caiaphas, the high priest, told the chief priests and Pharisees, "'It is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, that the whole nation should not perish.' He did not say this on his own authority. But being the high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation" (vv. 50-51). Just as Caiaphas prophesied without knowing it, I am certain when Solomon wrote Song of Songs, he was not aware he was prophesying by the Holy Spirit.

What exactly was the Holy Spirit prophesying through Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived? On the surface the Song depicts

a romance taking place between a king and a young maiden on a journey toward maturity. But in the context of the rest of Scripture, we can say that the Song of Songs speaks to the unparalleled depth of relationship we as believers have with our King, Jesus. We are His bride, journeying toward the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:9).

What basis do we have for interpreting the Song of Songs as depicting a marriage relationship between us and Jesus? For many believers the marriage paradigm is a foreign one. We are accustomed to thinking in terms of salvation and going to heaven, yet we have no real concept of spiritual intimacy with Jesus. But the idea is central to Scripture. In Ephesians 5:28–32 (NASB 1995), Paul writes (emphasis added): “So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of His body. 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. *This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.*”

It would be one thing if Paul confined himself to teaching husbands how to treat their wives, but he took it to a whole other level. He unveiled a great mystery, which is that Christ and His church are exemplified in the earthly marriage relationship—the two become one. Our marriages are little, lived-out pictures of the kind of relationship Jesus intends to have with us!

Our salvation aims at one purpose: that you and I will experience such a deep relationship with Yeshua that we can only compare that type of love to the love between a husband and wife. The Holy Spirit used Solomon to give the church an understanding of how God feels about us and the type of love relationship we are being called into. The Song was given by the Holy Spirit, taken directly from the heart of Yeshua, to

ignite within our hearts a deep understanding of and fiery passion for Jesus.

A Progressive Journey

The Shulammite bride is a picture of you and me and of the body of Christ corporately. Together and individually, we are on a journey into divine love, and this journey is progressive, meaning it is unveiled and accomplished over time in different stages and steps. This revelation shows us how we, the bride, grow in our intimacy with Jesus, the Bridegroom. As a result of this progression, we eventually come to realize how we bring great pleasure and delight to Jesus.

In the beginning of the Song, the Shulammite bride—a type or shadow of the church—looks at Jesus mostly in terms of what He can do for her. Many of us start out in our walk with God thinking mostly about how it affects us. We want God to answer our prayers. We want Him to tell us about His plan for our lives. We want His blessing, His protection, His promotion, His presence—and all of that is good and necessary. But as the maiden grows in maturity, she sees it is not all about what God does for her but also about what the relationship means to Him.

As the bride grows in her spiritual maturity, she comes to understand that her affections touch His heart. Not only is she blessed when she feels His love, but He is blessed when He feels her love. It moves Him. He is sensitive to our love.

Like our relationship with Jesus, the Song of Songs reads dynamically. It is in fact a dialogue between lovers and reflects the conversational intimacy of husband and wife. But the Song is more than a dialogue we read—it is a discourse we enter into to gain from personally. You and I must see ourselves in this story, and we must dialogue with the Holy Spirit about what He wants us to learn and experience through

it.

For all these reasons—and many more—I consider the Song to be one of the most important books in the entire Word of God. In fact, it is so important I wrote a book called “A Journey Into Divine Love” that explores the truths about God’s incredible love for us found within the Song. I believe God is emphasizing this revelation now to His church because we are approaching the end of the age. To walk steadfast and remain in His love during the days ahead, we must have the revelation that the Father gives us in the Song of Songs deeply imparted into us: the revelation of how our maker feels about us—that He is in love with us and has called and destined the church to be His bride.

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