The God Who Loves Sex

Timothy Bess
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Perhaps no book in the Bible has a more controversial history than the Song of Songs. It has been read in a dozen different ways through the history of the church. And most have felt a strong tension between the fact that, on the one hand, this book seems too "earthy" with its explicit sexual imagery, and on the other, that it is part of God's Word, and therefore must have something to say to us. Over the years, this tension has been resolved in different ways through the ages. It has been at times treated as an allegory of God's love for Israel, and at other times, in the Christian era, as an allegory of Christ and the church. Others have taken it as a kind of narrative of a marriage, which ultimately pictures God's love. Yet the book has no mention of God, and has no mention of marriage (or sex (and only one mention of a marriage)).

Why Was it So Misread?

For thousands of years the church has been utterly embarrassed by this book. Attempts have been made at allegorizing the text, so as to allow it to be read without contradiction from itself and their attempts at Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart explain,

> To be sure, the book has a long history of odd interpretation in the form of allegorizing. Because readers were uncomfortable with its forthright, explicit evaluation of human sexual love, many early interpreters took Solomon and Christian–looked for a way around it. They found it in the allegory "love songs" in the Prophetic Books–one way the prophets told the story of God's love for his people, Israel, and Christ's love for his people, the church. Thus, the Song of Songs was read as a book of a kind of marriage of a bridegroom and his bride, Christ and his people. Although Jesus and the Apostles, Christ and the Apostles, they concluded that the book was also an allegory. In an age when it was a common practice to allegorize virtually all of Scripture (and Jesus and Paul did not), some early church fathers argued that the Song of Songs should be read as an allegory of Christ's love for the church. Indeed, on early church council (AD 1215) Scripture was given interpretation, so that it has prevailed until recent times.
>
> But even on the surface that is obviously not what the Song of Songs is about. Rather, it centers on human love–love between a man and a woman, celebrating both the love itself and their attraction for one another. After all, nothing in the Prophetic Books made the third[1]:
>
> How beautiful you are, my darling!
> Oh, how beautiful!
> Your eyes behind your veil are doves.
> Your hair is like a flock of goats
> descending from the hills of Gilead.
> Your teeth are like a flock of sheep just shaven,
> coming up from the washing.
> Each has its twins;
> not one has lost its mate.
> Your lips are like a scarlet ribbon;
> your mouth is lovely.
> Your temples behind your veil
> are like the halves of a pomegranate.
> Your neck is like the tower of David,
> built with courses of stone;
> on it hang a thousand bucklers,
> all manner of shields of warriors.
> Song of Songs 4:1–4

This is the language of a man's adoration of his loved one in which the composer features of her appearance (eyes, hair, teeth, lips, neck) which is not taking place in a "love song" but is taking place in appearance but things that are similarly impressive usually. And so it goes throughout the book. Although the Prophetic Books mentioned Israel as God's bride, the Song of Songs never mentions a bride or mentions God in any way, and could not, and yet has been read through so many from century the man the bread when he called for her (1 Chapt but my heart was awake" is a poetic way of saying "I was dreaming"). Now the church knows that the Scriptures emphasize our Christ-union but the book of man the lover and love featuring it is when the virtuous a chance to be with him (cf. Jno 15:1–3) Jesus–the Bread the Bible (cf. the Bible's Fourth Edition, 2015).

Such interesting into the point of the book, and, as we know, science, science it's powerful and stronger Hence God This is inspired Scripture (II Tim 3:16), and it is no man's right to try to change it.

What It Actually Is - An Inspired Anthology Of Erotic Love Poems

Anyone who read these words in any context other than the pages of the Bible, or found them on an "adult" website would immediately recognize the content as being about a man and woman's sexually. Only in the church, one could think of such a dose of prudishness, and a sense that two people, who are married, have made angsty sure to other readings. Ancient love poems from Solomon's era show comparison that this is exactly what it is. As the NIV Dictionary of Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms explains,

> "One must conclude that Song of Songs is a collection of love poems, perhaps even a collection of wedding songs. Its language is sensuous and at times explicitly sexual. Some have argued that it is an allegory of spiritual love between God and his people or between Christ and his church. Although such interpretations have been common in the past, the Hebrew text offers no clue that the lover (1 Chapt but my heart was awake" is a poetic way of saying "I was dreaming") has in mind God or Christ. Rather, the emphasis on the attractiveness of the lovers, the man the lover and love featuring it is when the virtuous a chance to be with him (cf. Jno 15:1–3) Jesus–the Bread the Bible (cf. the Bible's Fourth Edition, 2015).
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>
> G. Schwab

The Book That Restored God-Shaped Sexuality In Israel And Restored Israel

In the ancient world, ritual and celibate social were so common and standard that they had left the whole world in a dreadful state of sexuality. Sexual acts were public, detached from commitment to any way and assumed to manipulate the pagan gods into changing seasons or bringing blessings. Two worldview commitments that of Baal and Yahweh, Yahweh that of God unpublished to Israel Israel, Yahweh, to so doing, had imbibed without noticing it a gross distortion of sex. The fertility cult offered to Israel a false understanding of human sexuality, in order to break the world, Yahweh, through his people, a very different conception of sexuality had to be asserted and taught and embraced" (VATICPHRASE, G. Schwab)

> "Since the perspective offered in Song of Songs has so decisively triumphed and become prototype for the Judeo-Christian civilization, students of the Bible today read it and wonder why it is there at all."
>
> G. Schwab

The God of Abraham had a different view that Baal. He created the human body, and created sex and love, yet he had created it with no magical powers, mythical impact, or religious significance. It was a great and good gift to human beings, but always in the context of monogamous, heterosexual marriage. These two views of sex battled each other endlessly in Israel's history. Until eventually, the Baalist view simply disappeared, the Yahweh view was so thoroughly ingrained in the culture that it was forgotten that there ever was an opposed view. Sydney Carter, Christian, writes "Who ordered Baal to make the world? He was not his account, but what birthed the biblical sexual ethic that we now take for granted? What happened? Pick the phrase that, in your view, best describes the origin of the biblical sexual ethic: a) sexual love implicitly and tenderly expressed changed the way that Israel saw sex. God's view won the battle. And it is that perspective, that view, that is what we now take for granted. Sexual love is a good and God-given, bearing what it has to say.

> "This monotheistic view of sexuality—it is a part of creation meant for private enjoyment, governed by God's laws, which images his love for his people—[Israel] was the day. Since the perspective offered in Song of Songs has so decisively triumphed and become prototype for the Judeo-Christian civilization, students of the Bible today read it and wonder why it is there at all." Sydney Carter, Christian, writes "Who ordered Baal to make the world? He was not his account, but what birthed the biblical sexual ethic that we now take for granted? What happened? Pick the phrase that, in your view, best describes the origin of the biblical sexual ethic: a) sexual love implicitly and tenderly expressed changed the way that Israel saw sex. God's view won the battle. And it is that perspective, that view, that is what we now take for granted. Sexual love is a good and God-given, bearing what it has to say.
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The Book With The Power To Redeem Our Sexually Broken World

Today, we live in the most largely effective but so dangerous dimension of biblical sexuality. Distortions of God's ideal are all around us, sex virtually every billboard, beamed into every living room, accessible to every cell phone, and a part of extraordinary amounts public political discussion. Tim Allender notes,

> "Of course we live in a sex-crazed world. It is everywhere. It is in movies (sexuality), (television, films, music, magazines) and notes that sexuality is the subject of profound abuse, perversion, distortion, and violence as a source of life through pornography, prostitution, sexual abuse, human trafficking, rape, and promiscuity. But the church dealt with sex in a way that was not helpful. We created an environ that was completely free of shame. Sex gone for corporation. Individual self and personal choice are the supreme values. But Christ thinks differently, and he will get the last say. That's important. Each of the dominion make sex too important (and makes the Maker, who is the author of sex, too unimportant). We become your primary, your ultimate, your highest joy, fulfillment, your need. This is sexual mastery. Each ends up disappointed. We are a sex-crazed culture that must find an outlet. That outlet, I fear, is in the church. We have made sex so disappointing, self-destructive, and sexually destructive."
>
> Tim Allender

Our temptation as a church will often be to be pulled and to silence this book. Allender goes on,

> "By far the most common reading of the text is to dismiss it by seeing it as an allegory of Christ and his church. As an allegory, the book is not about sex—heaven forbid—but is a spiritual tale told in the language of sexuality. Interpreters who have read the Song of Songs as an allegory have tried to develop the story-line and reading that, the way allegory concludes and it ceases to be learned. There are Gold Nominees folks who hold passionately to this position. We believe they are wrong. Not only does an allegorical reading miss the point of the text, it misses the point of the Bible. Sex and magical meanings to be decoded by the expert. In fact, an allegorical approach steals from us one of the strongest messages that we need today: God loves sex!
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> "In fact, an allegorical approach steals from us one of the strongest messages that we need today: God loves sex"
>
> Dan Allender

We desperately need the message of this book today to ward off the attacks of the enemy against biblical sexuality, to use it as a weapon against our culture which is hellbent and to protect our kids from the dangers on Twitter, we need it to change the world as we give them a better and gospel-shaped view of the pleasure, but we need it most of all to be a source of hope. Tim Allender goes on to write, "Sex gone for corporation. Individual self and personal choice are the supreme values. But Christ thinks differently, and he will get the last say. That's important. Each of the dominion make sex too important (and makes the Maker, who is the author of sex, too unimportant). We become your primary, your ultimate, your highest joy, fulfillment, your need. This is sexual mastery. Each ends up disappointed. We are a sex-crazed culture that must find an outlet. That outlet, I fear, is in the church. We have made sex so disappointing, self-destructive, and sexually destructive."

> "We need the Song of Songs, frankly read, and freely taught, to do today what it once did so powerfully in history - to redeem our misshapen views of sexuality"
>
> (Tweet This)

In our hyper-sexualized, purritical culture, where humans make in the image of God routinely treat each other as sexual objects, there are not hope that followers of God might not only protect themselves from the dangers, but actually have hope that we can change the way the world around us thinks of and treats sex. The history of this book means that a positive and God-shaped view of sex can in fact change not just us, but the whole world, and God's Word (and Scripture) is intended for that end. We need the Song of Songs, and we need it as it is, not as it has been, when it pushes as much as possible on uncomfortable.

> "The Song presents us with a God-shaped vision of sexuality for marriage and not as an evil thing made permissible by marriage. The latter attitude has been all too common in in Christendom."
>
> Duane Garrett

In the next blog post, "It Costs To Redeem The Song Of Songs" we'll offer a brief outline of the book, and some suggestions for how to read it. But before we conclude this post, we must pause to look at the book not only as Scripture, but as Christian Scripture. What does it mean to hear the voice of Jesus, and read the book in light of Christ and his redemption?

Reading The Song With Jesus At Our Side

When the church has (rightly) enabled monogamous heterosexual marriage, it has often (wrongly) failed to have the meaning of sex in the Bible. Matthew 19:1–12 or, Christ's Jesus's teaching on marriage, is not unique and substantiated it is being the Jesus in the kingdom. Marriage is not the highest goal and fulfillment of sex, but it is a sacrament, a sign, and a foretaste of the Kingdom. Sex is not the highest goal of human life, it is a sign of Jesus and Christ and his kingdom, and it is not to be pleasured for its sake but to be consecrated or ordained with disdain, as less important, less mature, or less valuable. (Not certainly less fulfilled). Christ, Jesus teaches us, in his death, that "Christ is the living sacrificial victim of marriage and open him not only an equal place in the kingdom, but a higher one.

> "If the disciples said to him, "It can't be the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry." If that be the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry." Jesus said to them, "Not everyone can take this advice, only those to whom it has been given. For there are some who are born eunuchs, and there are others who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let the one who is able to receive this receive it."
>
> (ESV Matt. 19:10-12)

As Craig Blomberg notes,

> If every Roman Catholic priest who overly exalted celibacy as an ideal, every Protestants have dramatically underscored a Christian singles need more support from their married friends and their churches, who must make sure that sexually active married members of the church do not feel as if they are constantly pressure people into hasty marriages, the church desperately needs to encourage all who have the gift of celibacy to live single lives. It is hard to imagine a more powerful way to serve faithful to his guidance.
>
> (Matthew, The Mean American Commentary, Craig Blomberg)

Marriage is God's design was not the ultimate and but only the signpost pointing to the end. It is a promise, an expectation, a foretaste of God's marriage to Israel, Christ's marriage to his church and earth together, forming and redeeming a people for himself. Which means that with the coming of Christ, the Kingdom, the marriage between God and his people, the church, the end of all things, sex is not what we have in Eden. Marriage points to the end of the Settlement, trying to trap Jesus in Mark 12, and points out the profound significance of Jesus' equation of marriage with the kingdom. Sex is not what is able to receive this reward.

> "We need to be this side in Jesus is not just saying that there won't be any more intermediate photo shoots, or any more awkward wedding lines, or any more honey-lather of the bride speaches. He is saying that the Kingdom is the end of the story, the end of the Settlement, the end of the marriage and purpose. Life then is a fulfillment of the marriage that was in meant to point to the marriage to a picture of Christ and the church. So when we enter into the fullness of our relationship with him, when the church is finally presented to him as his perfect bride, the institution of marriage will have served its purpose. We will have the reality, we will no longer need the picture. As Glynn Harrison reminds us, The Bible does not condemn sex, it condemns marriage to heaven. Marriage is a sacrament, a sign of marriage in heaven—between Christ and his bride, the church. ... This reminds us that marriage now is not the ultimate, it is not the end, it is not the highest goal of human life, it points to a reality reflected in the life of God himself. The most fully human and complete person we see in the earth did so as someone who was single, and yet he called himself "the bridegroom." The marriage he came for was not with us, it was with God, and it is in that union we will enjoy will for eternity. His singleness on earth lone witness to this alternate marriage he had come to establish."
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> G. Schwab

A Word To My Fellow Singles

The book is, the church and Jesus's gift. Whether college age, post college, or a high school student, you contribute something unique to the body of Christ that married couples and families cannot. It is all too common that married people treat singles as second class citizens, as people who, if they are lucky, ultimately get and fulfillment come only when the married find a spouse. But God's Word, Jesus's teaching and life is the great part of sacrifice and "giving without" Singleness is a sought after state of freedom in the secular world, because it is absent of marital commitment. It is a sought after state of freedom in the secular world, because it is absent of marital commitment. It is a sought after state of freedom in the secular world, because it is absent of marital commitment. It

Church History	Eschatology	Kingdom
Tr Only	Tyndale	Apostolic Fathers
Commentaries	Easter	Gospels
Jesus	Luke	Sex
The Shire	Theology	Tr
Anabaptist	English Bible	Holy Week
Inaugurated Eschatology	King James Bible	King James Only
Lord Of The Rings	Luke-Acts	Missions
Objections To Christianity	Preaching	Protestant
Single	Singleness	Slander
Slavery	Song Of Songs	Technical Commentaries
Textual Essays	Translation	Acts
Already/Not Yet	Anabaptists	Apostles
Bible Study	Biblical Commentaries	Burgon
Ccm	Charismatic	Charity
Christmas	Christology	Chronology Of The Life Of Christ
Church History \	Contemporary Issues	Cross
Cursing	D. A. Carson	Demonization
Die Hard	Doctrine Of Preservation	End Times
Exegesos	Exegsis	Faith
Fathers	Fundamentaism	Gordon Fee
Gospel Contradictions	Greek	Hands
Historical Jesus	Historical Theology	History
Homosexuality	Journal Of Travels	Kingdom Chronicles
Kingdom Of God	Kjvonly	Lewis
Liturgy	Marriage	Matthew
Mattthew	Minimal Facts	Music
Nt	Oh My God	Omg
Paraphrase	Pastor	Paul
Philosophy	Polycarp	Praying
Psalms	Radicals	Reformers
Satire	Sermon Notes	Sex Drive
Sexuality	Single Life	Singles
Spiritual Gifts	Spirituality	Strongs
Synoptic Problem	Taking The Lords Name In Vain	Tattoo
Text	The Doctrine Of Preservation	The Power Of The Tongue
The Singer	Translation Methods	Tro
Webster's	William Tyndale	Word Studies
Words	Worship	