

FIVE SMOOTH STONES – The Song of Songs

Introduction: The Song of Songs- The pastoral work of Prayer-Directing
(learning how to love and pray in the context of salvation)



SCAN HERE to watch a brief YouTube overview of the Song of Solomon

(or click this link: <https://youtu.be/4KC7xE4fgOw>)

Note: As in the Book of Esther, God is not mentioned anywhere in the Song of Solomon.

BUT WAIT! Is this "Song of Songs" or "Song of Solomon"?

In Hebrew, the first line is

שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים אֲשֶׁר לְשֻׁלְמָה = "Song of Songs",

שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים אֲשֶׁר לְשֻׁלְמָה = "that is, Solomon's"

The author is King Solomon, but the title is "Song of Songs"

"SONG OF SONGS" = "The Most Exceptional Song Ever!"

What Luther wrote

Many commentators have produced all manner of interpretations of this song of King Solomon's – and they have been both immature and strange. But to get at the simplest sense and the real character of this book, I think it is a song in which Solomon honors God with his praises; he gives Him thanks for his [own] divinely established and confirmed kingdom and government; he prays for the preservation and extension of this his kingdom, and at the same time he encourages the inhabitants and citizens of his realm to be of good cheer in their trials and adversities and to trust in God, who is always ready to defend and rescue those who call upon Him. Luther: Song of Songs, p. 191.

We shall never agree with those who think it is a love song about the daughter of Pharaoh beloved by Solomon. Nor does it satisfy us to expound it of the union of God and the synagogue, or . . . of the faithful soul. . . . In Solomon this poem commends his own government to us In it he gives thanks to God for that highest blessing, external peace. He does it as an example for other men, so that they too may learn to give thanks to God in this way, to acknowledge His highest benefits, and to pray for correction should anything reprehensible befall the realm. Luther: Song of Songs, p. 195.

The Song of Songs can teach us something about . . .

SALVATION / FAMILY / COVENANT / INTIMACY / BODY / PASSOVER / EUCHARIST

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SALVATION - God loving people

God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. - John 3:16

Song of Songs 1:9-11, 15; 2:2, 14

SALVATION - People loving God

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind. Deuteronomy 6:5

Song of Songs 1:2-4; 2:3-13, 16-17

I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little. Luke 7:36-50

SALVATION - People loving neighbors

Love your neighbor as yourself. Leviticus 19:18

Song of Songs 5:2-16; 6:1-3, 10

Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers? Luke 10:25-37

SALVATION - People loving neighbors

Which of these do you think was a neighbor? Luke 10:36

SALVATION - The neighborhood of family

A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families, Psalm 68:5-6

Song of Songs 1:4, 8; 5:9; 6:1, 10, 13

FAMILY – Adam and Eve

Genesis 2

Song of Songs 4:1-7

COVENANT - Marriage

Your Maker is your husband— the Lord Almighty is his name— the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; he is called the God of all the earth. Isaiah 54:5

Song of Songs 4:8-15

“Return, faithless people,” declares the Lord, “for I am your husband. I will choose you—one from a town and two from a clan—and bring you to Zion.” Jeremiah 3:14

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“In that day,” declares the Lord, “you will call me ‘my husband’; you will no longer call me ‘my master.’” Hosea 2:16

Sexuality? **INTIMACY!**

Genesis 4:1-2

Song of Songs 7:1-13

Which is preferable?

“Adam made love to his wife Eve” (NIV)

“Adam knew Eve his wife” (KJV)

BODY - The Bride of Christ

I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him. 2 Corinthians 11:2

Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Revelation 19:7

One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.” Revelation 21:9

Song of Songs 4:1-15; 6:4-9

PASSOVER – The Family of God Celebrating Salvation

“This is what the Lord says: ‘I remember the devotion of your youth, how as a bride you loved me and followed me through the wilderness, through a land not sown.’” Jeremiah 2:2

“It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,” declares the Lord. Jeremiah 31:32

EUCHARIST – The Family of God Celebrating Salvation

How can the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? Mark 2:19

Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!
Revelation 19:9

Is it ever appropriate for God’s people to celebrate His covenant love for them? How might they do that?

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The Five Smooth Stones - 1 Samuel 17 – David goes to fight Goliath

³⁸ Then Saul dressed David in his own tunic. He put a coat of armor on him and a bronze helmet on his head. ³⁹ David fastened on his sword over the tunic and tried walking around, because he was not used to them.

“I cannot go in these,” he said to Saul, “because I am not used to them.” So he took them off. ⁴⁰ Then he took his staff in his hand, **chose five smooth stones from the stream**, put them in the pouch of his shepherd’s bag and, with his sling in his hand, approached the Philistine.

Resources:

Luther, Martin. *Lectures on the Song of Solomon: A Brief but Altogether Lucid Commentary on the Song of Songs*. Translated by Ian Siggins. Luther’s Works, American Edition Vol. 15, pp. 191-264. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1972.

Luther, Martin. *Notes on Ecclesiastes*. Translated by Jaroslav Pelikan. Luther’s Works, American Edition Vol. 15, pp. 1-187. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1972.

Peterson, Eugene. *Five Smooth Stones for Pastoral Work*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992.

Shay, Jonathan. *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat trauma and the undoing of character*. Simon and Schuster, 2010.

The Next Megillah - Ruth - The pastoral work of Story-Making (developing an identity as a person of faith in the context of God’s covenant)

The scrolls were the applied wisdom of the pastoral office to a people who had come together to pay attention to their life together with God. Song of Songs was read at Passover, Ruth at Pentecost, Lamentations on the Ninth of Ab, Ecclesiastes at Tabernacles, and Esther at Purim. (Peterson, p. 14-15)

Peterson describes each of these as follows:

Song of Songs - The pastoral work of Prayer-Directing (learning how to love and pray in the context of salvation)

Ruth - The pastoral work of Story-Making (developing an identity as a person of faith in the context of God’s covenant)

Lamentations - The pastoral work of Pain-Sharing (dealing with suffering in the context of redemptive judgment)

Ecclesiastes - The pastoral work of Nay-Saying (unmasking religious illusion and pious fraud in the context of providential blessing)

Esther - The pastoral work of Community-Building (becoming a celebrative community of faith in the environment of the world’s hostility)