Day 390 & 391 – THURSDAY & FRIDAY: March 14th & 15th

Song of Solomon 3 & 4 – part 2

We will further examine 4:1-5:1 momentarily. Let us first, however, consider the explanations proposed for the events here in the shepherd hypothesis or three-character drama. Some who are of this opinion contend that the processional in Song of Solomon 3:6-11 represents not a wedding, but Solomon's arrival at the home of the woman to seduce her with his power and grandeur so as to bring her back after her escape from his harem-the seduction occurring in the first part of chapter 4 it is usually asserted (which we will see more about shortly). In this view, the directive in Song of Solomon 3:11 to the daughters of Jerusalem (harem girls, it is presumed, who have traveled with him) is to see Solomon with the crown he received on his wedding day--not that his wedding day is at hand. The idea is that Solomon is wearing this crown now to impress the Shulamite. But it seems quite odd that he would wear a crown from a prior wedding, perhaps only a garland or laurel branch, outside of a wedding context. And we have already seen that the woman is most likely in the procession herself, based on parallel verses in the Song.
Accepting her presence in the procession, some shepherd-hypothesis adherents argue that the depiction is of the Shulamite being brought to Jerusalem by Solomon and his men--or by just his men, with Solomon waiting in Jerusalem--after his men recaptured her. Recognizing a wedding here, some think the king is pressing the Shulamite into marriage with him. Yet, as Delitzsch counters, "The seduction fable is shattered...with the joyful consent of the queen-mother" (p. 549, note on verse 11). Acknowledging this, other shepherd-hypothesis advocates see Solomon marrying another woman here--yet while still trying to

win over the Shulamite in the lines that follow in the opening of chapter 4.

It must be admitted that the idea of King Solomon getting married at almost any given time is by no means far-fetched. After all, he did end up with 700 royal wives, and for each there was probably an official weeklong wedding festival. Consider that 700 weeks of weddings means that more than 13 years of Solomon's 40-year reign was taken up with wedding feasts! Throw in preparation time before each and time for Solomon's 300 concubines besides (one for almost every day of the year) and the staggering magnitude of Solomon's folly on just a physical level (not to mention the spiritual one) looms into view. If we account for Solomon not multiplying wives in his early faithful years and probably less frequently in his final years (particularly if he repented at that time), then the middle years of concentrated marrying must have been almost completely filled with wedding festivity. Yet would this not make such festivity a mere everyday, even monotonous routine for the king? Why would a random wedding in the midst of all this be called in verse 11 "the day of the gladness of his heart"? It could perhaps be argued that a wedding was merely called such-not that this was actually a blissful experience for Solomon. But, we then ask, why would his mother Bathsheba still be crowning him through all this endless parade of nuptial absurdity? It seems so very unlikely.

Again, it appears far more reasonable that the Shulamite is happily marrying Solomon in the king's early years before he started multiplying wives--or alternatively that King Solomon here is not the literal monarch but a figurative distinction for an Israelite groom (both of these being variations of the two-character progression).

4:1-7: Following the first subsection of the current unit (Song of Solomon 3:6-11), we then move into chapter 4. The first part, Song of Solomon 4:1-7 (the second subsection of the current

unit), is typically understood as a *wasf,* the Arabic term for a poem of descriptive praise of a person's physical attributes in an itemized fashion. As Wetzstein observed, such was sung in the Syrian Arab wedding tradition--again, perhaps passed down from biblical times. The *wasf* here forms an inclusio--beginning with the double declaration of "You are fair" (verse 1) or "beautiful" (NIV) and ending, after detailing the woman's features, with "You are *all* fair..." (verse 7). Some take this *wasf* and the rest of chapter 4 as a distinct unit without context. Yet the preceding scene in 3:6-11 appears to provide a context--so that 3:6-5:1 logically forms a single unit of three subsections. If the first subsection represents the wedding procession of the man and woman of the Song in a two-character progression, then 4:1-5:1 most naturally appears to immediately follow it in one of three ways: (1) 4:1-5:1 is the wedding night; (2) 4:1-7 is during the wedding celebration and 4:8-5:1 is the wedding night; (3) 4:1-7 follows the wedding but is before the wedding night and 4:8-5:1 is the wedding night.

Followers of the shepherd hypothesis typically see Song of Solomon 4:1-6 or verses 1-7 as Solomon's attempt to seduce the Shulamite in Jerusalem as part of, as noted, a forced marriage or just after he has married another woman. Some who include verse 8 as part of Solomon's seduction see the setting in the north rather than in Jerusalem, the assumption being that Lebanon in this verse is the woman's homeland. This corresponds with the belief that the procession of Song of Solomon 3:6-11 proceeds to the woman's country home--yet we've already seen the weaknesses of that notion. And Lebanon is likely a figurative reference, as we will see (though it could possibly designate her home in that sense). Moreover, including Song of Solomon 4:8 with verses 1-7 hurts the poetic construction here, verses 1-7 being an inclusio (which also creates a problem for those who put the break between verses 6 and 7). Also, verse

8 refers to the woman as "spouse" or "bride" (NIV)--putting it with the other five uses of the term in the verses that follow (and it seems odd that Solomon as seducer would be using this term for the woman). Verses 9-15 are generally acknowledged to be the words of the woman's true love--even by shepherd-hypothesis adherents--as the woman accepts the speaker as her beloved in verse 16 and then he embraces her invitation to enter her "garden" in Song of Solomon 5:1.

In identifying the man speaking in the first part of chapter 4, we should note correspondences with other verses in the Song. Observe that the first three lines of verse 1 about the woman being fair (beautiful) and having dove's eyes are repeated from Song of Solomon 1:15. Both occurrences of the statement are surely to be attributed to the same man. Shepherd-hypothesis advocates typically view both occurrences as a lustful Solomon's flattering seduction, while adherents of a two-character progression see the woman's lover (whether Solomon or another) speaking in genuine love and admiration.

The imagery of the woman's hair as a flock of goats, her teeth as a flock of sheep, her "temples" (as typically translated) as a piece of pomegranate, her neck like a tower and her breasts like gazelle fawns (Song of Solomon 4:1-5) is all repeated later (Song of Solomon 6:5-7; Song of Solomon 7:3-4). Again, it should be clear that these statements were made by the same man both times--for it is not reasonable that nearly identical descriptions would come from a true love in private and a lascivious interloper on a different occasion. Considering the quantity of descriptive dialogue from the man in these parts of the Song, we should ask why there would be so much set to beautiful lyrical poetry and music to be sung if it is obscene adulterous seduction.

One very important parallel to recognize is that between Song of Solomon 4:5-6 ("...that browse among the lilies. Until the day breaks and the shadows flee...") and Song of Solomon 2:16-17

("...he browses among the lilies. Until the day breaks and the shadows flee..."--both NIV). The latter is clearly the woman speaking of and to her true love, as is commonly acknowledged. Thus it is most natural to understand her true love responding to her in similar terms in Song of Solomon 4:5-6. Indeed, we have already seen further parallels between these two passages and Song of Solomon 8:14--including the imagery of the mountains of spices. This poses a huge problem for shepherd-hypothesis advocates. For it argues very strongly for the first part of chapter 4 being the words of the woman's true love. And if that is so, the other parallels just mentioned imply that her lover is also speaking in chapters 2, 6 and 7--effectively eviscerating the three-character drama.

Furthermore, it seems rather odd that the woman's true love would all of a sudden be speaking in the second part of chapter 4, without any warning or indication whatever, after Solomon's words in the first part of the chapter. The unabridged *Amplified Old Testament* contains an inventive sequence in its annotations about the woman, repulsed at Solomon's advances through verse 5, speaking the words of verse 6 herself of her absent true love, thereafter leaving the king and going to her own palace quarters and then seeing her beloved shepherd, who happened to show up at this moment, out the lattice of window bars--with him calling to her in verse 7. But *inventive* is the key word here-as there is no hint of such a sequence in the Song itself. And once again, this disrupts the clear inclusio from verses 1-7 (an inclusio being, as noted before, a literary grouping framed by similar material at both ends).

Considering the *wasf* of these verses as genuine admiration from the woman's true love, then, let's note its particulars. Some of the imagery probably sounds rather strange to us in our modern setting, perhaps even comical or grotesque, yet it was no doubt fitting in the pastoral society of ancient Israel.

4:1b: The woman's hair is likened to a flock of goats going down from Mount Gilead (Song of Solomon 4:1; Song of Solomon 6:5)--this referring not to a single mountain but to the slopes descending from the rugged high plateau of Gilead east of the Jordan River. We should not think of dirty, smelly, matted fur here. Rather, as Dr. Michael Fox comments: "Flowing tresses of black hair may be said to resemble lines of black goats seen from afar as they wend their way down the mountainside" (*The Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs,* p. 129, note on 4:1). Perhaps the picture is of bouncing curls when the woman's hair was let down: "The locks of her hair tumbled down freely and sensuously...cascading down over her shoulders just like a flock of goats playfully skipping down the mountains of Gilead. The mountains, on the east side of the Jordan , were known for their excellent grazing land. They were considered a blessing and were occupied by countless flocks and herds" (Tommy Nelson, *The Book of Romance,* 1998, p. 90). The imagery of goat flocks in Gilead conveyed richness and abundance, which is lost on our modern sensibilities. Furthermore, besides the visual representation here, the picture is also emotionally evocative, in keeping with the outdoor and pastoral imagery of the rest of the Song.

4:2: The next verse, comparing the woman's teeth to shorn and washed sheep, each bearing twins and none barren (Song of Solomon 4:2; Song of Solomon 6:6), would hardly come across as a compliment today. "We immediately think of woolly fleeces, which is too jarring. We need to paraphrase as something like 'Your fresh white teeth so clean so smooth, like skin of sheep so closely shorn, and washed and bleached'" (Tom Gledhill, *The Message of the Song of Songs,* p. 155). The washing may also refer to her teeth being wet with saliva and glistening. The bearing of twins may characterize the sheep in the metaphor rather than the woman's teeth directly--that is, her teeth are compared to

sheep that are healthy and fertile (a valuable asset at that time). Yet it could be that the word translated "bearing twins" should be understood as "twinning"--perhaps meaning not that the sheep bear twins but that they themselves occur in pairs. Thus the picture would be of top teeth matched to bottom teeth, and none barren or missing would mean that the woman has all her teeth--and there are no gaps. Note the alliteration in Hebrew between *shekulam* ("every one") and *shakulah* ("barren"). Again, the poetic scene here is emotionally evocative. The shearing and washing of the flocks was a jovial village occasion--filled with amusement and laughter. The man was perhaps being playful here with his smiling bride--and there was probably a fair amount of happy giggling as they approached their first sexual union.

4:3: The word translated "temples" in Song of Solomon 4:3 (and Song of Solomon 6:7), *rakkah,* is singular in the Hebrew. "Temple" or "brow" is the common translation of this word in Judges 4:21 and Judges 5:26. Yet Craig Glickman makes a compelling case for interpreting *rakkah* in the Song as "parted lips" or, more precisely, "the soft, moist inner mouth"--seeing the word as coming from a root meaning saliva (*Solomon's Song of Love,* pp. 181, 208-209). Othmar Keel translates the word as "palate" (*The Song of Songs, Continental Commentaries,* p. 138). Both define the "slice" of crimson pomegranate as being a slit opening for sucking out the juice, corresponding to Egyptian illustrations of the fruit. Glickman adds: "The context of the manner of praise supports this meaning too. Solomon [if he is speaking] is proceeding from the top of her head to her breasts--eyes, hair beside her cheeks, teeth, lips, *rakkah,* neck, breasts--it would be a clear break in direction to descend to the teeth, then to rise to the brow or temple. Consequently, some have rendered this 'cheeks,' but the word in the singular doesn't support this" (p. 208). Furthermore, a different word is used for cheeks in the song (*lehi,* Song of Solomon 1:10; Song of Solomon 5:13). Some,

however, take the meaning of *rakkah* in the Song more in line with temple to be the entire side of the face, showing that the woman is partially turned away--and the red color of the pomegranate indicating that she is blushing. The matter is uncertain due to inadequate linguistic data.

4:4: In Song of Solomon 4:4 we see the woman's neck compared to "the tower of David, built for an armory, on which hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men." (Her neck is likened to an "ivory tower" in Song of Solomon 7:4.) Picturing the woman's long neck as a tower may not in itself seem odd even today. But considering it an armory for hanging a thousand shields does seem strange to us. Probably the description is based on the *necklace* the woman is explicitly said to be wearing in Song of Solomon 4:9. The "shields" would be multiple tiers or layers of a great many small precious metal plates, ornaments or beads on or hanging from it. We do not know what ancient structure is meant by the tower of David in the metaphor. It may have been one of Jerusalem's fortifications or part of the palace complex (compare Nehemiah 3:25). "The custom of hanging shields on the tower was symbolic of the warriors' allegiance to and valor for a particular king or country (cf. Ezekiel 27:10-11)" (*Bible Knowledge Commentary,* note on Song of Solomon 4:4). Perhaps the man is making the comparison in the way he is to illustrate the woman's regal bearing. Or, besides the visual parallels, he could also be implying--considering where the evening is going--that she has stood strong, as a defensive fortress, against possible incursions that would have compromised her sexual purity. This seems to be the meaning of the woman referring to her breasts as towers in Song of Solomon 8:10.

4:5: The woman's breasts here in Song of Solomon 4:5 (and Song of Solomon 7:3) are compared not to towers but to twin baby gazelles feeding among lilies. There may be a visual parallel

here between the shape of a fawn's head and the contour of a young woman's breast. Yet the imagery is also emotionally evocative. Baby fawns are young, sweet and tender. Soft and precious, they evoke the desire to gently pet and nuzzle them. Some believe the man here was already undressing his wife on their wedding night--approaching her gently and cautiously as one would a baby gazelle, not wanting to frighten or overwhelm. Proverbs 5:19 uses the imagery of "a loving deer and a graceful doe" in saying that a wife's breasts are intended to regularly satisfy her husband, also implying the need for a gentle touch.
4:6: We earlier discussed the meaning of Song of Solomon 4:6 in comments on Song of Solomon 2:17. It is not clear if the opening two lines of 4:6 mean that what follows will *commence when* night falls or *continue until* morning comes. If the undressing has already started, then the latter is intended (but this is hard to determine). The mountain of myrrh and hill of frankincense may refer to the breasts just mentioned, lower anatomical parts, or the wonderland of either the woman's body as a whole or general ecstasy, similar to the use of the land of Punt in the Egyptian love songs (or what people today mean when they say, "I'm in heaven"). There does seem to be a relation between the mountains of myrrh and frankincense in Song of Solomon 4:6, the mountains of Bether in Song of Solomon 2:17 and the mountains of spices in Song of Solomon 8:14.
4:7-8: After the *wasf* or praise poem of the first part of chapter 4 ends with the close of the inclusio in Song of Solomon 4:7, thus concluding the second subsection of the current unit, a new subsection opens in Song of Solomon 4:8. As we have already noted, this third subsection, continuing to the end of the unit in Song of Solomon 5:1, is characterized by six mentions of the word "spouse" or "bride" (NIV). It is surely no coincidence that the section of the Song that appears to describe the physical consummation of the relationship is inundated with this word. It is

perhaps a not-so-subtle way of telling us that sexual union is reserved for husband and wife.

The mention of Lebanon in verse 8 links the second and third subsections of the current unit poetically. As Glickman notes: "The words for 'frankincense' (*lebonah*) and ('Lebanon') (*lebonon*) sound alike, so when these words occur in proximity, a transitional play on words occurs.... An alliterative transition occurs concluding Song of Solomon 4:6 and beginning Song of Solomon 4:7 with 'frankincense. All of you' (*lebonah cullak,* rendered 'You are completely'), and then beginning Song of Solomon 4:8 with ' Lebanon, O bride' (*lebanon callah*), which draws attention to the root word of 'bride,' which is 'completion,' so that the term for 'bride' connotes a 'completed one.' Such alliteration, of course, also serves to provide poetic transition and unity in the smooth flow of the lyrics" (pp. 209-210). Lebanon also serves to form an inclusio of the man's speech from verses 8-15.

The mention of Lebanon and the mountain peaks of verse 8--all to the north of the land of Israel--has been a matter of confusion. Some see them as denoting the home of the woman. But only Senir and Hermon are clearly the same geographically. Carr notes: *"Amana* is usually taken to be a mountain in the Anti-Lebanon range, but its exact location is uncertain. It is probably the hill in which the Amana River, which flows through Damascus, has its source.... *Senir* and *Hermon* are the Amorite and Hebrew names for the tallest peak (over 9,200 ft.) in the Anti-Lebanon range. The Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon (Mount Hermon) ranges lie some 15 miles apart on opposite sides of the Litani-Hasbani (Biqa') valley" (p. 120, note on verse 8). Yet Lebanon also denotes the valley below Hermon and the wider region (see Joshua 11:17; Joshua 13:5; Judges 3:3). So there may be no geographic disparity here. (We should also consider a possible link between Baal-hermon and Baal Hamon in Song of Solomon 8:11, which we will examine later.) Still, the difficulty of the woman

literally being in Lebanon on the night following what is evidently a Jerusalem wedding has led many to view the geographical references in verse 8 figuratively, as seems to be the case (though this could perhaps *include* the idea that she is from the north).

Note the word "look" in the New King James Version. Some see the man calling the woman to accompany him to look down from the mountain heights--implying that he will take her to reach the heights of love and ecstasy together. Yet why would this place them among dangerous lions' dens and leopards' lairs, as mentioned in the latter part of the verse? The problem is likely in the translation "look." The NIV has "descend." As Carr points out: "Two separate roots with identical form lie behind the variety of translations. One means 'journey' or 'descend,' the other 'gaze on' or 'look at'" (p. 119, note on verse 8). If "descend" is chosen here, the man is asking the woman not to join him to look out from the mountains, but to come down from the highland wilderness of wild animals (symbolic of a remote and inaccessible place) to be with him. As Roland Murphy points out: "The woman is not physically present on these mountains, and the man could hardly call to her there. The metaphor stands for her inaccessibility, a theme that appeared already in Song of Solomon 2:14 (crags and rocks). The animals are not threats to *her,* but to those who would try to reach her. A similar theme appears in the Cairo Ostracon 25218 [Cairo Love Songs, no. 21 (or 20D in Fox's numbering), Group A], where the lover is separated from his beloved by a crocodile" (*The Songs of Songs, Hermeneia Commentaries,* p. 160, note on Song of Solomon 4:8). The man in verse 8 may perceive the woman's fears, uncertainties and reservations as creating barriers between them coming together in full enjoyment of sexual union. So he asks that she leave these behind, trusting him fully. It may be that he chose the northern location because her home was

there and this would symbolize her inner security and clinging to premarital life. But that's not required.

4:9-10: After the transition of verse 8, 4:9-10 commence further praises from the man for his wife. Dr. Fox notes: "Unlike the Praise Songs [or *wasfs*] in Song of Solomon 4:1-7, Song of Solomon 6:3-10, and Song of Solomon 7:2-8, which laud the girl part by part, this one celebrates her entire person. It is thus an Admiration Song, a type of Praise Song" (p. 133; see p. 271). However, some of her parts are praised in this section, though not for how they appear but for how they provide sensual pleasure to the man.

In Song of Solomon 4:9 we first encounter the phrase "my sister, my spouse" or "my sister, my bride" (NIV). *The Nelson Study Bible* states that "this strange pairing of words was based on the idea that in marriage a couple became 'related'" (note on verse 9). Yet it should be noted that "brother" and "sister" are terms of endearment in the Egyptian love songs, wherein the lovers are not married. In the Song, the inclusion of "spouse" or "bride" makes the lovers' marital status clear. Dr. Glickman notes that "the phrase 'my sister, my bride' occurs four times, appearing at each stage of lovemaking: arousal (Song of Solomon 4:9); kissing (Sog of Solomon 4:10[-11]); consummation (Song of Solomon 4:12); and after consummation (Song of Solomon 5:1)" (p. 210). Again, the stress seems to be that making love is only for those who are married. Some contend that 4:9-5:1 is a mere verbal exchange expressing admiration and intent--that there is no actual coming together of the couple here (*The Amplified Old Testament,* for instance, has the couple speaking to each other through the window). But the wording and emphasis of Song of Solomon 4:16 and Song of Solomon 5:1 particularly should make it clear that actual physical union is being described--albeit in delicate and metaphoric language in parts.

4:11: In Song of Solomon 4:11, the kisses here leading to sexual union are deep ones involving the tongue--"what we would call a French kiss although it was nineteen hundred years before France was a nation. It was a genuine Hebrew kiss, deep and penetrating. Open-mouth kisses are one of the most sensual acts possible in a marriage union" (Tommy Nelson, p. 100). This is not something that dating couples should be engaged in. The milk and honey imagery here may evoke the idea, mentioned previously, of inheriting the "Promised Land" of marriage--besides the sensual pleasure implied (see also Song of Solomon 5:1).
4:12-15: In Song of Solomon 4:12-15 the man describes his wife as a lush, exotic garden of pleasant fruits and spices, a place of sensual delights. The garden with its fountain is said to be "enclosed...shut up...sealed" (verse 12). These are "metaphors for the beloved's virginity--or perhaps for the fact that she keeps herself exclusively for her husband" (*Zondervan NIV Study Bible,* note on verse 12). "Orchard" in verse 13 is translated from the Hebrew word *pardes,* related to the Persian word from which comes our word "paradise." Note the alliteration of *qineh ve-qinnamon* ("calamus and cinammon") in verse 14 and the beautiful assonance of the words in verse 15 translated "fountain of gardens, a well of living waters"--*ma'yan gannim, be'er mayim hayyim.* The refreshing spring and fountain as metaphors for the woman as a sexual partner are also used in Proverbs 5:15-20.
4:6: The Shulamite responds to her husband's affections in Song of Solomon 4:16. She begins with the word "awake." This is significant, for recall her earlier adjuration to the daughters of Jerusalem to not "stir up nor awaken love" until the right time (Song of Solomon 2:7; Song of Solomon 3:5). Well now it is clearly the right time. Her heretofore closed garden is opened to receive the stirring winds from both north and south, perhaps indicating that she is open completely to stimulation from the man. The figurative winds waft her garden's spices about and out

toward her lover as a stream--the word translated "flow out" being the same as that rendered "streams" (from Lebanon) in the previous verse. We should also observe that the meaning of the garden has been narrowed here. The woman does not refer to herself generally as a garden. Rather she uses "my garden" to designate a part or aspect of herself. The meaning may be her sexuality or her private parts--either of which implies the other. All of this she gives to her lover, finally calling it "his garden" and inviting him to come in and enjoy it. "It is problematic to know how literally to take the verb *eat,* but there is no doubt about the fact that she invites him to sexual union of the most intimate type" (*New International Commentary on the Old Testament,* note on verse 16).

5:1: Then in Song of Solomon 5:1, the delighted husband takes his fill of sexual love. All of the various elements mentioned here were used to describe the woman in his prior admiration poem (Song of Solomon 4:8-15)--thus clearly tying 4:16-5:1 to that poetic segment in this third subsection--yet now the man uses the form "my" for each element (indeed, eight times in short order). Her charms are now *his* to enjoy--and that he does with deep satisfaction. This man's possession of the woman's erotic attributes is, again, clearly indicative of marriage (see 1 Corinthians 7:3-4). Incidentally, it should be recalled that the shepherd hypothesis sees no wedding night here--only a reunion of bride and groom after time apart. Yet the wedding night of the lovers seems to best fit the evidence of the earlier material in this major section and of the section's central position in the Song.

The last three lines of Song of Solomon 5:1 are a matter of some dispute. The NKJV has the man here speaking to his friends--that is, to the guests celebrating outside the bridal chamber during the seven-day wedding feast, telling them to eat, drink and be merry (compare also John 3:29, where the friend of the bridegroom rejoices to hear his voice). Others, however, see the words in

Song 5:1b directed to the husband and wife in the bridal chamber. Consider that she just invited him to eat and he responds with eating and drinking. Thus the statement that follows is seen as an affirmation of the couple's lovemaking. The word for "friends" is related to the man's typical endearment term for the woman and "beloved" is the woman's endearment term for the man--yet both words can apply to each. It thus may be that someone is telling the man and woman to "go for it." If so, it is likely the chorus singing here--perhaps representative of the wedding guests. Yet others suggest that the chorus is here representing the songwriter--or even God, looking down and giving His divine approval to sexual relations in marriage, as only He could be a witness to the couple's intimacy.

We should recall from our introduction that 4:16-5:1 forms the central hinge of the Song of Songs--in terms of both language and quantity of verses (adding to the evidence of this being the marriage consummation on the wedding night). So it may well be that at this central point the songwriter or God is directly communicating through the Song to give its central message--that married lovers should take their fill of sexual love. Yet even if community affirmation is intended, we should recognize that this reflects divine approval--as God is the very Creator of sexuality and the institution of marriage. Again, with the final mention of "spouse" in Song of Solomon 5:1, it should be quite clear that sexual union is intended only for marriage. And in that context, it is a wonderful blessing.” [END]