

Episode #413 Song of Solomon 9: The Love Triangle Resolved

I. The “Song of Solomon” is written in the form of a drama in five acts. It tells a story about a love triangle between a country girl, her country boy lover to whom she is betrothed, and Solomon, who tries to steal her away from him. In it we see an example of the kind of love and loyalty we should have toward God, and of the kind of love He has for us.

II. Last time, our heroine had just faced off with Solomon, who had tempted her with the pride of life by offering her perhaps the top queen spot, and then with the lust of the flesh by trying to entice her with fleshly pleasure. She stood firm against the temptation, and told him she belongs to her shepherd boy already, having consummated her marriage to him under Solomon’s roof.

III. Continuing Act 4. Song of Solomon 7:11-8:4. The Girl Speaks to Her Absent Shepherd.

A. V.11. Solomon has probably exited in great anger, and the poor country girl is left to wait in nervous anticipation. She now speaks to her absent beloved. She wants to go with him into the fields and lodge with him in the country villages.

B. V.12. She wants to get up early to go into the vineyards with him to see if the vines flourish, the grapes appear, or the pomegranates bud. (She was doing this alone when Solomon found her.) With her shepherd in the vineyards, she will give him her endearments.

C. V.13. The mandrake was thought to promote fertility, and she probably speaks anticipating having children with him. At their gateways are many pleasant fruits, and she has reserved these fruits, new and old, for her beloved alone.

D. C.8.V.1. She wishes her shepherd was like her brother, so that when she met him in public, she could kiss him without reproach. A rather childish and despairing wish, since she doesn’t really want a sisterly relationship to him! But she is afraid she will be unable to have a relationship with him at all if the powerful King Solomon gets his way.

E. V.2. She wishes to lead him into her mother’s house to hear her instruction (regarding their relationship). She would serve him pomegranate juice there.

F. V.3. She wishes to be in his embrace.

G. V.4. (The court ladies enter.) She remonstrates the court ladies one last time not to try to influence her love.

H. At this point Solomon apparently dismisses her, no doubt in shame, and taking back all his rich gifts. She may have been shamed in the eyes of the king’s court, but in her eyes she has been set free!

IV. Beginning Act 5. Song of Solomon 8:5-7. The Lovers Return Home.

A. V.5. The citizens of her hometown see her returning from the wilderness. This compares to 3:6. Here, though, it is the girl, the happy bride, whom everyone notices, not everything but the bride! She first raised love in him under an apple (orange?) tree. It happened to be under this same apple tree that his mother had given birth to him. This is probably speaking of at their betrothal ceremony.

B. V.6. She urges him to set her like a signet ring upon her heart (like a wedding ring). Love is as strong as death (never letting go).

V. Conclusion: The faithfulness of the Shulamite to her shepherd paid off when she was released and allowed to go back home with him. She, the happy bride, is what everyone sees when she returns home with her beloved shepherd husband. Do we too believe that real love is better than simple sexual pleasure or the many enticing but empty promises of the world?