

Dr. Lloyd Carr, Song of Songs, Session 3 of 4, Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 4) Briefing Document, 3) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Carr, Song of Songs, Session 3 of 4, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Lloyd Carr's third lecture on the Song of Songs analyzes the book's structure, exploring differing interpretations ranging from a collection of unrelated poems to a unified, carefully structured work possibly employing chiasmic structure. He proposes a five-unit structure, each with a distinct theme, showcasing a cyclical pattern and repeated vocabulary. Furthermore, the lecture examines the identities of the characters, debating whether it involves King Solomon and a Shulamite woman or simply a single couple, highlighting the challenges in definitively assigning speeches to specific characters based solely on textual evidence. The lecture concludes by emphasizing the book's carefully constructed nature rather than being a random collection of poems.

**2. 17 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Carr, Song of Songs, Session 3 of 4 – Double click icon to
play in Windows media player or go to the
Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link
there (Old Testament → Psalms and Wisdom → Song of
Songs).**



**Carr_Song_Session
03.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Carr, Song of Songs, Session 3 of 4

Okay, here is a briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided lecture excerpts by Dr. Lloyd Carr on the Song of Songs:

Briefing Document: Dr. Lloyd Carr's Lecture 3 on Song of Songs

Introduction:

This document summarizes the main points from Dr. Lloyd Carr's third lecture on the Song of Songs. Carr focuses on the structural complexities of the book, arguing against the common view of it being a haphazard collection of poems and advocating for a carefully structured, unified work. He also begins an exploration into the characters involved.

Key Themes and Ideas:

1. Structure: Unity vs. Collection:

- **Problem of Structure:** A primary challenge in interpreting the Song is determining its structure. Is it a collection of unrelated poems with a common theme (love), or a unified, deliberately crafted work?
- **Common View:** Many contemporary scholars see the Song as a collection of isolated love poems from various authors and times, brought together later.
- **Carr's Argument for Unity:** Carr contends that the numerous repetitions of verses, words, and ideas suggest a very deliberate structure. He argues against the notion of a "haphazard collection."
- **Challenge of Sequential Order:** If it's a unified piece, does it have a sequential order? Carr notes that it doesn't function like a drama with a clear plot progression; it's more cyclical.
- **Ethical Problem with Sequential Reading:** A sequential reading implies that the early and very explicit sexual references within the Song may suggest biblical approval of premarital sex, which he notes is problematic.

1. Chiastic Structure:

- **Chiastic Form:** Carr proposes that the Song is structured chiastically (A-B-B-A pattern), based on the Greek letter Chi (X).

- **Center Point:** He identifies 4:16-5:1 as the central pivot around which the rest of the book revolves.
- **Divisions:** The book divides into five units:
- **Unit 1 (1:2-2:7):** "Anticipation" - lovers looking forward to union. Ends with the phrase "do not stir up love until it pleases" (2:7).
- **Unit 2 (2:8-3:5):** "Found, Lost, and Found" - Lovers unite, separate, then reunite. Ends with "do not stir up love until it pleases" (3:5).
- **Unit 3 (3:6-5:1):** "Consummation" - Wedding celebration and honeymoon. This unit does not conclude with "do not stir up love..."
- **Unit 4 (5:2-8:4):** Reversal of unit 2 - losing and finding the beloved.
- **Unit 5 (8:5-8:14):** "Affirmation" - A statement of certainty of the whole relationship.

1. Detailed Analysis of Unit 1 (Anticipation):

- **Initial Desire:** The woman's first request is for her lover's kiss, wanting to be taken into his chambers, showing a desire for their love to be exalted (1:2-4)
- **Shift to Uncertainty:** The woman expresses shyness and insecurity about her appearance (1:5-7) referencing being sunburned and made to tend the vineyards by her brothers. She doesn't want to be mistaken for a wanderer (prostitute).
- **Lover's Encouragement:** The lover reassures her of her beauty, comparing her to a prized mare of Pharaoh's chariot and bestowing praise (1:8-11).
- **Return to Confidence:** The woman's perspective shifts as she sees herself through her lover's eyes; she delights in his interest (1:12-14).
- **Bantering Exchange:** A series of compliments between lovers ends with descriptions of their natural surroundings transforming into a place for sharing their love (1:15-2:2).
- **Woman's Declaration:** She identifies herself as a simple country girl (2:1-2).
- **Lover's Exclamation of Beauty:** He reasserts her beauty and unique position among other women (2:2)
- **Woman's Response:** She delights in his presence and calls him sweet to her taste. She calls out her sickness of love and shares their physical intimacy (2:3-6).

- **Concluding Admonition:** "I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or the hinds of the field, that you stir not up nor awaken love until it please." (2:7)

1. **Vocabulary and Contextual Nuance:**

- **Unusual Vocabulary:** Over half the words in the Song are unusual.
- **Example: "Banqueting House" (2:4):** The phrase is explored in context.
- Carr considers the possibility that it is a vineyard, place where wine is made, or where it is consumed. The interpretation must be tied to the physical love expressed through the surrounding verses.
- **Example: "Banner" (2:4):** The term translated as "banner" is explored for its possible meanings.
- Carr suggests it should not be a "banner" or a "flag" but a verb. He highlights the use of the same word in the Akkadian language, meaning "to desire." Therefore, the verse is more accurately understood as "His intention was to make love to me."
- Carr points out the problem with the commonly sung, less nuanced interpretation of the verse.

1. **Recurring Motifs and Vocabulary:**

- **Repetitions:** The lecture highlights how certain ideas, such as the "do not stir up love until it pleases" refrain, recur in different sections with only slight differences.
- **Specific Words:** Individual terms are often used in reverse order and specific vocabulary are also repeated.
- **Careful Structure:** These repetitions indicate the book was structured and edited deliberately and not haphazardly.

1. **Characters:**

- **Number of Characters:** There is disagreement on the number of speakers in the Song and how the book is divided, but it's generally thought to be in the 30s, in terms of sections.
- **The Woman:** She is the most straightforward, though her identity is debated.
- She is referred to as "Shulamite" (6:13), possibly linked to Shunem.

- A theory links her to Abishag the Shunemite from 1 Kings.
- Carr focuses on her status as a country girl compared to the girls in Jerusalem.
- **The Men:Two Man Option:** Is it a story of a country girl (Shulamite) being brought into King Solomon's harem while she is still in love with her shepherd boyfriend?
- **One Man Option:** Is there only the beloved, a single male character? Carr tends towards this option. It makes more sense of the story's continuity and avoids difficulty in attributing speeches.
- **Other Characters:**The "daughters of Jerusalem": Women who represent the sophistication of city culture.
- The Woman's brothers: Referenced in 1:6 and 8:8.
- Wedding guests in the middle section

Conclusion:

Dr. Carr's lecture presents a strong case for the Song of Songs being a carefully constructed, unified work, rather than a collection of disparate poems. He emphasizes the chiasmic structure and the meticulous use of vocabulary and recurring motifs. The lecture also raises key questions about the characters, particularly the role and number of the male figures in the narrative.

This document provides a framework for further study of the Song of Songs.

4. Study Guide: Carr, Song of Songs, Session 3 of 4

Song of Songs Study Guide

Quiz

Instructions: Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. What is the most common contemporary interpretation of the structure of the Song of Songs, and what evidence is often cited to support it?
2. According to Carr, what is a major problem with the view of the Song of Songs as a collection of unrelated poems?
3. What is a chiastic structure, and how does Carr apply it to the Song of Songs?
4. How does Carr divide the Song of Songs into five units, and what are the themes of these units?
5. What is the significance of the phrase "I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem... that you stir not up nor awaken love until it please" in Carr's analysis?
6. In the first unit of the Song, what is the woman's initial request, and what shift in her mood takes place immediately after?
7. How does the man describe the woman's beauty in the first unit, and how does this shift her perspective about herself?
8. What is significant about the mention of "the banqueting house" and the "banner of love" in chapter 2, verse 4, according to Carr?
9. Who are the "daughters of Jerusalem" in Carr's analysis, and what do they represent in the context of the poem?
10. What are the two main possibilities regarding the male characters in the Song of Songs, and what challenges does each present for interpretation?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The most common contemporary interpretation is that the Song of Songs is a collection of isolated love poems brought together by a common theme. This view is often supported by parallels with Egyptian love poetry, where similar collections exist.

2. Carr argues that the presence of numerous precise repetitions of verses, words, and ideas in the Song of Songs indicates a careful structure, not a haphazard collection. These repetitions suggest an intentional design.
3. A chiastic structure is a cross-shaped pattern (A-B-B-A) where elements are mirrored or reversed around a central point. Carr argues that the Song of Songs is structured chiastically with verses 4:16 and 5:1 serving as a central pivot.
4. Carr divides the Song into: 1) Anticipation, 2) Found, Lost, and Found, 3) Consummation, 4) Losing and Finding, 5) Affirmation. These units reflect the shifting phases of the lovers' relationship.
5. The phrase serves as a recurring refrain, marking the end of the first two sections. It underscores the theme of restraint and patience in love, emphasizing that love should be allowed to develop naturally when the time is right.
6. Her initial request is for her lover to kiss her and take her into his chambers to exalt in their love. Immediately after, she expresses uncertainty and shyness about her appearance due to being sunburned.
7. The man describes her as beautiful, like a mare among Pharaoh's chariots, with lovely cheeks and ornaments. This praise helps her see herself through his loving eyes and shift away from self-doubt.
8. According to Carr, the "banqueting house" refers to the place of wine (possibly a vineyard, wine storage, or tavern), and the "banner of love" is better understood as a verb meaning "he looked on me with desire." In this interpretation, it indicates that the man's intention towards her was lovemaking.
9. The "daughters of Jerusalem" represent the more sophisticated city women, acting as a foil to the country girl. They serve as a contrast to her natural beauty and simplicity.
10. The two possibilities are that it's either two male characters (King Solomon and the country shepherd) or only one man (her lover). The two-man option poses challenges regarding the speeches attributed to each man, while the one-man option is more cohesive.

Essay Questions

1. Analyze the chiastic structure of the Song of Songs as presented by Carr. How does this structure contribute to the overall meaning and interpretation of the text?

2. Compare and contrast Carr's analysis of the Song of Songs with the interpretation of the text as a mere collection of love poems. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each approach?
3. Discuss the role and significance of the "daughters of Jerusalem" in the Song of Songs. How do they contribute to the themes and overall message of the poem?
4. Explore the symbolism of the language and imagery in the Song of Songs, focusing on how these elements contribute to the depiction of love and desire between the two main characters.
5. How does Carr's interpretation of the Song of Songs address the ethical and moral concerns associated with reading it as a sequential narrative of a sexual relationship?

Glossary of Key Terms

Chiastic Structure: A literary device with a structure that is mirrored or reversed, often represented as an A-B-B-A pattern, with the central point as a pivot around which other elements revolve.

Anticipation: The first unit of Carr's structure, focusing on the lovers' longing for their union and fellowship.

Consummation: The third unit of Carr's structure, relating to the wedding and consummation of marriage between the lovers.

Aphrodisiac: A food, drink, or other substance that stimulates sexual desire.

Banqueting House: Refers to the "house of wine," which Carr says could be a vineyard, storeroom, or tavern.

Daughters of Jerusalem: The women of the city who serve as a contrast to the country girl, representing societal norms and sophistication.

Shulamite: A possible identification of the woman in the Song of Songs, potentially referring to a girl from Shunem.

Repetition: The recurrence of words, phrases, or ideas that creates a sense of unity.

Unity: The quality of being a coherent whole, suggesting the song was composed as a single work, not a collection.

Sequential: Following a specific order from start to finish, which Carr argues is not the organizing principle of the Song.

5. FAQs on Carr, Song of Songs, Session 3 of 4, Biblelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ: Understanding the Song of Songs

- **What are the main challenges in understanding the structure of the Song of Songs?**
- One major challenge is determining if the Song of Songs is a unified piece or just a collection of separate poems. Some scholars believe it's a compilation of love poems from various authors, times, and places, united by a common theme. However, others argue that the significant repetitions of verses, words, and ideas throughout the text indicate a carefully structured work by a single author. Another challenge lies in deciding whether the Song of Songs has a sequential order, as it does not follow a typical dramatic structure with a clear beginning, plot development, and conclusion. Instead, the poem is somewhat circular, revisiting similar themes and ideas, which complicates the interpretation of its narrative.
- **What is the chiastic structure and how does it apply to the Song of Songs?**
- A chiastic structure is a literary technique where the elements in the first half of a text are mirrored or reversed in the second half, forming a cross-like pattern (like the Greek letter "chi," X). In the Song of Songs, the central point of the book is verses 16 of chapter 4 and 1 of chapter 5. The verses before and after this central section unfold in a reversed and mirrored pattern, with similar ideas and vocabulary. For example, a theme or idea introduced at the beginning of the book will be mirrored towards the end. The structure is not merely about having half of the verses on either side of the center, but that the content is intricately interwoven.
- **How is the Song of Songs divided into sections based on its chiastic structure, and what are the themes of each section?**
- The Song of Songs is divided into five main units:
- 1. **Anticipation (1:2-2:7):** Focuses on the lovers looking forward to their union, ending with an adjuration not to stir up love prematurely. It begins with a call to kissing.

2. **Found and Lost and Found (2:8-3:5):** The lovers initially find each other, then are separated, and eventually reunited. This section also ends with the same adjuration not to stir up love.
 3. **Consummation (3:6-5:1):** Describes the wedding procession, the consummation of their marriage, and the beginning of their honeymoon in the garden, and it does not conclude with the adjuration to not stir up love.
 4. **Lost and Found (5:2-8:4):** This mirrors the second unit. The lovers are separated after the wedding and then are reunited. This section deals with themes of loss and seeking.
 5. **Affirmation (8:5-8:14):** Affirms the entire relationship and is a statement of certainty. It concludes with an expression of the beloved's allure, reminiscent of the gazelle imagery.
- **How does the language and imagery in the Song of Songs support the idea that this is a love poem rather than something more metaphorical?**

The language of the Song of Songs is very sensual, expressing physical attraction and desire, for example, the woman's request for kisses, the lover praising the woman's beauty (like comparing her to a mare of pharaohs chariots). There are references to physical features like cheeks, neck, and eyes, and the use of aromatic and luxurious imagery such as myrrh, frankincense, nard and henna that evoke sensory experiences. Some argue that the language of physical intimacy and desire would indicate the story is about a couple in love. There is an idea of physical love. For instance, the use of food imagery such as apples and raisins, can serve as aphrodisiac references. The use of words that translate to "house of wine" where lovers seek privacy may point to the physical aspect of this love as well. There are verses and language that might refer to the couple actually making love.

- **Who are the main characters, and what makes them so difficult to identify?**
- The main characters include a woman, who is identified as the Shulamite, and a male lover, with many believing that there is only one male character. Some believe there are also other individuals involved such as: the daughters of Jerusalem, the brothers of the Shulamite, and the guests at the wedding feast. The woman is most likely from the country, possibly Shunem, while it is unclear whether the man is a King or a shepherd. There is a major disagreement on whether there are two male characters involved or one. Identifying who speaks which line is difficult because it is very ambiguous, and there is no agreement between scholars on who is speaking when. Some scholars believe there are two males, the king and a shepherd boyfriend, but others disagree, saying there is just the single lover.
- **What is the significance of the "daughters of Jerusalem" in the Song of Songs?**
- The daughters of Jerusalem are the women that are in the city that represent city girls. The woman in the story identifies as a country girl, and the daughters of Jerusalem are the city-girls and they are used to contrast her. They represent the sophistication of the urban culture, contrasting with the simplicity of the woman's rural background. Their appearance in the narrative can signify the social pressures and differences that she faces as a country girl. The woman often contrasts herself with these city girls.
- **How is the book structured to create a sense of a cohesive story rather than a collection of isolated poems?**
- The Song of Songs uses several elements to create a cohesive narrative: the repetition of phrases (such as the adjuration "do not stir up love until it pleases"), cyclical structure, the recurring use of imagery and vocabulary that connect different sections of the book, and the chiasmic structure. These elements indicate a deliberate arrangement of the text, rather than being just a random collection of poems on a similar theme. The consistent use of characters, as well as shifts in focus on these characters, also creates a flow and narrative.

- **What are some of the interpretive challenges in the Song of Songs, specifically regarding its vocabulary and context?**
- Over half the words in the Song of Songs are unusual words. It contains some uncommon or unique terms whose meanings are not always clear. Additionally, certain verses, when taken out of their immediate context, could easily lead to misinterpretations that are disconnected from the overall narrative. For instance, some verses have been interpreted as metaphors for spiritual love, although when read in their immediate context, these verses seem to directly address physical, romantic love. Interpretive challenges include assigning the correct speaker to each line, and determining whether certain words are nouns or verbs. It is also challenging to differentiate metaphorical language from literal language.