

SONG OF SOLOMON

INTRODUCTION

1. AUTHOR – claims to be Solomon in 1:1. The book shares several words and phrases with Ecclesiastes. See 1 Kings 4:32
2. TITLE – is really "Song of Songs" as written by Solomon.
3. PURPOSE – The book is a celebration of mature love between husband and wife, enjoyed as instructed in Ecclesiastes 9:9.
4. INTERPRETATIONS – Usually three main ones are given.
 - A) LITERAL – The book is a description of Solomon's courtship and marriage to his "beloved."
 - B) ALLEGORICAL – This one identifies Solomon as God and the girl as either Israel or the Church. The poem then describes God's love for His people.
 - C) TYPICAL – This interpretation combines the two, taking an actual experience of Solomon and using it to show God's love.

A PROPOSED BACKGROUND OF THE BOOK

The Song of Songs is written as a dialogue between Solomon, the Lover, and the girl, the Beloved. One setting that has been proposed for the poem is this. King Solomon had a vineyard several miles north of Jerusalem (8:11) that he entrusted to keepers. These were a mother, two sons (1:6), the girl (6:13), and her little sister (8:8). The girl was a Cinderella type (1:5) being lovely but made to do much of the hard work (1:6). One day, King Solomon came to the vineyard disguised. She was embarrassed by her appearance (1:6) and seems to have taken him for a shepherd (1:7). He was evasive but spoke loving words to her (1:8-10) and won her heart as a shepherd and promised he would return for her. She often dreamed of him at night thinking him to be near her (3:1) until finally he returned in all his kingly majesty to marry her (3:6-7). There are other explanations given which also fit.

OUTLINE

1. The love of the two lovers expressed. CH 1:1-2:7
2. Looking for and finding the lost lover. CH 2:8-3:5
3. The taking of the bride and the wedding. CH 3:6-5:1
4. The bride cannot understand where her lover has gone. CH 5:2-6:3. It is possible that she balks at believing that Solomon was really her shepherd man.
5. The love of the husband and wife expressed. CH 6:4-8:14

IMPORTANCE OF SONG OF SOLOMON

1. Song of Solomon expresses the joy of love expressed between those who are truly in love. Notice that the love expressed is within the marriage relationship.
2. The book demonstrates the beauty and purity of the sexual relationship as expressed openly when received as a gift from God Who is the Creator of sex. See Ecclesiastes 9:9.
3. Some see a picture of Christ here who won the love of His bride, the Church, as a Shepherd, but Who returns as a King to claim her.
4. How could Solomon, with a thousand wives and concubines have seemed to be so devoted to this one? This may have been after his backslidden condition and the one marriage that was for love, not for political purposes.

ASSIGNMENT

Read through the book of Song of Solomon and then write a love letter to your own husband or wife, even if it is only a short one.

Recommended Reading – "A Song For Lovers", by S. Craig Glickman, IVP, 1976

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1-8 – The one who wrote this poem of love or these poems of love was one who had a highly developed sense of observation and pleasure. The way each detail is described, not only of the lover but also of the elements of nature, it is obvious that this person paid much attention to detail. The way various elements, small details of so many aspects of life are noted, it is clear that there was deep pleasure from many areas of life. These all seem to culminate in the pleasure of married love in this poem.

8:7 "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it. If a man offered for love all the wealth of his house, he would be utterly despised." There is nothing worth as much as true love.

That makes the love God has for us worth a great amount of wealth because it is only the love of God for us that is perfect in all facets. Only God will not let us down. Only God's love will seek out our best at all times. Only God appreciates every part of who we are, not only the visible parts of our physical being, but he also appreciates all the inward parts that never show since he created them and each of us individually and uniquely.

At the same time, this entire book honors the physical aspect of the sexual relationship. Do we ever forget that God created this? Do we sometimes separate this aspect of our life and thinking from God and think that he has nothing to do with this? God invented the parts of the human body. He designed them to respond to sight, touch, smell and sound in the ways that they do. We as humans have taken one of God's most beautiful gifts and dragged it through the mud, polluted it and cheapened it. Let us read this book with celebration and offer our bodies and all its parts to God for his glory.

What would it be like to meditate on this poem for a long period of time? Would we gain appreciation and notice more of the things that go on around us? Do we have any idea how to love like this? Do we know how to love even our closest friends, family or spouse this way? Do we even want to? Do we know how to love God, or Jesus, or how to be loved by them, to receive the love they have for us? It is one of our greatest lacks. It is this way because we are selfish, self-centered. Why do we suppress love? Did our parents love us? Do we love our immediate family like this? When we talk with them, do we try to also do other things, sort of multi-tasking? Why are our hearts so cold that we do not revel in this love, long for it, crave it? Have we given up ever receiving this kind of love? We need to pray to have God open us up to this kind of love from him and in turn, pass on this kind of love to those around us. Lord, make it our prayer to come to know this kind of love more each day.