

Song of Solomon

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If I am the one who would categorize and edit the Books of the Bible without the Lord's guidance, I may not be so easy on the Book of Song of Solomon and keep it from becoming one of 66 Books in the Bible.

Whenever I go through this Book to follow the daily assignment of reading through the Bible in a year plan, I shake my head, because some of the descriptions seem risqué to be a part of the Bible. But I believe that the Lord has a very good reason why it is included in the Bible.

When we studied the Book of Ecclesiastes, it seems very discouraging since the author Solomon said, "Everything is vanity." But this Book is filled with romantic love for king Solomon and his wife Shulamite woman.

Some of the Bible commentators call the Song of Solomon perhaps the most difficult and mysterious Book in the Bible.

To understand this Book, as usual, we must have a background established in our hearts.

A. THE AUTHOR AND THE TIMELINE

The author is none other than Solomon, the lover boy of Israel who had 700 wives and 300 concubines. The opening verse of chapter one makes the authorship clearly known to us.

Scripture tells us that Solomon not only composed 3000 proverbs but also 1005 songs according to 1 Kings 4. This Book is also known as the "Song of songs". It was on Jerusalem Billboard Chart No. One for a long time as a love song.

The Song of Solomon was one of the three Books of the Bible written by Solomon when he was young and married the first time. The Book of Proverbs was written when he was a mature adult; the Book of Ecclesiastes, when he was an old man who had turned away from the Lord.

Many biblical scholars believe that the Book was written 970-930 B.C.

B. THE THEME OF THE BOOK

Throughout eight chapters of this Book, the theme comes very easily – the joy and intimacy of love within the committed marriage relationship.

C. INTERPRETATIONS

In an attempt to discover the meaning of the Song of Solomon, the students of the Bible can take one of four styles:

1) Allegory

It has many tendencies to dismiss any literal meaning and believes that this Book is a parable of God's love for Israel, Christ's love for His church, or Christ's love for the individual believer.

Allegorical interpretation is not a good way to study the Bible. Once you start to take the texts to the place where it is no longer connected to the original intention of God's Word, it becomes extremely dangerous. Allegorical interpretation will lead you to do that.

As I've said many, many times before and will repeat this continuously – "Any text out of context is pretext." I like what Mart DeHaan said about interpretation of the Bible: "If the literal sense makes sense, seek no other sense; lest you come up with non-sense."

2) Typology

It believes in the literal meaning as well as a great spiritual meaning that points to our marriage relationship with God.

We are going to take a few typology interpretation approaches in this Book. I really don't think that it is necessary to go over verse by verse literal interpretation because it is what it says – it is a song between a husband and a wife. Nothing complicated.

3) Satire

It follows the story line of the dramatic view but puts more bite into Solomon's rejection.

4) Literal

It sees the love of two actual people, Solomon and the Shulamite, being celebrated in poetic form, nothing more and nothing less.

D. DESCRIPTIONS

The descriptions, though explicitly sexual at times, is never crass. Rather Solomon uses richly symbolic, highly figurative expressions to create metaphors.

Song of Solomon 1:15 The Beloved Behold, you are fair, my love! Behold, you are fair! You have dove's eyes.

Song of Solomon 4:1-4 Behold, you are fair, my love! Behold, you are fair! You have dove's eyes behind your veil. Your hair is like a flock of goats, Going down from Mount Gilead. 2 Your teeth are like a flock of shorn sheep Which have come up from the washing, Every one of which bears twins, And none is barren among them. 3 Your lips are like a strand of scarlet, And your mouth is lovely. Your temples behind your veil Are like a piece of pomegranate. 4 Your neck is like the tower of David, Built for an armory, On which hang a thousand bucklers, All shields of mighty men.

If you call your wife or your girlfriend, "You have dove's eyes," nowadays, she may not like your description very much. Or comparing her hair to goat's hair for that matter. Never, never compare her hair with animal's hair unless you don't mind sleeping in a dog house next 40 years. Just don't go there. It can be hazardous for your health.

Calling loved ones different names has changed in descriptions but still awkward when you think about it – Pumpkin (I never understood why pumpkin), Sweet Cake, etc.

E. STRUCTURE

We can divide the Song of Solomon into three broad sections:

- 1) The Courtship – 1:2-3:5
- 2) The Wedding – 3:6-5:1
- 3) The Struggles and Growth in Marriage – 5:2-8:14

F. TYPOLOGY INTERPRETATIONS OF THE BOOK

1) The Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valleys

Song of Solomon 2:1-2 I am the rose of Sharon, And the lily of the valleys. 2 The Beloved Like a lily among thorns, So is my love among the daughters.

You may have heard someone describing Jesus with this phrase. However, the Bible does not use the rose of Sharon or the lily as a symbol for Jesus but this phrase obviously has had tremendous resonance in our Christian culture.

2) The little foxes that spoil the vines

Song of Solomon 2:15 Catch us the foxes, The little foxes that spoil the vines, For our vines have tender grapes.

Often it is the little things that weaken a marriage. The slow leaks, not the blowouts. The insidious “pests” we seldom even consider that cut away at the heart of a home until finally it crumbles.

We need to watch out for those “foxes” which are always present, always ready to devour the blossoms of our relationship in our families.

This also applies to our relationship with Jesus. We may not have any immediate cracks in our spiritual lives, but one backsliding would lead to another. At the end, we will see how far we walk away from the Lord. That is the reason why I say to you guys that it is important for us to keep a short account with the Lord. When we sin against Him, we immediately must take care of it by confessing it to Him and ask for His forgiveness. By doing so, He will mend the crack we cause between Him and us.

3) I sought him, but I could not find him

Song of Solomon 5:2-6 I sleep, but my heart is awake; It is the voice of my beloved! He knocks, saying, “Open for me, my sister, my love, My dove, my perfect one; For my head is covered with dew, My locks with the drops of the night.” 3 I have taken off my robe; How can I put it on again? I have washed my feet; How can I defile them? 4 My beloved put his hand By the latch of the door, And my heart yearned for him. 5 I arose to open for my beloved, And my hands dripped with myrrh, My fingers with liquid myrrh, On the handles of the lock. 6 I opened for my beloved, But my beloved had turned away and was gone. My heart leaped up when he spoke. I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer.

If someone tells you that they have such a perfect marriage that they never disagree or argue, either they are lying through their teeth or one of them is not thinking at all.

The ecstasy of the preceding section is replaced by deep apprehension. Love brings its joys, but those joys seldom last long. We are such flawed and fragile creatures, and interpersonal relationships contain such subtleties. We often take our relationship with our spouses or friendship with our close friends for granted, thinking that it would be there all the time, and even neglecting them.

Once we may have tight intimacy with our Lord Jesus, but whether we are doing God’s work or our own work, we start to neglect our daily time with Him and think that He would be there no matter what we do. Of course, He always is there, but in reality, we are the ones who drift away from Him by not anchoring ourselves to Him firmly.

I wouldn't be surprised this text was in the mind of Jesus in the Book of Revelation 3:20 in His letter to the Laodicean church.

Revelation 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

I also believe that this image was in the background of Jesus' parable of the foolish virgins in Matthew 25:1-13.

Matthew 25:8-10 And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' 9 But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.' 10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.

4) Clear as the sun

Song of Solomon 6:10 Who is she who looks forth as the morning, Fair as the moon, Clear as the sun, Awesome as an army with banners?

The Lord sees the church as His bride, pure, clear, and without blemish. Is it because we are so good and righteous? Absolutely not. Our God sees us shining brightly in that way because of the blood of Jesus Christ.

5) I am my beloved's

Song of Solomon 7:10 I am my beloved's, And his desire is toward me.

I just love the way this was written. Such a sweet intimacy between a husband and wife is described here.

Jeremiah 31:33 But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

That is what the Lord wants us to have with Him. From Genesis to Revelation, God declares this 16 times. Yes, He is the God of all nations and the universe. At the same time, He wants to be our individual personal God so that He can show His love, grace, mercy, and hope to us eternally.

G. APPLICATION

Our relationship with the Lord Jesus must be pure and undefiled by outside worldly influences and our own carnal desires.