

Song of Solomon Notes

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Introduction:

One of the favorite and most controversial books of the Bible.

- Charles Spurgeon and D.L. Moody listed Song of Solomon as their favorites.
- Watchman Nee said “Song of Solomon is the capstone of the Bible.”
- Song of Solomon is often called “The Holy of Holies of the Bible.”

There are 4 main interpretations of this book:

1. An erotic love story of Solomon and one of his wives. The Talmud and rabbis wouldn't let Jewish males read it until they were in their 30's.
 - Sex was God's idea; “Be fruitful and multiply.” (Gen. 1:26; 2:18) But sex is not only for procreation – this is one of the main themes of Song of Solomon.
 - Certainly, Song of Solomon extols marital love, but it also speaks of a deeper love.
2. The covenant love story between God and the nation Israel. There are numerous places in the Bible (ie. Hosea) where Jehovah is spoken of as the husband and Israel as the wife.
3. The NT love story of Christ and His Bride, the Church. Ephesians 5:22-33 speaks of a marriage between a husband and wife as a picture of Christ's relationship to the Church.
 - The name, Shulamite, is the feminine form of the male name, Solomon.
4. The marriage between the Shulamite and her shepherd- husband which is being assaulted by the seduction of Solomon, who is a type of the world.
 - Solomon had a house of cedar (Songs 1:17) and was over many flocks himself.

The Jews would read the Song of Solomon annually on the 8th day of Passover.

Like the book of Esther, the Song of Solomon doesn't mention God's name.

Song of Solomon is never quoted in the NT.

Matthew Henry says that Psalm 45 (see also Heb. 1:8) is the key to the Song of Solomon.

Chapter 1:

1:1 – “song of songs” – 1 Kings 4:32 says Solomon wrote 1,005 songs, but this is the best.

- This seems to be the love song of all humanity for all time.
- Song of Solomon sets in stark contrast the meaninglessness of Ecclesiastes.

1:2 – “kiss” – The song moves immediately into intimacy. This is the kiss between lovers.

- This song is all relationship – no theology, no apologetics, no exhortation, etc.
- “wine” – Love is better than all that inebriates.
 - Solomon had tried to satisfy himself with wine. (Eccl. 2:3)

- 1:3 – “fragrance” – “For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life.” (2 Cor. 2:15-16)
- “Your name” – This speaks of the person and all that person is.
 - “The greatest hindrance of our love of Christ is our service for Christ” – Oswald Chambers. Some people are so in love with service, or power, or God’s gifts, etc. that it makes it nearly impossible for them to simply love God.
 - “ointment” – This word comes from the same root word as “anointing.”
 - “the virgins love you” – Purity is difficult and precious.
- 1:4 – “Draw me” – God initiates this relationship. Our pursuing power is dependant on His drawing power; His grace.
- “We love Him because He first loved us.” (1 John 4:19)
 - “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him.” (John 6:44)
 - Christianity is not “do,” it is “done.”
 - This may be a picture of the wedding night.
- 1:5 – “I am dark” – She is quick to notice her own imperfection.
- You cannot come to Christ without first recognizing your own darkness.
 - “but lovely” – But she knows Solomon loves her because he only says good things about her.
 - This is the dichotomy of a believer; we are dark in and of ourselves, but perfect in the righteousness of Christ.
 - “tents of Kedar” – Dark animal skins.
 - “Kedar” – Home of Bedioun tribes in the Arabian desert. (Isa. 21:16)
 - “curtains of Solomon” – White linen.
- 1:6 – “Do not look upon me” – Her circumstances (“the sun has tanned me”) and others’ reactions (“My mother’s sons were angry”) provided opportunities for excuse.
- Self-consciousness hinders intimate love.
 - “the keeper of the vineyards” – She has been made a servant.
 - “my own vineyard” – She hasn’t been able to properly care for her own body.
- 1:7 – “Where you feed your flock” – She wants to know how to find him.
- “feed your flock” – Her king (v. 4, 12) and lover is also a shepherd.
- 1:8 – “fairest among women” – This is the Lord’s opinion of us in Christ.
- “feed your little goats” – There is an encouragement to remain in the place of feeding.
 - “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as in the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.” (Heb. 10:25)
 - “shepherds” – Plural. These are the under-shepherds.
- 1:9 – “my filly” – The prized mode of transportation.
- 1:10 – “Your cheeks are lovely” – Solomon understands the blessing a compliment can be to a wife.
- Women are to be the responders in the relationship. Men need to provide something good for their wives to respond to.
 - “ornaments” – God has decked us out and beautified us.

1:12 – “spikenard” – Mary of Bethany anointed Jesus with spikenard before His crucifixion. (John 12:3)
- Of all the stuff at Solomon’s table, the thing that draws His attention is my smell of brokenness.

1:13 – “myrrh” – An embalming spice.
- The wise men gave Jesus myrrh. (Matt. 2:11)
- “between my breasts” – Over her heart.

1:14 – “henna” – (Heb. “kopher”) This Hebrew word is also translated “atonement, propitiation.”
- “the vineyards of En Gedi” – Speaks of an oasis.

1:15 – “dove’s eyes” – Scientists speaks of the tunnel vision of dove’s eyes.
- Doves are faithful to their mates for life.

1:16 – “bed” – or “couch.”
- “our bed is green” – She is referring to where they met to get to know one another.

Chapter 2:

2:1 – “lily of the valleys” – Wild flowers.

2:2 – “thorns” – A product of the fall. (Gen. 3:18)

2:3 – “fruit” – The fruit of the Spirit. (Gal. 5:22-23)

2:4 – “banqueting house” – “Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” (Rev. 19:9)
- “Many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. 8:11)
- “his banner over me was love” – His love is the defining characteristic of our relationship with God.
- It is not effort, or pressure, or guilt, of manipulation, etc.

2:5 – “lovesick” – Jesus calls us His Bride, not His wife. He is still passionate in this relationship with us.

2:7 – “Do not stir up nor awaken love until it pleases” – Repeated in 3:5 and 8:4.
- This overwhelming intimacy is the theme of Song of Solomon.
- On a human level, don’t hurry or force a relationship. Let it happen.
• Practically, abstain from pre-marital sex.
- On a spiritual level, all human effort to earn or elicit God’s love only gets in the way of truly receiving God’s love. It only comes by grace.

2:8 – “The voice” – Jesus said His sheep “know his voice.” (John 10:4)
- God communicates to us in ways that transcend our five senses.
- We need to learn to hear His voice above our circumstances.
- “the mountains” – Biblically, mountains often speak of government or problems.
- These mountains could also speak of the high places God brings us to. (Hab. 3:19)

2:9 – “looking through the windows” – “Now we see in a mirror, dimly.” (1 Cor. 13:12)

- It is God’s desire to be seen and known.

2:10 – “Rise up, my love” – He is issuing an invitation to deeper fellowship.

- She postpones her response to His invitation.
- “my fair one” – This is God calling His beloved.
- God sees us differently from the way we see ourselves or the way others see us.

2:13 – “fig tree” – Possibly picturing the re-birth of the nation of Israel in 1943.

- “come away” – It is good for couples to continue to date throughout their marriage.

2:14 – “the clefts of the rock” – Moses was hid in the cleft of the rock as God’s glory passed by. (Exod. 33:22)

- “your voice is sweet” – And most of the time all we do is whine.

2:15 – “little foxes” – It is often small things that ruin relationships.

- “Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that so easily ensnares us.” (Heb. 12:1)

2:16 – “I am his” – She is confident in his love for her.

2:17 – “Bethel” – means “separation.”

- In our relationships with Jesus there is separated from and separated unto.

Chapter 3:

3:1 – “By night on my bed” – This may be a dream sequence.

- “but I did not find him” – Her delay has put some relational distance between them.
- We may feel far away from God, but feelings are not an accurate barometer of reality.

3:2 – “go about the city” – Finding God is not a matter of location.

3:4 – “I found the one I love” – His grace allows Himself to be found by her.

- “would not let him go” – Like Mary held Jesus on the resurrection day.
- “the chamber of her who conceived me” – She is trying to return to the place of her origin. This possibly speaks of her desire to re-experience her first love.

3:6-5:1 – This may be a picture of the Jewish wedding tradition.

3:8 – “They all hold swords” – He is protective of His bride.

3:9 – “palanquin” – A portable throne.

3:10 – “silver” – A picture of redemption.

3:11 – “see King Solomon with the crown” – We must direct others’ attention to Him.

- “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” (Matt. 5:16)
- “his mother” – That would be Bathsheba.

Chapter 4:

4:1-5 – God’s intimate knowledge and love of His people.

- “The very hairs of your head are all numbered.” (Matt. 10:30)

4:1 – “flock of goats” – The goats of Canaan were usually black.

4:2 – “teeth are like a flock of shorn sheep” – Her teeth are white, even, washed, symmetrical, and without any missing.

- “teeth...have come up from the washing” – Personal hygiene is very important in personal and sexual intimacy. It is not okay for one member to let themselves go regarding personal hygiene.

4:3 – “temples” – This may speak of her mind and thought life.

4:4 – “neck is like the tower” – This probably speaks about how she carries herself.

4:6 – “Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away” – It seems like the reality of the actual experience will go far beyond all that is said to this point.

- “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.” (John 14:3)
- “myrrh” – Speaks of death.
- “frankincense” – Speaks of the priesthood.
 - His death and priesthood are the basis of His love for us.

4:7 – “no spot in you” – Christ’s perfection is imputed onto those who believe in Him.

- “God...calls those things which do not exist as though they did.” (Rom. 4:17)
- “For we are His workmanship.” (Eph. 2:10)
- “Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.” (Jude 24)

4:8 – “Come with me” – He is calling her away to journey with Him.

- “The spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously.” (James 4:5)

4:9 – “ravished my heart” – “The reckless, raging fury” that is the love of God.

4:10 – “better than wine is your love” – Solomon repeats the Shulamite’s estimation of his love for her from Song of Solomon 1:4.

- God is not intoxicated by the stuff that intoxicates us.

4:11 – “Honey and milk” – Milk and honey are symbols of the promised land. (Exod. 3:8)

4:12 – “garden enclosed” – She is a virgin until her wedding night.

- They have lacked nothing by remaining celibate until their wedding night.
- “And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.” (Gen. 2:25)

4:15 – “well of living waters” – John 7:37-39.

4:16 – “north wind” – A picture of pressure or difficulty through the Scriptures.

- “south” – The desert wind, warm and dry.
 - Despite the season and circumstances, our relationship with God can continue to grow and flourish.
- “Let my beloved come to his garden” – She is offering herself to him.
 - The Bride is not completely passive in this love-relationship.

Chapter 5:

5:1 – “I have come” – He is taking her up on her invitation...but comes in an unexpected time (“I sleep” – v. 2) and way (“open for me” – v. 2).

- “drunk my wine” – He is satisfied in her.
 - “If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.” (Rev. 3:20)

5:2 – Some time seems to have lapsed here.

5:3 – “washed my feet” – She is making excuses.

- She is delaying again...this time with more indifference than ignorance.

5:5 – “my hands drip with myrrh” – His fragrance is still on the doorknob.

5:6 – “my beloved had turned away and was gone” – The fullness of His presence has passed by.

- Have you ever missed an opportunity with the Lord?

5:7 – “The watchmen” – The spiritual or civil leaders.

- “They struck me” – People will most often hinder our pursuit of God.
 - Moses’ misrepresentation of God kept him from the promised land. (Num. 20)
- “Took my veil away from me” – They are humiliating her.
 - “For there is one God and Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.” (1 Tim. 2:5)

5:8 – “lovesick” – She loves him more now that she has lost him.

- She may have been taking him for granted.
- Sexual intimacy should never be used by one partner to control or manipulate the other. (1 Cor. 7:3-5)

5:9 – “What is your beloved more than another beloved” – They don’t understand what is so special about the one she loves.

- The lover is the only thing the beloved desires at this time.

5:10-16 – Her description of her beloved.

- She gives them all the advice and information she seems to have forgotten.
- The beauty of Christ. Compare with Rev. 1:13ff.

5:10 – “white and ruddy” – He has a great complexion and is healthy.

5:14 – “rods” – The Hebrew speaks of “enfolds,” as hands that cover us.

5:15 – “legs are pillars of marble” – Very strong support.

- 5:16 – “altogether lovely” – Jesus is the only man lovely in all His aspects.
- Stay away from the stuff that will cause dissatisfaction with your spouse.
 - “friend” – Jesus not only calls us servants, but also friends. (John 15:15)
 - Friendship is very important in marriage.

Chapter 6:

- 6:1 – “Where has your beloved gone” – As a result of the testimony of the lover, other people want to see Him too. This is a great witness.
- 6:2 – “My beloved has gone to his garden” – As the Shulamite answers her friends, she herself is reminded of where to find her lover.
- 6:4 – “O my love” – There is no reproof here. He doesn’t rebuke her, but only accepts her.
- “Tirzah” – means “delight.”
- 6:8 – “sixty queens” – Solomon may be referring to his other wives.
- 6:9 – “perfect” – This is how God sees us in Christ.
- 6:10 – “the morning” – The new day.
- The Church is anticipating the blessed hope of a new day.
- 6:11 – “the vine had budded” – Their love is still budding and growing.
- 6:13 – “Shulamite” – The feminine form of the name “Solomon.”
- “two camps” – (Heb. “Mahanaim”) Where God met Jacob as he was returning home and anticipating seeing Esau. (Gen. 32:2)
 - We don’t dance in our own strength. The lover is the partner.

Chapter 7:

- 7:1-9 – Again Solomon describes his bride. (Songs 4:1-15; 6:4-10)
- 7:1 – “beautiful are your feet” – “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace.” (Isa. 52:7; Rom. 10:15)
- 7:2 – “heap of wheat” – It could be that when they harvested wheat, they would pile it up and then cover it over with a white linen.
- 7:5 – “purple” – Possibly so dark, it looks purple.
- 7:7 – “like a palm tree” – Palm trees grow stronger and more fruitful with age.
- 7:9 – “the roof of your mouth” – They are kissing a lot.
- “the best wine” – God saves the best wine for last. (John 2)
 - “The wine goes down smoothly” – The Shulamite breaks in here.

- 7:10 – “I am my beloved’s” – She is surrendering herself to him.
- She is no longer struggling (Songs 1), refusing (Songs 3), or delaying (Songs 5).
 - “toward me” – His affection isn’t just toward His kingdom, His influence, His plan, or His glory, but toward me as an individual.
 - This love is the culmination of all God is and has done.
 - This is the condescension of the king to desire his bride.

7:11-12 – “us” – 4 times. She is not letting him go.

- 7:13 – “mandrakes” – A supposed aphrodisiac. (Gen. 30:14-19)
- “pleasant fruits” – The result of simply abiding in the vine. (John 15:5)

Chapter 8:

8:1 – “like my brother” – PDA (public display of affection) was forbidden in that culture, even between a husband and a wife. Siblings though could hug and kiss on the cheek. The picture is an older sister caring for a younger brother.

- She would like to make an open and public display of her affection for him without being despised.
- This world doesn’t like our public displays of affection toward God either.

8:4 – “Do not stir up nor awaken love” – It is genuine and not manipulated.

8:5 – “Leaning” – Trusting. She is growing in faith.

- “apple tree” – Songs 2:3.
- “There she who bore you brought you forth” – We have been prepared to come to God long before we knew it.

8:6 – “a seal upon your heart” – As the High Priest bore the names of the 12 tribes on his shoulders and in his breastplate during his priestly ministry.

- “love” – This is all she wants.
- The degree to which we make ourselves vulnerable is the degree to which we can experience His love.
- “strong as death” – She is extolling the power of love.
- Christ’s love to us was strong as death, for it broke through death itself.

8:7 – “waters...floods” – Problems.

- “a man would give for love” – Love yields a sacrifice.
- It is nothing to you to sacrifice everything for the one you love.

8:8 – “no breasts” – Immature.

- How do we lead anyone else into the experience of His love?

8:9 – “If she is a wall” – If she remains separated and pure, she can grow to maturity.

- “silver” – A picture of redemption.
- “door” – Possibly speaking of a gate that others would pass through.
- To love God properly is to love God only.

- 8:10 – “As one who found peace” – She was beautiful and pure, but the great secret is that she also waited for the man who would truly appreciate her beauty and purity.
- 8:11 – “Baal Hamon” – Lit. “Lord of the multitude.”
- “leased the vineyard to keepers” – Like in Matt. 21:33-46.
- 8:12 – “Solomon, may have a thousand” – She is finding fruitfulness in herself and is willing to give it away.
- 8:13 – “Let me hear it” – He asks her to speak.
- She is surrounded by people, and he doesn’t mind her getting the attention as long as he can hear her voice.
- 8:14 – “Make haste” – “Come, Lord Jesus.” (Rev. 22:20)
- Their love has not diminished as the years have gone by.