

THE SONG OF SOLOMON SESSION 1

Title and author: We commonly call this book the song of Solomon, but the first verse gives us the true title - **Song of Solomon 1:1** The song of songs, which is Solomon's. It's actually called "the song of songs" and names Solomon as its author. The phrase "song of songs" is like "king of kings" and "holy of holies" which simply means it's the greatest of all songs.

What it is: The Bible is broken down into different categories – the law, the prophets, the gospels, the epistles, historical, and wisdom. The song of Solomon is biblical love poetry that falls into the category of wisdom literature because it instructs its readers about a "wise love" relationship. This writing is often misunderstood, misapplied or ignored altogether. It is the lover's song, a story about God's love applied to human relationships. The poem is very expressive and romantic.

The main people contained in the song: Solomon (the king), the Shulamite shepherdess (the woman in love), the Shepherd (the object of her love), the daughters of Jerusalem (a chorus of women who comment on the couple's relationship). Each speak at different times in the song and without a study Bible to clarify who is speaking when, it can be difficult to understand.

Interpretations of the song: Some scholars see the book as an allegory of the history of the Jews from the time of Abraham to the advent of the Messiah. Some hold the view that the song is an allegory of the emancipation of the Hebrew people from slavery in Egypt. They think that it depicts the wilderness wanderings of Israel and the eventual conquest of Canaan. Others think it depicts the relationship between Jehovah and Israel. Christian expositors believe that the book depicts the love of Christ for the church or the love of a soul for Christ. And some other scholars view the book simply as a historical poem and believe it celebrates the marriage of Solomon to Pharaoh's daughter. As so often is the case in Old Testament scripture, here we have allegory emerging from history. No doubt the events recorded in the song really happened, but beneath the facts of the story lie deep, abiding spiritual lessons.

Most people view Solomon as a type of Christ and the Shulamite as a type of the church. Here's why I don't hold that view, because Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines...he hardly fits as a type of Christ. Solomon is also clearly seen in royalty as a king, but the Shulamite is in love with a lowly Shepherd. The view of the song that others have put forth that I hold is this one: The shepherd pictures Christ who is the great

shepherd. The Shulamite mirrors the church or the individual believer who is devoted to Christ. Solomon represents the prince of this world, who employs his power, wealth and magnificence to come between them. The daughters of Jerusalem are court women who admire the worldly prince; and they look criticize those who would turn their backs against him in favor of an absent and unknown Beloved.

There are many who argue against this view because they can't imagine that Solomon would characterize himself in this way, but they forget that all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and he may not have known that was the point at all. I don't view it as an allegory of Jehovah and Israel because even though Israel is called the wife of God when in her history was she ever faithful to Him only? The Old Testament is littered with her spiritual adultery. I don't believe it's about Solomon marrying the Shulamite women because it's clear in the song that her beloved only has eyes for her. Solomon overindulged himself with hundreds of wives which led to his downfall. So, the question is, what is Solomon's goal in writing the song? It's his telling of a woman so in love with a humble and lowly shepherd, that even with all his magnificence, wisdom and wealth, he could not win her love, and it spellbound him.

The scene of the first chapter: The Shulamite is a young and beautiful woman who is from a modest family. Her family supports themselves by farming and pasturing. Solomon has been out with his entourage and happened upon her. Struck by her beauty, he takes her into his tents but she's in love with another man (a shepherd). While being held in Solomon's pavilion she soliloquizes about her beloved shepherd.

Song of Solomon 1:1-4 The song of songs, which *is* Solomon's. Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love *is* better than wine. Because of the savour of thy good ointments thy name *is as* ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee. Draw me, we will run after thee: the king hath brought me into his chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine: the upright love thee. *She longs for a kiss from her true love which she says his love is better than wine. There are some parallels to draw upon about Christ.*

- **His love - John 15:9** As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. **John 15:13** Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.
- **His name** – In the scriptures a person's name was a direct reflection of their character. She says that his name is like ointment poured out...meaning that his character is beautiful and attractive. The name "Jesus" means Jehovah saves! His name is salvation. Christ means "anointed one" - **John 3:18** He that believeth on

him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

- **The upright love thee** – He is loved by the righteous just like Christ. The righteous love Christ because he is the reason they are righteous for before him, we were unrighteous **1 Peter 2:6-7** Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe *he is precious*: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,

Song of Solomon 1:5-6 I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon. Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me: my mother's children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept. *Here the Shulamite describes herself. She is beautiful. Her skin is very dark because she's out working in the sun all day long. The tents of Kedar refer to tents of the Arab Bedouins which is made from black goat hair. Her brothers were angry with her because of her love for the shepherd and they too tried to keep her away from him by giving her more work to do. The phrase "but my own vineyard have I not kept" may mean that she had no time to maintain herself because she was always working.*

Song of Solomon 1:7 Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest *thy flock* to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions? *Because she is separated from her love, she is asking where he may be found. She does not want to go from flock to flock like a harlot looking for any man*

The daughters of Jerusalem answer her:

Song of Solomon 1:8 If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents. *The daughters of Jerusalem are women of Solomon's court. They sarcastically answer her "if you don't know, O you fairest among women, then follow the sheep tracks; go and pasture your kids by the herdsmen's tent." They are saying "You don't seem to understand your present position. Don't you realize what Solomon is offering you? The world is yours if you agree to be his. If you don't appreciate that, then you can go back to the backwoods life of your country bumpkin." Which is exactly what she wants and they don't understand her.*

Solomon speaks of his admiration for her:

Song of Solomon 1:9-11 I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots. Thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels, thy neck with chains of

gold. We will make thee borders of gold with studs of silver. Solomon compares her beauty to the beautifully decorated horses of Pharaoh's chariot. He compares her cheeks to jewels and her neck with chains of gold. He promises to adorn her with gold and silver in place of her rustic clothes.

The Shulamite and her Shepherd lover speak to each other:

Song of Solomon 1:12-14 While the king *sitteth* at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof. A bundle of myrrh *is* my wellbeloved unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts. My beloved *is* unto me as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of En-gedi. *While Solomon was at his table, the Shulamite and the shepherd meet and speak of each other. Spikenard was a costly and aromatic ointment for anointing and was also burned as incense. Myrrh was a precious aromatic resin used for its fragrance, medicinal properties, and symbolic significance, particularly relating to death and burial. A cluster of camphire refers to a cluster of henna blossoms which is a symbol of love and beauty. It is a term of endearment, comparing the beloved to something precious and beautiful. Myrrh was given to Christ as a gift as a child and it was mingled in drink given to him at his death. Myrrh's aroma is released when it is crushed. Christ is beautiful in his death which was motivated by love.*

The Shepherd speaks:

Song of Solomon 1:15-17 Behold, thou *art* fair, my love; behold, thou *art* fair; thou *hast* doves' eyes. Behold, thou *art* fair, my beloved, yea, pleasant: also our bed *is* green. The beams of our house *are* cedar, *and* our rafters of fir. *He calls her beautiful and says that she has dove's eyes meaning that they are tender, innocent, and full of love. He says their bed is green because it's the grass of the open field. The beams over our heads are cedar trees and our rafters are the limbs of fir trees. Solomon can offer her the most immaculate house to live in, but she's not interested. She rather lie in an open field with the man she's in love with than live in a mansion with a man she doesn't.*

This first chapter has spiritual depths in it. Jesus Christ is the Great Shepherd who gave himself for his bride. The church is beautiful and pleasant in his eyes. The church is devoted to him though there are many who try to divert her attention away from him. Solomon is the prince of this world that has everything to distract her, but she won't be wooed. Her family are angry with her and try to keep her away from him with extra chores and the daughters of Jerusalem can't understand why she would prefer a shepherd to their king. The warning to the individual Christian is that there is a lot that they will have to contend with to not be pulled away from devotion to Jesus - **Jude 21** Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

