

Schaff-Herzog says, "The theme is conjugal love, pure and simple."

The Bible Commentary says, "The simplest and most natural (interpretation) appears to be that which regards it as a poem or drama of pure wedded love."

Edward J. Young says: "The song, therefore, is didactic and moral in its purpose. It came to us in this world of sin, where lust and passion are on every hand, where fierce temptations assail us and try to turn us aside from the God-given standard of marriage. And it reminds us, in particularly beautiful fashion, how pure and noble true love is."

It is certainly not amiss to emphasize in our day the Biblical view regarding marriage. It was the Lord God Himself who said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make a help meet for him." (Genesis 2:18)

See also, [Pro 18:22](#); [Pro 19:14](#); [Heb 13:4](#); [1Pe 3:1-6](#); [Gen 24 \(Gen 24:67\)](#); [Exo 21:10](#); [1Co 7:4](#); [Pro 31:10 ff.](#); [1Ti 5:14](#)

The "Song" emphasizes that the husband/wife relationship is to be exclusive and loyal to each other.

*My beloved is mine and I am his (2:16)*

*I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine (6:3)*

*I am my beloved's and his desire is toward me (7:10)*

## Conclusion:

The Biblical understanding of the divine purpose, of fulfillment, of finality is the kind of feeling toward the marriage relationship that we need to try to recapture. It is this kind of feeling toward married love that the Song of Songs seemingly seeks to magnify.

# SONG OF SOLOMON

## Introduction

### I. Title and Author –

This little book of eight chapters has been titled many ways. The Hebrew title is "the Song of Songs," which means the most superlative song or as we would say, "The Best of Songs". To this inscription is added that the song belongs to Solomon. For this reason then it is also referred to as the Song of Solomon. The Latin word for "song" is Canticle and so some Bibles and commentaries refer to it as Canticles.

Verse 1 asserts that Solomon wrote this song (among the 1,005 which he wrote, I Kings 4:32), although the verse may be translated "The Song of Songs which is about or concerning Solomon." The contents of the book agree with all that we know about the abilities and wisdom of Solomon, and there is no compelling reason not to regard him as author. In the Hebrew Bible the books stands in the third division of books: "Law, Prophets, and Psalms."

### II. The Content of the Song

The song is a poetic representation of the sentiments of lovers, some of it quite frank in terms of intimate admiration and desire for each other. It is quite plain from the spacing in the Hebrew and the change of person, number and gender of the personal pronouns and verb endings that the speakers shift from male to female and from the single male and female to a plurality of women termed in the text the "daughters of Jerusalem." But beyond this there is little to aid in the interpretation of the song. There is no scene description, or stage directions.

We cannot say absolutely and beyond possibility whether the principal characters in the song are two lovers, or two lovers and a rival. Different parts of the songs give only subtle hints as to the place where the scenes transpire. If the writer originally gave any hints to aid in the

framework of the song, or any stage directions, such notations have been lost or discarded.

Any attempts to divide the parts into alternating divisions or to suggest the locale or setting of each part depends largely on the grammar and poetic style of the Hebrew. This is a fascinating study, and perhaps this book has had a greater variety of treatment than any other book of the Old Testament.

The traditional view is that there are two single lovers, Solomon and a woman of Shulam, a town seemingly in northern Palestine. For our purposes in surveying the contents of the books we shall interpret the song according to the traditional view of two lovers, Solomon and the Shulamite, and a chorus of women from Jerusalem (either court attendants or the royal harem.)

### III. Interpretation

There have been many different methods employed to discover the meaning and significance of the book. The following is a brief outline of some of the more prominent.

**1. The Allegorical Interpretation.** This has been the dominate view of Jewish Rabbinical scholars. The male "lover" is supposed to represent God, while the "beloved" is the nation Israel. This view seems to account for the selection of the Song as the scripture to be read at the Passover festival by later Judaism.

A variant of this view was introduced early into Christian literature. This view was that the song had to do with Christ and His bride, the church. This view was been widely accepted in the past It accounts for the interpretive chapter headings in many printed versions, (e.g. ch. 1-3 "The Mutual Love of Christ and His Church")

It is seen in poetic adaptations in our songs as "Jesus, Rose of Sharon" and "the Lily of the Valley." Oddly, however, if the interpretation were carried through correctly, the *church*, not Christ, would be represented by these titles.

J. W. McGarvey said of this view: "I tried hard to see something prophetic in it, but I failed, and I have never yet succeeded. I am not surprised, therefore, that all very recent interpreters have abandoned the idea that the Shulamite in some way represents the church, and Solomon the Lord Jesus. There is no sustained analogy in any part of the song to anything connected with Christ or the church."

**2. The Dramatic View.** A few view that originally the poem was a drama in which the settings and actions were supplied by pantomime or stage curtains. Some see the story as a love play in which Solomon's love for a young Jewish country maiden is portrayed.

Some think this view is unlikely because (1) there is little evidence of drama among the Hebrews, (2) and there is nothing in the poem itself of any drama directions or such a production, but what we have left is simply the dialogue which is presented as a love poem or love song (or if you will, an OT musical production by Solomon.)

**3. The Collection View.** Some think the book is not a unit but rather a collection of wedding songs such as were used at wedding festivals. (And such as those still used today in some countries,

e.g. Syria.) Parallel collections of such love songs have been made. But the "Song of Solomon" does seem to have a type of plot which develops throughout and it is not likely that a collection of isolated poems would give a story like this.

**4. A Modernist View.** One recent modernistic view (cf. The Interpreter's Bible) has claimed that the song was borrowed from pagan religious rites This view holds that the Song gradually lost its identity with paganism and was taken over by Israel. The modern liberal holds that it was the product of some evolutionary process based on mythological stories.

**5. The View of Pure Married Love.** A sixth century commentator was condemned by an early council for regarding the song as a simple love story between two married people. The Jewish Mishna pronounced an anathema on anyone who should so interpret the song.