

VIA EMMAUS: A CHRIST-CENTERED WALK THROUGH THE BIBLE

Song of Songs: More Than Just An Old Fashioned Love Song (23)

THE NEED FOR THE SONG OF SONGS

- (1) We live in a Genesis 3 world – *Sex, Marriage, and Male/Female Relations have all been affected*
- (2) We live in a Pornographic World – *Billion dollar industry; Even the purest have need of sanctification*
- (3) We are an Ignorant Church – *By and large, pastors have failed to teach God's Word on sex & marriage*

INTRODUCTION

Title	Song of Solomon; Song of Songs; The Canticles
Author	Traditionally, Solomon has been assigned as the author (1:1; cf 1 Ki 4:32)
Problems:	(1) Song of Songs 1:1 is grammatically ambiguous (2) Solomon's personal life raises questions about his authorship (3) Solomon depicted as an ideal king (1:5; 3:7, 9, 11; 8:111-12)
Solution(?):	Like Ecclesiastes/Proverbs, Song of Songs assigned to Solomon (1:1) Authorship is unknown, but thematic/theological content secures its place
Date	Prior to the Divided Monarchy (931 BC) – Shunem (6:13) & Tirzah (6:4) were in the North

INTERPRETATIONS

(1) Allegorical

This is the most common interpretation for the book – predominate until 19th C.

Extended picture of love and intimacy between God and Israel (Jewish), Christ and his Church

Positive: It commends the spiritual dimension of the book, and relates it to Christ (cf John 5:39)

Problem: Is not faithful the original text and leads to wild speculation, no constraint on imagery

(2) Anthology

Makes Song of Songs a collection of songs about the joys and ecstasy of married life

Positive: Commends a pure and holy version of marriage and sexuality

Problem: It rejects the unity and messianic focus of the book

(3) Unified Love Story

- a. Shepherd Hypothesis – three-person love story (two country lovers and Solomon)

Positive: Solves the problem of understanding how Song of Songs fits with Solomon's harem

Problem: Makes Solomon look foolish and the language of the song fits better with two persons

- b. Solomon-Shulammitte

Positive: Takes seriously imagery & setting of the book; commends God's gift of sex & marriage

Problem: Fails to develop the Edenic, Davidic, and Messianic Themes in Old Testament

(4) Typological, Messianic Approach

- a. Literal – Poetic love song with strong Edenic imagery that bespeaks the goodness of creation
- b. Historical – The main character is a Davidic king with the royal majesty of Solomon
- c. Eschatological – Informs us of the intense love God/Christ has for his people/church (cf Zeph 3)
- d. Canonical – Psalm 45 serves as a wonderful cross reference to understanding the setting
Genesis 1-2; Proverbs 5:15-19; Ephesians 5:22-33 are also helpful for understanding Canticles

OUTLINE

TITLE (1:1) “Song of Songs” – *Poetic Genre; superlative song, not anthology*
“Solomon” (1:5; 3:7; 8:11, 12); “King Solomon” (3:9, 11) – *More than an exalted title*

THE LOVERS YEARN FOR EACH OTHER (1:2-2:17)

Praises from the Bride (1:2-4, 5-7, 12-14; 1:16-2:1; 2:3-17)

- High regard for her “Beloved” and his name (1:2-4); Humble regard for herself (1:5-7)
- “Vineyard” (v. 6) – *Emblematic of her own physical appearance*

Praises from the Groom (1:8-10; 1:15; 2:2)

- Agrarian Metaphors (1) Figurative, not literal, not visual; (2) Quality of excellence & value
- Compliments are External – *How does this match up with 1 Peter 3?*
- Monogamous Fidelity – *His love is only for her; This is one trouble with three-person view*

Commendation from the Congregation (1:4b; 1:11; cf. 5:1b; 5:9; 6:1, 13)

- Sex is a community matter – *Marriage should be arranged, established, supported by community*

The Man and Woman Together

- Female Responsiveness – *She speaks much more, but her voice is not domineering but inviting*
Admits insecurity (1:5-6); Pleas for leadership (1:7, 2:10, 13b) and protection (2:15)
- Male Leadership – *He speaks less, but his voice gives direction, purpose, and security*
Communicates direction (1:8), praise (1:9-10, 15), and commitment (2:1)

THE SHEPHERDESS DREAMS (3:1-6:3)

A Dream in the Night

- “*On my bed by night... I slept, but my heart was awake*” (3:1; 5:2)
- This explains why the marriage is not until chapter 8

A Royal Wedding (3:6-11)

- In the dream, Solomon arrives in splendor – “*sixty men*” is twice that of David (cf. 2 Sam 23:13)
- Vision is comparable to Psalm 45 – *fits with the canonical develop of the Messiah* (cf. Heb 1)

Solomon’s Praise (4:1-16)

- This is the praise of a betrothed husband before the wedding – *should characterize married life*
- Purity and virginity are commended (4:12) -- *No intercourse in this passage, it is still a dream*
“Garden” is picturesque of the couple’s sexuality; cf Proverbs 5:15-19

The Beloved’s Praise (5:2-8, 10-16)

- The passion of Solomon’s approach, followed by the terror of losing him (5:2-8)
- She commends her lover from head to toe (5:10-16) – *Male leadership + Female response*

THE LOVERS YEARN FOR EACH OTHER AGAIN (6:4-8:4)

- He professes his exclusive, committed love (6:4-10); He reiterates his delight in her (6:13b-7:9)
- She responds with acceptance and delight in his pursuit (7:9b-8:4)
This reinforces covenantal monogamy -- Love has awoken and can now be enjoyed (8:4)

THE LOVERS JOIN IN MARRIAGE (8:5-14)

The dream becomes a reality (8:5-7) – *Love is awakened and the Covenant is sealed*

The lovers passion and purity is instructive for ensuing generations (8:8-9)

Virginity is rewarded (8:10-14) – *Bible is a story of virgins & adulterers (Rev 14:4; 18:3, 9)*