

**A LOOK AT THE BOOK
THE SONG OF SOLOMON
GODLY COUNSEL ABOUT LOVE AND ROMANCE**

Ralph Porter

AUTHOR

Internal claims of the book itself and external tradition both indicate that this book was the work of Solomon.

Although some argue for a later author, the basis for this conclusion is primarily suppositional.

There is no clear evidence to contradict the book's claim.

DATE

Assuming that Solomon wrote it, places the date during his reign (971-31 B.C.).

The evidence for his youth argues for a date early in his reign.

BACKGROUND

Solomon reigned at the peak of Israel's history.

Politically, its borders were never greater.

Economically, their wealth was great and increasing continually.

Solomon's wisdom was known throughout the world.

The book describes his love relationship with a Shulammite girl.

It's difficult to identify her historically, since Solomon had many wives.

It has been proposed that since many of his marriages were political alliance marriages, this may have been the one wife he really loved.

The book certainly intends to depict their relationship as special.

PURPOSE AND THEME

Allegorical View:

Many commentators have interpreted the book from an allegorical or typological point of view, demonstrating God's love for His people

Either Israel = God's love for Israel, His wife.
Or, the church = Christ's love for the church, His bride.

However, the emphasis on the physical aspects of their romantic relationship seems to demonstrate that it was not the purpose of the author to cause the reader to see the love of God for His people.

Too much detail!

You can't allegorize all the *physical* detail!

Physical view:

The attention paid to physical details draws the reader's attention to the romantic relationship between the two principal participants, particularly to the physical aspects of that romantic relationship.

It would appear, therefore, that the author wants to teach something about love and romance.

As part of the family of wisdom literature, the book seems to provide practical counsel on what true romantic love ought to be.

This would correspond to Solomon's counsel elsewhere to live together with, and to enjoy, the wife of your youth.

Solomon's counsel might also reflect some of his own frustration from many women, but perhaps, little genuine love.

The book sets forth a pattern for the kind of relationship that will satisfy.

Like the other wisdom literature, it's based in large part on the hard experience of practical living, coming from failure.

ORGANIZATION

The book depicts a gradually developing and maturing relationship of love.

Normal logical divisions seem to have been eliminated, in favor of the gradual development of a continually deepening personal relationship.

ARGUMENT

TITLE 1:1 "Solomon's Song", or "Song of Songs"

ATTRACTION INTO COURTSHIP 1:2-3:5

The story begins with the description of how their affection developed into courtship.

EXPRESSION OF AFFECTION 1:2-2:7

Her longing for affection 1:2-7

[The captions supplied in the text were included by interpreters—based mainly on the pronouns used in the text.
They are supplied to help the reader follow the text better.]

The Shulammitte expresses her desire for Solomon.

His expression of affection 1:8-11

He notices her as well and responds to her desire for affection with his own expression of affection.

Dialogue of affection 1:12-2:7

The introductory interchange results in a dialogue between them in which they each repeat their affection for one another.

VISIT TO THE BRIDE'S HOME 2:8-17

As time passes, Solomon decides to formalize their relationship by visiting the girl's home.

His arrival 2:8-9

Following the initial excitement of his arrival, . . .

His proposal 2:10-13

. . . he calls for her to go with him, which amounts to a formal proposal.

Her response 2:14-17

Her response is immediate.

She wants nothing more than to be with him.

DREAM OF SEPARATION 3:1-5

Panic strikes for a moment as a dream of separation causes her to consider what life would be like without him.

Once she found him, she would never again let go of him.

She could not bear to imagine life without him.

CONSUMMATION OF MARRIAGE 3:6-5:1

At last the wedding day arrives.

WEDDING PROCESSION 3:6-11

As she sees Solomon coming with his marriage procession, she becomes excited.

SONG OF PRAISE 4:1-15

As they enter the marriage chamber to consummate their marriage, he sings a song of praise for her beauty.

RESPONSE OF LOVE 4:16-5:1

Following his warm praise for her, she responds to him out of love and invites him to enjoy the sexual consummation of their marriage relationship.

APPRECIATION THROUGH SEPARATION 5:2-6:13

Shortly after their wedding, a separation occurred, which caused her to suffer, but deepened their appreciation for one another.

THE SEPARATION 5:2-8

While he was gone, she dreamed that he had returned and she missed him, so he left again.

She went out to search for him.

THE SEARCH 5:9-6:9

Her description of him 5:9-6:3

As they were separated, she described him to those she met.

His description of her 6:4-9

Her description of him is complemented by his description of her, which he probably communicated to her when he returned.

THE DISCOVERY 6:10-13

Although the following section is difficult to relate, it may describe his return.

She went down to the grove and rapidly returned when she saw Solomon's approaching procession.

APPRECIATION THROUGH MATURATION 7-8

Having returned to one another, their relationship continues to mature and their appreciation for each other grows.

HIS PRAISE OF HER BEAUTY 7:1-9a

As he praises her beauty, . . .

HER SURRENDER TO HIM 7:9b-10

. . . her desire for him grows and she surrenders to him.

HER INVITATION TO ESCAPE TOGETHER 7:11-8:4

The enjoyment of one another's presence stimulates her to invite him to go off with her for a few days.

They will enjoy a second honeymoon together.

Since they enjoy one another's company, neither desires to leave.

HER VISIT HOME WITH MEMORIES AND DEEPENED DESIRE 8:5-12

On another occasion, they visit her home.

The visit brings back memories of her childhood.

The experiences they share there cause their desire for one another to grow.

THEIR MUTUAL DESIRE TO ESCAPE TOGETHER 8:13-14

As the book comes to a close, it portrays a continuing "fairy tale" ending, though it is a true one.

The story never really ends.

The conclusion is a mutual expression of their desire to go off together.

It seems to communicate that this goes on forever.

That is the message the author wants to leave us in conclusion.

There should be no end.

A genuine relationship such as this should continue to grow deeper, without an end.

What lessons do we learn about genuine romantic love from the study of this book?

The sexual relationship is expressed with no negative concept (4:13-16)

It's not sin

It provokes no embarrassment

Sex is good-God made it!

God doesn't bring the negative (dirty) concept into sex-man did!

The sexual relationship is anticipated enthusiastically by both partners (1:2, 4)

In large part because of the attitude of the other toward them.

Their healthy, respectful, loving attitudes, encourage each other.

They enjoy being together (1-2)

They are only attracted to each other (2:2-3)

They belong to each other (2:16a)

When Solomon lost that, he lost something significant.

They have a wholesome respect and appreciation for each other's bodies (1:8-11, 13-16)

The attractiveness of their mate is expressed openly (4:7)

The partner seeks companionship and praise-a sense of worth

Notice the natural response to his praise (4:16)

Sex is one expression of genuine love and attraction

To only appreciate the physical is to degrade the other person

Spontaneity in their relationship (7:12)

Don't assume that your mate knows how you feel about them-express it!

She expresses a firm sense of confidence (2:16; 6:3; 7:10) Why?

How should we apply the lessons the Song teach us about love, romance and marriage?