

The Song of Solomon (Songs)

<i>Introducing the Song of Solomon</i>	
Author	Solomon (1:1)
Title	The first verse is the title in the Hebrew Bible: Solomon's Song of Songs. In English translations it is the: Song of Solomon or the Song of Songs. It means "the most superlative, or best, of songs." In other words, of all the material Solomon wrote, he thought this poem to be his best in terms of what it means.
Uniqueness	The entirety of the book is a lyric poem in dialogue form. It tells of the king (Solomon) who comes in disguise to the family vineyard of a Shulamite woman, wins her heart, and ultimately makes her his bride.
Key Thought of the Book	I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine
The Most Challenging Issue for Interpretation	Taken at face value, the book denotes a romance between Solomon and a Shulamite woman who becomes his bride. The problem is Solomon wasn't a very good example of marital devotion. He had many wives and concubines (140 at the time according to SofS 6:8) and many more that would come later (1 Kgs 11:3). As a result, Jews and Christians have always struggled to interpret and apply the way Solomon intended it.

<i>Ways to Interpret the Song of Solomon</i>		
Solomon's Love for His Bride	Literal Interpretation	The king comes in disguise to the family vineyard of a Shulamite woman, wins her heart, and ultimately makes her his bride. Perhaps the only virtuous relationship Solomon ever had.
God's Love for Israel	Allegorical Interpretation *Allegory = poem with a hidden meaning	God's love for Israel, His Bride in the OT
God's Love for the Church	Allegorical Interpretation	God's love for the Church and how they eagerly anticipate the bridegroom (God) coming for his bride (the Church).
All Three	Layered Interpretation	Solomon's love for His bride <u>and</u> God's love for Israel <u>and</u> God's love for the church
The Solution	Interpret at Literal // Apply at Allegory for Israel <u>and</u> Church	

<i>Outline and Flow of the Book</i>				
Courtship	Marriage	The Separation	Restoration	Devotion
Love Anticipated 1:1-3:5	Love Consummated 3:6-5:1	Love Rejected 5:2-7	Love Rekindled 5:8-6:13	Love Grows 7:1-8:14

<i>Section One: Courtship – Love Anticipated (1:1-3:5)</i>	
Solomon and the Shulamite	³ Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest is my beloved among the young men. I delight to sit in his shade, and his fruit is sweet to my taste. ⁴ Let him lead me to the banquet hall, and let his banner over me be love. ⁵ Strengthen me with raisins, refresh me with apples, for I am faint with love. ⁶ His left arm is under my head, and his right arm embraces me. ⁷ Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you by the gazelles and by the does of the field: Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires... ¹⁶ My beloved is mine and I am his; he browses among the lilies. ¹⁷ Until the day breaks and the shadows flee, turn, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or like a young stag on the rugged hills (2:3-7; 16-17)
God and Israel	Israel was pursued by God just as Solomon pursued the Shulamite Woman. Israel was precious in his eyes (Is 43:4)
Jesus and the Church	We eagerly await the coming of the Bridegroom for his bride.

Section Two: Marriage – Loved Consummated (3:6-5:1)

Solomon and the Shulamite	⁶ Who is this coming up from the wilderness like a column of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and incense made from all the spices of the merchant? ⁷ Look! It is Solomon’s carriage, escorted by sixty warriors, the noblest of Israel, ⁸ all of them wearing the sword, all experienced in battle, each with his sword at his side, prepared for the terrors of the night. ⁹ King Solomon made for himself the carriage; he made it of wood from Lebanon. ¹⁰ Its posts he made of silver, its base of gold. Its seat was upholstered with purple, its interior inlaid with love. Daughters of Jerusalem, ¹¹ come out, and look, you daughters of Zion. Look on King Solomon wearing a crown, the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of his wedding, the day his heart rejoiced (3:6-11)
God and Israel	Consummation of God’s Marriage to Israel, like Jewish marriages involved three steps: (1) the Betrothal Covenant (Have no other “g”ods) (2) taking of bride by the groom to father’s house at night (I led you out of Egypt on mighty wings) (3) Wedding Feast: the Seven Festivals of Leviticus (Passover, etc).
Jesus and the Church	(1) Betrothal Covenant – What we are living in now (2) Taking of Bride by Groom to Father’s House at Night – I come like a thief in the night / In my father’s house, there are many rooms. . .and I will come back and receive you to myself. (3) Wedding Feast – the marriage of the Lamb is come and his wife has made her ready (Rev 19:7)

Section Three: The Separation – Loved Rejected (5:2-7)

Solomon and the Shulamite	⁵ I arose to open for my beloved, and my hands dripped with myrrh, my fingers with flowing myrrh, on the handles of the bolt. ⁶ I opened for my beloved, but my beloved had left; he was gone. My heart sank at his departure. I looked for him but did not find him. I called him but he did not answer.
God and Israel	Babylonian Captivity (End of 2 Kings)
Jesus and the Church	Or else I will remove my lampstand

Section Four: The Restoration – Love Rekindled (5:8-6:13)

Solomon and the Shulamite	⁸ Sixty queens there may be, and eighty concubines, and virgins beyond number; ⁹ but my dove, my perfect one, is unique, the only daughter of her mother, the favorite of the one who bore her. The young women saw her and called her blessed; the queens and concubines praised her.
God and Israel	Return to the Promised Land from Captivity (Ezra, Nehemiah, 1-2 Chronicles)
Jesus and the Church	I saw a New Heaven and a New Earth. . .

Section Five: Devotion – Love Grows (7:1-8:14)

Solomon and the Shulamite	Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot sweep it away. If one were to give all the wealth of one’s house for love, it would be utterly scorned (8:7).
God and Israel	Nehemiah rebuilds walls and renews covenant; Ezra gathers the books; Zerubbabel starts rebuilding the temple.
Jesus and the Church	And the New Heaven and the New Earth is when God makes all things new for his bride: ² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. (Rev 21:2-4)