

Introduction

Why all the fuss about the Song of Solomon? Throughout church history the Song of Solomon has proven to be one of the most neglected portions of scripture in the entire Bible. People have the tendency to perceive as “difficult” things that they do not easily understand or that are different in nature from what they are usually accustomed – and the Song of Solomon easily scores on both accounts.

Even the casual reader can tell that something is up. This book is unlike any other in the word of God. The nature of the Song of Solomon can be more easily appreciated when we note that Jesus described the Old Testament as having three major divisions:

*“And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in **the law of Moses**, and in **the prophets**, and in **the psalms**, concerning me.” Luke 24:44*

Technically the Song of Solomon is part of the “Psalms.” These are what we commonly refer to as the poetical books that include Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and of course, the Song of Solomon. But, being acquainted with these other poetical books does not necessarily prepare one for understanding the Song of Solomon. The nature, arrangement and structure of the Song of Solomon are not really similar to what one finds in the other four poetical books. Furthermore, knowing Solomon’s writing style in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes is of little help, for this last book that bears his name is very different. The casual reader can tell that Solomon’s song is some sort of love poem, but beyond

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that, he or she will struggle to make sense as it really is unlike anything else in scripture.

With a brief perusal the believer can see that the book appears to be heavily weighted with figurative language. This opens up many of the same challenges that are to be found in prophetic books such as Revelation, Daniel and Zechariah. How can one tell what is literal and what is symbolic?

The book appears at first glance to have very little story line. Like Solomon's other two books, the apparent disjointed nature of his song and the hopping from topic to topic can present a challenge to the reader who is more acquainted with the stories of the Old Testament and the life of Christ, or the well ordered doctrinal arguments of Paul.

Solomon's song also has many references that appear to involve intimate details of married love. In our sex saturated society, the result of teachers approaching this book is often one of extremes. Some expositors try to turn Solomon's song into a sex manual while others completely ignore it in an attempt to avoid offending people's sensibilities at all costs. To hear Solomon on several occasions describing his lover's breasts can add an uncomfortable element to your average Sunday evening Bible study.

The thesis of this short exposition of the Song of Solomon is very simple:

*“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is **profitable** for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”*

II Tim 3:16-17

Although the book may bear Solomon's name, God is the Author. The Song of Solomon is inspired, preserved scripture. Every word and verse of this book is PROFITABLE for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and for instruction in righteousness. As you read through this song, there may be times you wonder how on earth a certain verse could ever be profitable, but God's promises are always true! You need the Song of Solomon if you are to be perfect – a complete and mature servant of Christ. This book is necessary if you are to bring forth good works in your life that honors your Lord.

So we will not be treating the Song of Solomon as some oddity or quaint work of history that is now irrelevant to the average Christian. Rather we will do just the opposite! Though rich in poetic beauty, at the end of the day these words are God's words. They are intended to instruct and are essential to your spiritual well-being.

Interpreting the Song of Solomon

Any study of scripture must begin with a frank appraisal of *how* one will be doing their study. Rather than settling for one's opinion or a particular school of Bible interpretation, a Bible-believer should go to the Bible and see how scripture goes about interpreting scripture. Many times the Old Testament quotes and interprets other portions of the Old Testament. For instance, in Daniel 9:2, Daniel refers to a prophecy of Jeremiah concerning the seventy years of captivity God's people would endure. Daniel interprets this prophecy literally, at face value, in its context – the Jewish captivity would indeed occur and last for seventy literal years. The prophecy was literally true and Daniel's literal interpretation of Jeremiah was 100% correct. Daniel was performing the very opposite of spiritualizing or allegorizing scripture. This same pattern is repeated hundreds of times throughout the New Testament where Jesus, Paul or one of the other writers or speakers refers to specific Old Testament passages.

Paul even goes a step further in I Corinthians 2:12-13 when he tells us how we can know the things that God has given to us:

*“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; **comparing spiritual things with spiritual.**”*

As the Great Interpreter and as God himself, the Holy Spirit knows exactly what he intended for us in every verse. His method of teaching is one of comparison – scripture with scripture, allowing the Bible to explain itself! So in the Song we

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will be taking a literal approach to Bible interpretation with a heavy emphasis upon cross-referencing in an attempt to discover what the Holy Spirit intended for us.

Whenever one starts speaking of “literal interpretation” they must always be quick to add the words “in its context.” Literal speech allows for and understands that some things are figurative and were never intended to be taken literally OUT of their context. For instance in Song 4:1, the King says to his Bride, “*Thou hast doves’ eyes...*” Clearly she was human and was not a dove, nor has she undergone surgery and had bird’s eyes transplanted into her head. This lady is human and has human eyes in every sense of the word – but they somehow have characteristics similar to that of a dove. Because we **start** with a literal interpretation, we can usually spot figurative language when it appears. One who starts with some other system of interpretation does not have a foundation to begin from and is therefore open to every crazy opinion and idea of men that comes along. Allegorizing and spiritualizing scripture leaves one with meanings that are impossible to verify as true and meanings that God never intended.

Our first line of interpretation must be comparing scripture with scripture in the immediate context – the same verse or chapter. God’s usual method of doing this is by metaphor and simile.

Metaphor – Direct Comparison

4:1 – thou **hast** doves’ eyes

4:12 – A garden inclosed **is** my sister

Simile – Comparison using like or as

4:2 – Thy teeth are **like** a flock of sheep

4:3 – Thy lips are **like** a thread of scarlet

In the eight chapters that compose the book we are studying, the word “like” appears 23 times and the word “as” appears 39 times. The student would do well to always take careful note of these instances.

Unlike books such as Daniel and Revelation, the figurative language we find in Solomon’s song is rarely explained in the context. Thus comparing scripture with scripture beyond

the immediate context becomes important – usually we refer to this as cross-referencing. In Solomon’s song we will find hundreds of instances where other scriptures provide us with the proper interpretation of the passage at hand. We will not be making arbitrary guesses at cross-references, but rather looking for similar words, phrases, comparisons, people, and events.

When interpreting scripture, the student should also take note that there are three angles or perspectives to the interpretation of every verse of God’s word. These three perspectives are verifiable by looking at the context of each verse and the manner in which Old Testament verses are used and explained in the New Testament.

- 1) **The Historical Setting**
- 2) **The Doctrinal Interpretation**
- 3) **Spiritual Applications**

Every verse of scripture has but one historical setting. What were the time, place and circumstance where this passage of scripture was written, spoken or read? This is usually the easiest aspect to grasp for any given verse and virtually all passages have but one historical setting.

Every verse of scripture usually has only one, major doctrinal interpretation. What was God actually trying to say in this verse? If all scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, what is the doctrine or major teaching of this verse?

Every verse of scripture can have multiple spiritual applications. What does the verse mean to me? How can I apply this to my life? What am I supposed to do with this verse? Is there anything here that gives me reproof? Correction? Instruction in righteousness? How can this verse thoroughly furnish me unto some good work? What can I learn from this verse that will make me more like Jesus Christ?

A simple illustration of this principle can be seen in the shortest verse of scripture – “*Jesus wept.*” (John 11:35). **The historical setting** was the occasion of Lazarus’ recent death in Bethany; Jesus was standing outside of his tomb, beholding the people’s unbelief and tears, and he wept as well. The fact that Jesus was crying teaches us an important **doctrinal truth** – Jesus was a man! Although one might struggle to mine any deep doctrinal truths from two words, the verse clearly points us

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doctrinally to the humanity of Christ. ***Spiritual applications*** are numerous as we ask the question, “What does the verse mean to us?” Jesus cried and we can too. We should have compassion on the bereaved. Real men do cry. Tears show others that we care. And the list is endless! But this is not the doctrine of the passage – merely applications.

One of the more common errors in Christendom (both in pulpits and commentaries) is to go looking for spiritual applications before understanding a verse’s historical setting and doctrinal teaching. The result is a “what does this verse mean to me” mentality that tends to replace sound doctrine with human opinions.

In this volume we will make numerous spiritual applications – but we will always seek to establish the doctrinal teaching of the passage first where possible. Sound doctrine leads to correct practice and methods. Conversely, unsound doctrine will lead to bad practice and poor spiritual applications.

In the book of Song of Solomon we will note in general terms the following:

1) The Historical Setting of the Song of Solomon – A love poem between King Solomon and his favorite wife.

2) The Doctrinal Interpretation of the Song of Solomon – Not far into this book it becomes apparent that there are spiritual aspects of this relationship that are simply not possible between two, normal human beings. Although many doctrinal interpretations have been suggested over the years, the primary teaching of the book appears to center on the love between the Lord Jesus Christ and his wife, the Church. By the word “church” we do not mean all “churches” or denominations and we definitely do not mean all of Christendom. Rather, “the church” refers to all of those individuals from the resurrection of Christ to the Rapture who have entered into a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ via the new birth. In this sense, Solomon is a picture or type of Jesus Christ; his Gentile wife is a picture the New Testament church, which is the body of Jesus Christ. (Eph. 1:22-23)

3) The Spiritual Applications of the Song of Solomon – Although there are numberless spiritual applications to be found in Solomon’s song, two in particular will become more obvious than others:

a) The ideal relationship between a human husband and wife. God's plan for marriage on the physical, emotional and spiritual levels is spoken of in a myriad of ways. Christian couples alert to the Spirit's leading in their lives will gain much from the Song of Solomon that will strengthen and enrich their relationship.

b) The practicalities of our relationship with Jesus Christ. We have the tendency to minimize the practical realities of what a daily walk with a God who loves us, really means. Solomon's song will challenge us to have a deeper, more intimate relationship with Jesus Christ – something many believers are unaware of as a possibility or shy away from because of the excesses of the Charismatic Movement or “the deeper life” crowd. I firmly believe one reason why this book is so often neglected is because it leaves a niggling sense of conviction in many hearts that there is something we are completely missing in our so-called “personal relationship” with Jesus Christ.

The Author of the Song of Solomon

As previously mentioned, the divine Author of all scripture is the Holy Spirit of God. The human author, Solomon, was one of many “holy men of God” throughout the Old Testament who “spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” (II Peter 1:21).

The title and first verse of the book clearly ascribe this book, or more properly this “song,” to King Solomon.

“The song of songs, which is Solomon's.”

Solomon's name is mentioned seven times throughout the book – an interesting “coincidence” seeing that the number seven is connected with the perfection of Christ numerous times throughout the Bible. The first six times Solomon is mentioned in the third person, but the last reference in 8:12 is a direct address in the first person: “*thou, O Solomon....*”

Solomon was the third king of Israel and the last king of the united kingdom, as his son Rehoboam split the kingdom into the northern and southern states of Israel and Judah. Solomon reigned for forty years. (I Kings 11:42)

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Solomon is a paradox of monumental proportions in that he started life well and finished poorly. In his early years he was humble and submissive to the will of God. During these early days of his reign, God approached him with the offer of whatever he wished and Solomon asked for wisdom. His humility and obedience were rewarded with supernatural wisdom from God (I Kings 3:5-12). His enthusiasm and love for God were expressed in the massive undertaking of constructing the temple in Jerusalem. This stage of his life matches the Song of Solomon.

During his middle years, King Solomon had consolidated his kingdom and began to reach out around the world through trade. He began to gather many wives as well as an incredible fortune through his various business pursuits. His wisdom and fame began to draw great attention from other kingdoms, bringing the famous visit from the Queen of Sheba (I Kings 10) as well as others who sought out his wisdom and advice. This is the time of his life that roughly parallels his writing of the book of Proverbs.

In his later years, Solomon began to reap the fruit of his poor choices and his failure to keep his heart tender before God. As he amassed horses, wives and gold in disobedience to the direct command of God (Deut. 17:16-17), his wives began to influence him to disobey God through idolatry (I Kings 11:1-8). This of course drew him away from the Lord and brought the Lord's disfavor upon his reign. (I Kings 11:9-14) Solomon became despondent and bitter and this attitude can be seen in the book of Ecclesiastes which was written near the end of his life.

Solomon has a number of peculiarities that stand out among the characters of the word of God. Several of these should be noted as they are reflected in his song.

1) Solomon's dual typology – Solomon is the only character in scripture who clearly pictures in a single lifetime the typology of both the Lord Jesus Christ and the antichrist – a contrast of his early days with that of his later life. Ecclesiastes is where one will find Solomon demonstrating in typology the attitude and fruit of the antichrist. The Song of Solomon expresses the exact opposite set of sentiments! Just like Christ toward his church, Solomon expresses the incredible love and devotion he has for his wife.

2) The wisest man who ever lived – Scripture clearly attributes this superlative to Solomon as a result of God's

supernatural intervention in his life at Gibeon. I Kings 4:29-31 says,

*“And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore. And Solomon’s wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt. **For he was wiser than all men;** than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol: and his fame was in all nations round about.”*

This wisdom can be seen in almost every chapter of his song as Solomon shares with this Bride truths of which she is unaware. The parallel here to Christ should be obvious.

*“But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and **the wisdom** of God...But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God **is made unto us wisdom,** and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” (I Cor 1:24 & 30)*

*“...Christ; In whom are hid **all the treasures of wisdom** and knowledge.” (Col. 2:2-3)*

3) The man with 1000 wives – To be technical Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines. (I Kings 11:3) Whether this was actually the case when the Song of Solomon was written is unclear. Despite his marital status at the time, there is no doubt that the woman in the song was Solomon’s one, true love (Song 6:9). Whether Solomon’s marital ambitions were motivated by lust alone or extreme romanticism is likewise unknown, but he clearly was a man for taking note of details. He appreciated the beauty of his wife and the world about him and wrote about these details in deeply passionate, romantic terms. There is a HUGE emphasis in this book on these physical elements. Every chapter is bursting at the seams with two lovers giving specific descriptions of the smells, sounds and other physical attributes of each other and the world around them. Taken out of context, this would lead one to think that Solomon had a lust problem and was obsessed with the physical – but all of this emphasis on the physical is matched with vivid and

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descriptive accounts of feelings and emotions as well. In fact, as the believer reads the Song of Solomon he is not embarrassed by these descriptions as one would be with lewd comments made by some shady character with a lustful heart. Rather, there is a purity underlying this portion of holy scripture that easily convinces us that these descriptions are not only genuine and have been uttered with guileless motives, but that they are the pure words of God Almighty.

4) A scientific expert on the physical world – Solomon’s God-given wisdom extended to many scientific pursuits such as zoology, botany and physiology. I Kings 4:33 says of King Solomon,

“And he spoke of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spoke also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes.”

This love for God’s creation is reflected in an overwhelming number of references in Solomon’s song to the plants and animals of the natural world. There is a particularly strange emphasis in this book upon gardens – something that Solomon seems to be an expert on. (Eccl. 2:4-6) Not only is the word garden mentioned nine times in eight chapters, but there is much explanation and comparison made in these references. For a full log of the plants, animals, gems and minerals mentioned in this book, see Appendix C.

The Format of the Song of Solomon

The format of this book is that of a song. Many Bible students have been confused over the years by the old name for the Song of Solomon – “Canticles.” The Latin word “canto” means “to sing.” A canto in English is usually a poem or a division. A canticle is a song. A cantata is a musical production. The Latin Vulgate refers to this book as “Canticum Canticorum” which means “Song of Songs.” Therefore it is not uncommon to find the Song of Solomon through much of church history being referred to as “Canticles” or the “Canticle of Canticles.” Many a Bible student who has attempted to use the print version of

Strong's Concordance has been thrown for a loop when they have seen the abbreviation "Can" or "Cant."

Another variation of this name that may be encountered is "Asma" or "Aisma." The supposed Septuagint introduces the Greek term *aisma asmaton* which means "song of songs." Yet another variation is the name of this book in Luther's German Bible – *das Hohelied* or "high song."

According to I Kings 4:32, Solomon wrote 3000 proverbs and 1005 songs. At least three of his songs have been preserved for us: this book of the Song of Solomon along with Psalms 72 and 127.

There are many songs found throughout the Bible such as the Song of Moses (Deut. 32:44; Rev. 15:3), the Song of the Lamb (Rev. 15:3) and the whole book of Psalms which is a compilation of songs of praise. The Song of Solomon however is clearly identified for us by the Holy Spirit in Song 1:1 as "*THE song of songs.*" Hopefully the reader can see why it was not a difficult choice to choose this name as the title of the volume you are presently studying.

Just because the portion of scripture we are studying is a song, does not mean that it is flowery fluff. Many modern "Christian" songs may have gone this route, but the great hymns of the faith are known for their doctrine! A proper, Biblical song enables one to teach and admonish (Col. 3:16) the words of God to others. Many who approach the books of Job, Psalms, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes do so purely for their devotional benefit and miss entirely their deep doctrinal teachings. We will not be making the same error.

Not only is the format of this book a song, but it also is presented in dialogue format. Much like the script of a play, the characters in this song sing or converse back and forth to one another. One of the major exercises in studying Solomon's song is to keep track of who is doing the speaking. Appendix A has a concise breakdown of who is speaking in what passage. The paragraph breaks are moderately helpful in assisting us to identify speaker changes, but primarily the student will need to watch the pronouns. First person, second person, third person and gender changes will identify who is speaking and to whom they are speaking.

There are three major speaking parts in this song that are spoken or sung for us by the King, the Bride and the daughters of Jerusalem:

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1) **The King** – historically a reference to Solomon; doctrinally a reference to Jesus Christ.

2) **The Bride or wife** – historically a reference to Solomon's favorite wife that he identifies in 6:13 as "*the Shulamite*." Doctrinally we will identify this woman as the church of Jesus Christ – YOU if you are a born again believer in the Saviour!

3) **The Daughters of Jerusalem** – historically the women (probably unmarried) that resided in Jerusalem; doctrinal interpretations we will examine as these ladies speak their parts.

There are several other characters without speaking parts mentioned in this book. Each will be examined in more detail when they appear.

- 1) **The Virgins**
- 2) **The Queens**
- 3) **The Concubines**
- 4) **Valiant Men**
- 5) **The Watchmen**

For those interested in statistics and trivia, the book of the Song of Solomon was written in approximately 1014 BC. This book has 8 chapters, 117 verses and 2658 words.

Parallel Passage

One of the helpful features of the word of God is that many passages have a parallel passage or companion passage. These parallel passages occur when two or more scriptures complement one another in, often recording the same details or making the same observations. The most obvious example is probably the gospels where many of the parables, events and sermons in the life of Christ are repeated. Duos like Ephesians and Colossians or II Peter chapter two and the book of Jude or the Chronicles compared with the Kings and Samuels are often so similar in nature that the textual critics assume one is the original and the other merely a copy. Only the Bible believer recognizes

that the Holy Spirit provides complementary passages so that truth can be gained by comparing scripture with scripture.

The parallel passage to the book of the Song of Solomon is Psalm 45:6-17. This psalm describes the relationship between the King (clearly identified as Jesus Christ when comparing Psalm 45:6-7 with Hebrews 1:8-9) and his Bride. Comparisons between this psalm and Solomon's song will often be made throughout this study. The parallel passage says:

“Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad. Kings' daughters were among thy honourable women: upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir. Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him. And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall entreat thy favour. The king's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king's palace. Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth. I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations: therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever.”

(Psalm 45:6-17)

Objections to the Song of Solomon

There are several objections made to the inclusion of the Song of Solomon as a book of scripture. As a Bible believer who accepts God's word as my final authority, I have no problem with the Song or any of the other 65 books of scripture. God's evident hand of inspiration and preservation upon all his words is evident.

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Textual criticism is usually the domain of those who have little interest in obeying what God actually said, even if they could definitively determine what that is.

The first major objection to this book is that Solomon's song is never quoted in the New Testament. Although this may be technically true, the allusion throughout the New Testament to the relationship between Jesus and the Church being that of a Bridegroom to his Bride is well established. See Matt. 9:15; John 3:29; Eph. 5:25-29; Rev. 19:7-9; 21:2 & 9; 22:17. This objection also ignores that the Song of Solomon was an accepted part of the Hebrew scriptures that Jesus used and that he would have indirectly put his stamp of approval upon when he spoke of the Hebrew scriptures as authoritative and as being the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms (Luke 24:44). Jesus did not mention these three divisions of what we refer to as the Old Testament and then add an exclusion clause for the Song of Solomon. The same truth can be seen in Matthew 23:35 when he made his famous reference to all the blood that had been shed from Abel (Gen. 4) to Zacharias the son of Barachias (II Chron. 24) – an inclusive statement that in effect covered everything from Genesis to II Chronicles – the last book in the Hebrew canon. Jesus was essentially using an idiom that not only had the effect of saying “Everything from A to Z” (Abel to Zechariah), but that also had the effect of saying “Everything from cover to cover” with respect to the books of the Bible in the order they were used by the Jews in his day. Again, Jesus was showing indirect approval for the Song of Solomon.

Oddly enough, both this objection and the next are also true of the book of Esther to one extent or another. One must always remember however that the New Testament quotes the Old Testament books BECAUSE they are the authoritative word of God, not IN ORDER TO MAKE them authoritative! Scripture derives its authority from God, not from being quoted by another portion of scripture – or for that matter in the Koran, Book of Mormon, or any other “holy” work. Ironically the founder of Mormonism, Joseph Smith, taught that the Song of Solomon was not inspired scripture although the Mormons continue to include it when printing LDS Bibles.

The second major objection to the Song of Solomon is that it never mentions the name of God. One who has living within his heart the Lord Jesus Christ however can not fail to miss the many beautiful references to our Saviour typified by Solomon

throughout this book. Christian hymn writers, preachers and Bible readers know all too well that the Lord Jesus Christ is the *Rose of Sharon, the Lily of the Valleys, and My Beloved!*

As you begin to delve into the treasures of the Song of Solomon, I would challenge you to seek Jesus in every verse. Our Lord said, “*Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and **they are they which testify of me.***” (John 5:39) On the road to Emmaus, Jesus opened up the Old Testament to two of his disciples. Beginning with Moses and the prophets, he “*expounded unto them in **all the scriptures** the things concerning himself.*” (Luke 24:27)

Approach God’s word humbly, expectantly and along with the Psalmist in Psalm 119:18 ask God to, “*Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.*”

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Chapter One

1:1 – “*The song of songs*”

Songs have three major purposes according to scripture:

1) To praise God – This is well established throughout the word of God. The phrase “*sing praises*” appears fifteen times in the Bible and is both commanded as well as shown by example. The first “song” of scripture (Exod. 15:1) was in praise of God’s greatness and mighty acts.

2) To teach and admonish believers – Colossians 3:16 is rather straightforward when it commands us,

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”

This verse shows us that there are three types of godly music: **a) psalms** which are generally accepted to be scriptures put to musical tunes and sung; **b) hymns** which are songs that specifically praise and exalt God; and **c) spiritual songs** which are songs, with or without lyrics, that appeal to the spirit rather than to the flesh. This third category rules out much of the world’s music (because both its words and music are carnal rather than godly) and the entire contemporary Christian music (CCM) scene of praise and worship where the words may be godly, but the music still has a fleshly beat, inflections and intonations. Any song sung by a believer should be coming from his spirit (I Cor. 14:15), which is that part of us that communes with God. At the end of the day our music should reflect sound doctrine and convey

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“*the word of Christ*” in a manner that can teach (positive instruction) and admonish (warn) other believers.

3) To fix in the memory – Most people realize that music is an aid to retention. Words they never would otherwise have remembered can be fixed in the mind for decades when put to a catchy tune. In Deuteronomy 31-32, God commanded Moses to commit to paper a song that would serve as both a reminder to, and a witness against, his people about the dangers of disobeying and forgetting God.

1:1 – “*The song of songs*”

This phrase points to the excellency of this song over all others. This is true when comparing the Song of Solomon to other 1004 songs that Solomon wrote. At face value, this song must also supersede the other songs found in scripture that would include the:

- 1) Song of Moses & Israel after the Red Sea – Exo. 15
- 2) Song of Moses – Deut. 31-32 and Rev 15:3
- 3) Songs of Deborah (Jud. 5) and Hannah (I Sam. 2)
- 4) Entire book of Psalms
- 5) Song of God to Israel in Isa. 5
- 6) Songs in heaven praising God – Rev. 5, 14-15

The pre-eminence of this song over all others, particularly when compared to the songs of the angelic hosts praising God, is hard to rectify at first. How could a song between a King and his Bride possibly outweigh songs sung to God Almighty before the throne in heaven? The only way to answer this question is to look at the subject matter. If the Song of Solomon truly is a love song between Christ and his church, then the answer is apparent – what could possibly trump the love of Christ for his redeemed? This would be THE song of songs!

1:1 – “*The song of songs*”

Contrast this phrase with a similar phrase that illustrates the other extreme of Solomon’s life – the phrase “*vanity of vanities*” found in Ecclesiastes 1:2. Compare this with other

superlatives found in scripture such as “*King of kings*” and “*Lord of lords*” (Rev. 17:14) or “*God of gods.*” (Deut. 10:17) “*Holy of holies*” would be another example except for the fact that this exact phrase does not appear in scripture.

1:1 – “*which is Solomon’s*”

The textual critics may debate the authorship of the Song of Solomon, but not the Holy Spirit. God’s clear identification of Solomon as the author leaves no room for doubt...unless of course you reject the authority of scripture.

Solomon was uniquely loved by God and uniquely equipped to write this book that bears his name. This can be seen in:

1) His name – according to II Samuel 12:24-25, Solomon (Hebrew “Shelomoh” meaning “peace”) was called “Jedidiah” by the Lord. This Hebrew name means “beloved of the Lord.”

2) His wisdom – what more intricate, unfathomable topic could possibly be confronted by man than an infinite God who loves his creation? Solomon’s unique, supernaturally given wisdom was used to elaborate upon this deepest of all topics.

3) His promise – God did not merely call Solomon “beloved of the Lord” but demonstrated this by giving to his father David an unconditional promise concerning Solomon, his descendants and the throne of Israel – see II Samuel 7:12-15. This was not merely a promise of a physical dynasty regarding the throne of Israel, but a promise with eternal repercussions – the promise of an everlasting kingdom with the Messiah at the helm that all began with David’s son, Solomon.

4) His temple – of all the men in history, God chose Solomon to erect the first temple. The temple was a testimony to God’s glory and to his love for mankind by providing a place for atoning sacrifices. Understanding these truths in erecting the temple served Solomon well in writing a song that conveys the same truths – exalting a God who has unsearchable, infinite love for his blood bought Bride!

1:2-7 – **DIALOGUE** – *The Bride*

The Song of Songs

1:2 – “*Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine.*”

As seen often throughout the books of the Bible, the first verse or first several verses of any given book will usually set forth the theme of that book. The Song of Solomon follows this same pattern. The two phrases of this verse point us to the two major themes of the Song:

- 1) **The excellency of Christ’s love** – “*thy love is better than wine*” –
- 2) **The desire for intimacy with Christ** – “*Let him kiss me...*” –

We have set forth these two themes in a different order than the verse reads because of that little word “for.” The first statement depends upon the second. Thus the second phrase is the pinnacle or climax of the Song of Solomon – the pre-eminence and excellency of Christ’s love above all else.

Interestingly enough the Bride is the one who begins speaking in this book. Thus the book presents us with a framework where the Lord has already reached out to us; we respond by exalting him and seeking deeper fellowship with him.

1:2 – “*thy love is better than wine*” – **The First Theme**

Wine in the Bible is often a type or picture of joy and gladness. Psalm 104:15 notes that God has provided “...*wine that maketh glad the heart of man.*” Obviously God was not speaking of the product down at the local liquor shop. The fact that the majority of the references in scripture to wine are not referring to an alcoholic product is beyond the scope of this book. The point here however is that love can not be outdone or superseded. Love is the highest and greatest of human and divine emotions! Holiness may be God’s greatest attribute, but love is his greatest emotion.

Love is the reason given in John 3:16 for God redeeming mankind. Love is the reason given for why we should praise God according to Psalm 63:3. Naomi had pointed out to her that just one daughter-in-law that loved her was better than seven sons. (Ruth 4:15). Solomon pointed out the supremacy of love over