

Song of Songs

(aka Song of Solomon)

Authorship: Solomon (1:1). Though Solomon eventually had a thousand wives and concubines (see 1 Kings 11:3), he could have written Song of Songs early in his life, before his sinful polygamy. Some scholars have suggested that 1:1-3:5 describes the woman's true love, a peasant shepherd, while the rest of the book describes Solomon's using his kingly position to steal the woman away from the shepherd. Most recent scholarship, however, sees Solomon as the sole male protagonist throughout. Some have suggested he may have disguised himself as a shepherd to see whether the woman would love him without knowing his true kingly identity. Of the 1,005 songs Solomon composed (see 1 Kings 4:32), this was his "song of Songs" (1:1), his very best.

Date and Location: About 950 B.C., in Jerusalem

Background: The Song of Songs, also called the Song of Solomon, is a collection of love poems between a husband and wife, with occasional sections attributed to friends or relatives who shared in the couple's happiness. The personal pronouns in the original text suggest the identities of the various speakers, and though they occasionally differ, several modern English translations provide subheads in an effort to identify those speakers. The poems describe the couple's courtship and marriage, though it is not entirely clear at what point the marriage took place. In explicit but tasteful and beautiful imagery, Song of Songs celebrates both the emotional and physical aspects of marriage.

Purpose: (1) The review: Song of Songs demonstrates the love that should exist between a husband and wife; (2) The preview: Christians through the ages have seen the book as an illustration of Christ's love for His bride, the church.

Unique Features:

- ↳ Song of Songs is unique among Bible books for its intimate look at sexual love;
- ↳ It is one of the only two Bible books that do not mention the name of God (the other is Esther).

Outline:

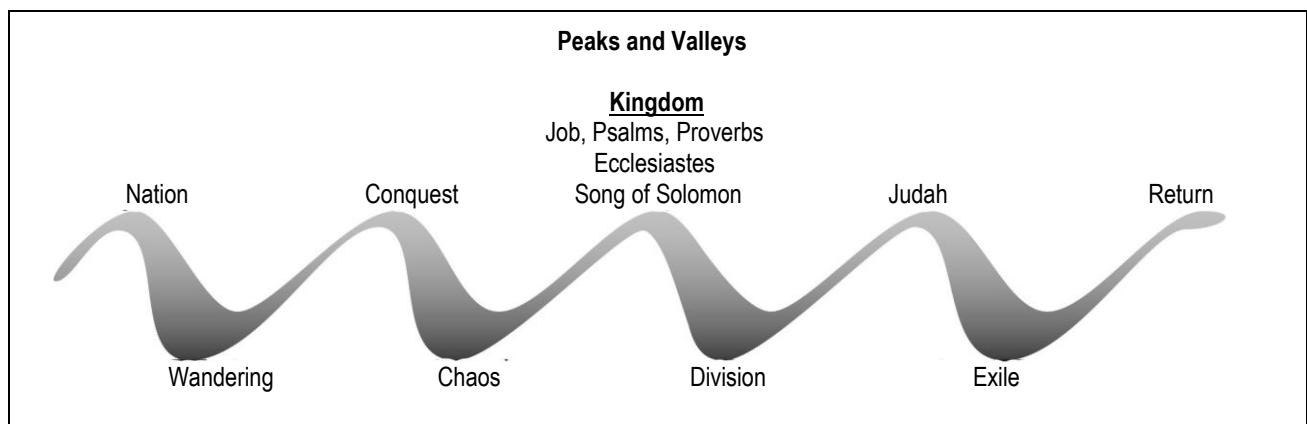
I. Act One: Serenated by a Shepherd (1:1-3:5)

II. Act Two: Married to a Monarch (3:6-8:4)

III. Conclusion: The Wonder of Wedded Love (8:5-14)

Key Verse

"I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine;
he grazes among the lilies" (Song of Songs 6:3 ESV).



Sources:

Journeying with God: A Survey of the Old Testament, Purposeful Design Publications.
Wilmington, Harold L. *Wilmington's Bible Handbook*, Wheaton, Ill: Tyndale, 1997.