

11-2017

Article 22: Song of Solomon at a Glance

Harold Willmington

Liberty University, hwillmington@liberty.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/owners_manual



Part of the [Biblical Studies Commons](#), [Christianity Commons](#), [Practical Theology Commons](#), and the [Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Willmington, Harold, "Article 22: Song of Solomon at a Glance" (2017). *The Owner's Manual File*. 24.
https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/owners_manual/24

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Theological Studies at Scholars Crossing. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Owner's Manual File by an authorized administrator of Scholars Crossing. For more information, please contact scholarlycommunications@liberty.edu.

SONG OF SOLOMON AT A GLANCE

This book describes in personal and vivid detail the depths and sheer delights of that love between a bridegroom and his bride. In no other biblical book do we find the intimacy and intensity of love's language as employed here.

BOTTOM LINE INTRODUCTION

HOW DO I LOVE THEE? LET ME COUNT THE WAYS.

This book is the most intimate one in the entire Bible. Of the 1,005 songs composed by Solomon (1 Kings 4:32) this was his "song of songs" (1:1). Jewish tradition says that Solomon wrote the song in his youth, the book of Proverbs in his middle years, and Ecclesiastes during his final years.

As with the book of Esther, the name of God does not appear in the Song of Solomon. The Song is the only biblical book that includes a chorus, somewhat similar to the style used by the ancient Greek dramas at a later date.

As in all other biblical writings, there is only one correct interpretation, with several possible applications. Most would interpret this as the literal account of the wooing and winning of a peasant girl by King Solomon. However, the applications are several.

- A. It serves to show God's love for Israel.
"And because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and brought thee out in his sight with his mighty power out of Egypt"
(Deut. 4:37).
- B. It provides a model for that quality of love God desires to see between a man and his wife.
"Husbands, love your wives ..."(Eph. 5:25a).
"So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself"(Eph. 5:28).
- C. It illustrates Christ's love for the church.
"Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end"(Jn. 13:1).
"Even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it"(Eph. 5:25b).

FACTS REGARDING THE AUTHOR OF THIS BOOK

1. Who? **Solomon**. He was the son of David and Bathsheba (2 Sam. 12:24), Israel's third king (1 Kings 1:39), and the world's wisest man (1 Kings 3:5-12).

2. What? The books of Proverbs 1-29; Psalms 72, 127, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes.
3. When and where? 935 B.C., from Jerusalem.
4. Why?
 - a. Prov. 1-29. To contrast man's foolishness with God's wisdom and to instruct believers concerning this wisdom.
 - b. Psalms 72, 127. The glories of Messiah's kingdom (72) and the importance of proper foundations (127).
 - c. Song of Solomon**
 - (1) Historical: Solomon's love for his bride.
 - (2) Typical: God's love for Israel, Christ's love for the church, and the love that should exist between a man and his wife.
 - d. Ecclesiastes. The futility of human existence apart from God.
5. To whom? To "my son" (Prov. 1:8, 10, 15, etc.). This was Rehoboam who apparently refused most of the wisdom offered by his famous father – see 1 Kings 12:1-16.

KEY EVENTS

1. The language and actions of love.

KEY INDIVIDUALS

1. Solomon: Israel's wisest king, who disguised himself as a lowly shepherd and won the heart of a girl who worked among the vineyards
2. Shulamite girl: young maiden who responded to his love and married Solomon

UNIQUE FEATURES

1. Song of Songs is unique among Bible books for its intimate look at sexual love.
2. In explicit but tasteful and beautiful imagery, Song of Songs celebrates both the emotional and physical aspects of marriage.
3. Joseph C. Gillow writes the following regarding the Song of Solomon:
 "Amid the current deluge of marriage manuals and sensational guides to liberated lovemaking, one small, beautiful book deserves all the attention the others are clamoring for, but it lies misunderstood and largely neglected. Few people realize the One who created us male and female also provided us with specific instructions as to how we best respond as men and women.

"Solomon's writing takes the form of a lyric idyll, a kind of love song. In a lyric idyll, speeches and events don't necessarily follow in chronological order. It's like a movie with several flashbacks; the story remains temporarily suspended while the audience views a scene from the past. This explains the lack of chronological sequence in the song.

"Another feature of lyric idylls is the chorus. This is an imaginary group that interrupts certain scenes to make brief speeches or to give warnings. The writer uses the chorus

as a literary device to make transitions from one scene to another or to emphasize a point.

"The book is a series of fifteen reflections of a married woman, Solomon's queen, as she looks back at the events leading to the marriage, the wedding night, and their early years together. These 'reflections' are expressed in fifteen short love songs." (*Solomon on Sex*. Nelson Publisher, pp. 7, 8)

4. The Song of Solomon is one of only two Bible books that do not mention the name of God. The other is the book of Esther.

COMPARISON WITH OTHER BIBLE BOOKS

Proverbs:

- Both use water metaphors to describe women (4:15; Prov. 5:15-18)
- Both use the gazelle or doe as an illustration of gracefulness (2:7, 9, 17; Prov. 5:19)
- Money can buy neither love (8:7) nor wisdom (Prov. 3:13-15; 8:10-11)
- The voice of love in Song of Songs is similar to the voice of the prophetess (Dame Wisdom) in Prov. 8:1-9:12. Both voices draw people in powerful ways.

Ecclesiastes:

- While Ecclesiastes describes Solomon's vain search for happiness, Song of Songs tells of at least one time, perhaps early in his kingship, when he did find it.

TITLES FOR AND TYPES OF JESUS

1. The future return of the Bridegroom to fetch His Bride (3:6-11)
2. The Greatest Among 10,000 (5:10)
3. The Fair as the Moon, Bright as the Sun, and Majestic as the Stars (6:10)