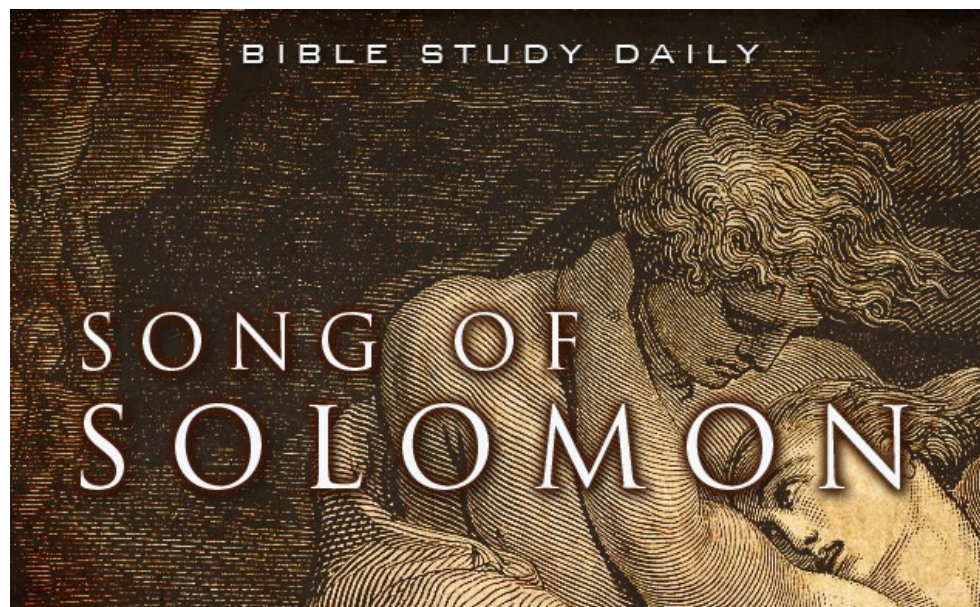




BIBLE STUDY DAILY



This document contains the introduction to the book of the Song of Solomon as well as my study notes for the book.

Name

The book is commonly referred to as either “Song of Solomon” or in some translations “Song of Songs.” The title Song of Songs is a translation of the original Hebrew title shiyr hashiyrim. The title Song of Solomon was adopted later in recognition of Solomon as the author.

Author

Solomon is the generally accepted author of the Song of Solomon. The author identifies himself as Solomon in 1:1. The book refers to Solomon by name six times (1:5; 3:7, 9, 11; 8:11-12), and as king five times (1:4, 12; 3:9, 11; 7:5).

Genre

Poetry

Literary Form

Song

Time Frame

Most scholars agree Song of Solomon was written between 971 B.C. and 931 B.C.

Emphasis


The Song of Solomon is most often interpreted as an allegory (a story or poem that can be interpreted to reveal a “hidden” meaning). The emphasis of the book depends on how one interprets the text. Jews interpreted the book as an allegory expressing God’s love for Israel. The early church fathers interpreted the book as an allegory expressing Christ’s love for the church. With either allegorical interpretation the central theme of the book is an expression of the joy of romantic love.

Outline

- The Courtship (1:2-3:5)
- The Wedding (3:6-5:1)
- The Marriage (4:1-16)
- The Marriage Matures (5:2-8:4)
- The Power of Love (8:5-7)
- Epilogue (8:8-14)

Structure

Because Song of Solomon is written as a poem it has some unique structural elements that are worth noting. First, it follows what is known as



a chiasitic structure common to Hebrew poetry:

A (1:2-2:7)

B (2:6-17)

C (3:1-5)

D (3:6-5:1)

C1 (5:2-7:9)

B1 (7:10 – 8:4)

A1 (8:3-8:14)

A and A1, B and B1, and C and C1 mirror each other, and D is the central or main point of the poem.

Second, the construction of the poem itself reflects great artistry: there are seven main sections of the book, seven praises (4:1-5), two sets of ten praises (5:10-16, and 7:1-5), and ten uses of a word that conveys love (2:4,5,7; 3:5; 5:8; 7:6; 8:4,6,7).

What I Noticed Today (Song of Solomon 1-8)

The three main sections of Song of Solomon are the courtship leading up to the wedding (1:2-3:5), the wedding (3:6-5:1), and the marriage maturing (5:2-8:4).

My notes for the book follow the chiasmic structure of the song (see the Introduction to Song of Solomon for more information on the structure).

Section A (1:2-2:7)

In verses 1:2-1:7 the bride confesses her love for the king after being brought into his chambers.

In verses 1:8-2:7 Solomon and his bride express their love for one another.

Section B (2:6-2:17)

In verses 2:6-2:17 the bride describes the many ways she adores her beloved

Section C (3:1-3:5)

In verses 3:1-3:5 the bride describes her dream in which she is awakened, leaves home to find her beloved, is found by guards, she asks for help, she finds her beloved, returns home with him, and is reunited with him through the night.

Section D (3:6-5:1)

In verses 3:6-3:11 the narrator describes Solomon arriving for the wedding.

In verses 4:1-5:1 Solomon describes his bride's beauty in detail using a number of metaphors (she is like....).

Section C1 (5:2-7:9)

In verses 5:2-5:9 the bride describes another dream in which she is asleep but her heart is awake as she searches for her beloved.

In verses 5:10-6:1 the bride, now awake, offers 10 praises of her husband.

In verses 6:2-3 the bride describes being aware of her beloved's presence in the garden.

In verses 6:4-7:10 Solomon describes how he and his bride delight in each other.

Section B1 (7:10-8:4)

In verses 7:10-7:13 the bride invites her beloved into the garden (vineyard) to



give herself to him.

In verses 8:1-8:4 the bride describes her great longing for her beloved.

Section A1 (8:3-8:14)

In verses 8:3-8:7 the bride describes her devotion and love for her husband.

In verses 8:8-8:14 others describe the bride's beauty and character, and the bride and her beloved describe the fruit of their vineyard and their desire to be together.

Song of Solomon describes in such beautiful language the love between the bride and her beloved. There is anticipation as the story of their courtship begins, the tension mounts as they separate the night before the wedding. Then comes the wedding ceremony itself and the consummation of their love on the wedding night, and finally, a description of how their love grows and comes to maturity.

Note: This creates in my mind a wonderful picture of God's love for His people Israel, but it also a picture of Jesus's relationship with the church! So as far as the scholars go who argue the allegory is one or the other, honestly, I can see both portrayals clearly demonstrated in the Song of Solomon!