

## Introductions for Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon

Student: Doug Hamilton

### Author and Date:

#### Some say Solomon did not write it.

The authorship would seem obvious from the first verse of the book "*The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's.*" Yet, the International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia calls this into question by stating,

"...this superscription was prefixed by an editor of Canticles and not by the original writer is evident from the fact that the relative pronoun employed in the title is different from that employed throughout the poem." (from International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database Copyright (C) 1996 by BibleSoft)

A couple of other "scholars" also come to a similar dismissive conclusion. Sadly, they really do not propose a credible author in place of Solomon, so the point is in vain. Don't you hate it when "scholars" take the simplest phrase and confuse it for the simple folk?

Most of the sources point to Solomonic authorship, such as Ungers, Nelsons, Zondervans and Wycliffe. They do call into question the same point as ISBE, but counter it with facts that back up Solomon as the author. For instance, the book mentions Solomon numerous times and not just the opening verse.

- Song 1:5 "...like the curtains of Solomon."
- Song 3:7 "Behold, it is the {traveling} couch of Solomon..."
- Song 3:9 "King Solomon has made for himself a sedan chair from the timber of Lebanon."
- Song 8:11 "Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon..."
- Song 8:12 "...the thousand {shekels} are for you, Solomon..."

If Solomon was not involved in the writing of the book, then whoever did write it certainly wanted us to believe that it was. Nobody else is mentioned throughout the book with the same consistency and in the same person.

Another thought is from IKing 4:32 "*He (Solomon) also spoke 3,000 proverbs, and his songs were 1,005.*" We have many of this man's great proverbs called the Book of Proverbs, but what about these 1,005 songs? Is it not reasonable to assume that this might be some of those songs that Solomon authored? I know of no other writings other than Ecclesiastes, which clearly do not qualify.

Yet another point of Solomonic authorship would be in the mentioning of Tirzah and Jerusalem in 6:4 concerning the bride "*You are as beautiful as Tirzah, my darling, as lovely as Jerusalem, as awesome as an army with banners.*" It seems that the writer would have personally known of the beauty of Tirzah and Jerusalem to use them as adjectives. We know that during Solomon's reign, Israel was still one nation. A traveler could freely visit both of these cities. However, the country was divided during Rehoboam, the son of Solomon. No longer was easy to know the beauty of both cities. IKing 16:23-24 states "*In the thirty-first year of Asa king of Judah, Omri became king over Israel, {and reigned} twelve years; he reigned six years at Tirzah. And he bought the hill Samaria from Shemer for two talents of silver; and he built on the hill, and named the city which he built Samaria, after the name of Shemer, the owner of the hill.*" From there the city of Tirzah drifted into obscurity and no longer existed after the exile of Israel to Assyria. This most certainly rules out someone not from the days of Solomon.

Still another point of interest is brought forth in Song 6:8 "*There are sixty queens and eighty concubines, and maidens without number;*" There were not many kings who could boast of such a fact. Solomon according to IKing 11:3 "*had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines*" If it was Solomon that wrote

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the song, then this would put it somewhere early in his reign, about 965 BC, which consequently lines up with the majority of the internal evidence.

In conclusion concerning the authorship and date of writing, it seems safe to hold to the traditional view of the Solomonic authorship and during the middle of his reign. Though more internal evidence could have been mentioned, it is not necessary to go further on that point.

### The Audience of the Book:

Who is the audience for this song? It is difficult to know depending on the proposed purpose of the writing.

- If one takes the position the song was written to show a royal, blissful relationship of marriage in the tenth century BC, then the audience would be those who would appreciate it...the married Jews.
- If it is the same minus the time restriction, then all couples of all time are the recipients.
- If the position were to show God's desired relationship for the nation of Israel, then it would be all Jews of the day.
- If the position were to show God's relationship to the church, then it would be Christians. If it is a combination of both, then anyone with ears and eyes would be the recipients, which the writer agrees.
- Since there are examples of both male and female speaking, to focus it to a particular gender would be erroneous.

Note: Some have proposed that the words seem to be slanting toward a complete male authorship because of the "fantasy" male portrayal of the bride. This does not hold up to scrutiny because women also find it appealing.

### Contribution to Christianity:

This is probably one of the most neglected books in all of scripture. Ask yourself when was the last time you heard a lesson or series of lessons from this text? If you are like most Christians, you have never had a lesson on this. Perhaps this is because it makes us uncomfortable to say some of these words in public. Years ago in a small country congregation, I announced to the church family that I was going to be having some sermons on the Song of Solomon. An old woman sitting toward the front placed her hand on her mouth while gasping out loud. I asked the group if it was okay to preach from the entire Bible or just the books that we want. Naturally they found it okay to cover Song of Solomon in the confines of the worship assembly and we continued

In fact, in my observation, the Song of Solomon teaches more detail on the relationship of marriage than any other book in the Bible. There are four areas that we will focus on from the book over the next two lessons.

### 1) Marriage is a physical relationship

Where would marriage be without the physical aspects of the covenant? It is generally the physical side of the relationship that first attracted us to our spouse. The odds are that there was something physically attractive about your spouse early in your connection that sent the message to your brain to press on with the relationship. There was that sparkle in their eye, that flowing hair, that strong chin or that pretty face. There was the physical moment of the first time you held hands, the first hug and the first kiss. The marital relationship definitely has a physical aspect to it. The Song of Solomon clearly captures this perspective of marriage.

### The Kiss

- Song 1:2 "May he kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! For your love is better than wine.
- Song 4:3 "Your lips are like a scarlet thread, and your mouth is lovely..."
- Song 7:9 And your mouth like the best wine!..."

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- Song 8:1 "...I found you outdoors, I would kiss you..."
- There was a young child who for the first time witnessed his mother and father kissing on the lips. The little boy told them that it wasn't right to do this because they were married. Don't be fooled, husbands and wives are privileged to have a wonderful physical side to the relationship.

### The Embrace

- Song 2:6 "{Let} his left hand be under my head and his right hand embrace me."
- There is a saying about hugs that seems to carry some merit, "Four Hugs a Day". Some experts say that a person who receives four hugs throughout a day is happier and less stressed. I find that to be true. Do not underestimate the power of hugging in your marriage.

### The Courting

- Song 2:9-10 "My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag. Behold, he is standing behind our wall, He is looking through the windows, He is peering through the lattice. "My beloved responded and said to me, 'Arise, my darling, my beautiful one, and come along.
- Do you remember all the recreational companionship you had early on in your marriage? This is important even today. Do you remember all those times you held hands and went for a walk? Those things are not gone because your marriage is old. Do them today to have a strong marriage.

### The Racing Heart

- Song 4:9 "You have made my heart beat faster, my sister, {my} bride; you have made my heart beat faster with a single {glance} of your eyes, with a single strand of your necklace.
- Do you remember all the times that you were excited to see your spouse? I remember the first time I kissed Jana and she was all happy inside. I can tell that her heart was fluttering. That is something that we can have throughout our marriage if we work at it.

### The Romance

- Song 5:2-4 "I was asleep, but my heart was awake. A voice! My beloved was knocking: 'Open to me, my sister, my darling, My dove, my perfect one! For my head is drenched with dew, My locks with the damp of the night.' 3 "I have taken off my dress, how can I put it on {again?} I have washed my feet, how can I dirty them {again?} 4 "My beloved extended his hand through the opening, and my feelings were aroused for him.
- There are some physical things that might be done before marriage and many items of romance that must wait until the covenant is entered into. That is what makes marriage special, or it contains certain privileges. Those privileges are to be for the life of the marriage and part of the life of the marriage. Solomon reminds us of this.
- *1 Cor 7:5 Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again lest Satan tempt you because of your lack of self-control.*
- Take a lesson from Solomon and do not neglect the physical side of your marital relationship.

## 2) Marriage is an emotional relationship

There is not only a physical side to the matrimonial covenant, but an emotional as well. The emotional side of the relationship is developed through the exchange of one's feelings toward the other. The Song of Solomon is quite clear in this category concerning the exchange of feeling toward one another. Listen to the words of Solomon as he describes to his bride his feeling for her.

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- *4:1-5 "How beautiful you are, my darling, how beautiful you are! Your eyes are {like} doves behind your veil; your hair is like a flock of goats That have descended from Mount Gilead. 2 "Your teeth are like a flock of {newly} shorn ewes Which have come up from {their} washing, all of which bear twins, and not one among them has lost her young. 3 "Your lips are like a scarlet thread, and your mouth is lovely. Your temples are like a slice of a pomegranate behind your veil. 4 "Your neck is like the tower of David built with rows of stones, On which are hung a thousand shields, all the round shields of the mighty men. 5 "Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle, which feed among the lilies."*
- This description may sound silly, but in the 10th century BC, these words were a deep expression of love. This is an area the Song of Solomon seems to nail down better than any other book in the Bible, the emotional relationship in marriage. It is very important in the marriage to be able to express your feelings for the other person. Time and time again, we will find the bride or Solomon catering to one another's feelings.
- *Song 7:4-5 "How beautiful are your feet in sandals, O prince's daughter! The curves of your hips are like jewels, the work of the hands of an artist. 2 "Your navel is {like} a round goblet which never lacks mixed wine; your belly is like a heap of wheat fenced about with lilies. 3 "Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle. 4 "Your neck is like a tower of ivory, your eyes {like} the pools in Heshbon by the gate of Bath-rabbim; your nose is like the tower of Lebanon, which faces toward Damascus. 5 "Your head crowns you like Carmel, and the flowing locks of your head are like purple threads; {the} king is captivated by {your} tresses.*
- There would not have been a woman in the tenth century BC that would not have loved to hear these sweet words ministering to her emotions like Solomon did so many times in the Song. She would have to feel emotionally attached to her man after this vernacular arrangement.
- One of the leading causes of divorce in this country is a lack of communication in the marriage. How many marriages would have been saved if the husband and wife would have only taken the time to let each other know of their deep feeling toward each other? What if we were inventive in our approach to each other in describing our love for them? What if we made it a point to cater to the emotional needs of our spouse, would marriage be better? "Your hair is like a lava lamp methodically flowing its ooze up and down the bottle. Your teeth are like the keys of the keyboard, white and straight. Your neck is like a Craftsman wrench, smooth, long and strong." Your feet are lovely like two jack stands holding up a Ford Explorer! I think we get the point. We need to be expressing how we feel to our spouse.
- There was a time in my marriage where I used to write poetry for my wife. She was always thrilled to receive on because it was an expression of how I felt about her. She sometimes writes me encouraging card to me, expressing how much she loves me. We must take the time to let our spouse know how we feel because marriage has a certain emotional perspective and Solomon confirms it in his Song.
- In closing part one of the lesson, listen to the perspective of the bride toward Solomon in *Song 2:1-2 "I am the rose of Sharon, the lily of the valleys." "Like a lily among the thorns, so is my darling among the maidens."* She is well-adjusted emotionally, just like the church is to be in relation to the Groom, which is Christ. We have a song in the church that is written from this verse. And this thought.

### Jesus, Rose of Sharon

Jesus, Rose of Sharon, bloom within my heart;  
Beauties of Thy truth and holiness impart,  
That where'er I go my life may shed abroad  
Fragrance of the knowledge of the love of God.

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Jesus, Rose of Sharon, sweeter far to see  
Than the fairest flow'rs of earth could ever be,  
Fill my life completely adding more each day  
Of Thy grace divine and purity, I pray.

Jesus, Rose of Sharon, balm for every ill,  
May Thy tender mercy's healing pow'r dis-til  
For afflicted souls of weary, burdened men,  
Giving needy mortals health and hope again.

Jesus, Rose of Sharon, for evermore;  
Be Thy glory seen on earth from shore to shore,  
Till the nations own Thy sov'reignty complete,  
Lay their honors down and worship at Thy feet.

### 3) It is a spiritual relationship

“By all means marry; if you get a good wife, you'll become happy. If you get a bad one, you'll become a philosopher.” --Socrates

- God stated in *Gen 2:18* *"It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him."* Instead of immediately creating the woman for Adam, the Lord caused all the animals to come to him and in *Gen 2:20* *"And the man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him."* It was perhaps at this time while naming the paired animals that Adam realized there was nobody from his species that he had to be the “helpmeet” or completer. Adam went to sleep knowing there was not a suitable candidate for him. Is it any wonder that when he wakes up from the “ribectomy” that he says in *Gen 2:23* *"This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of Man."* Adam had learned a deep, spiritual appreciation for this beautiful woman standing before him. She was there to complete him and vice-versa.
- This happens to be the same verse quoted by Paul in *Eph 5:28-32* to describe the spiritual relationship of the church to Christ. *"So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; 29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also {does} the church, 30 because we are members of His body. 31 For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh. 32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church."*
- The Song of Solomon takes the spiritual relationship between husband and wife, and consistently uses language that parallels the spiritualaity of Christ and His church. No book in the Bible communicates matrimonial spiritual values better than the Song of Solomon. Every chapter of the song exposes parallel spiritual values of the passion of Jesus for the church.

### Purity

Song 1:3 "...Therefore do the virgins love thee."

Rev 14:4 "...for they are virgins. These (are) they that follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth."

### Communion

Song 2:13 "...Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away."

Rev 19:7 "...for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready."

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Commitment

Song 3:4 "...I held him, and would not let him go..."

Heb 13:5 "...I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you"

Presentation

Song 4:7 "You are altogether beautiful, my darling, and there is no blemish in you."

Eph 5:27 "a glorious church...that it should be holy and without blemish."

Friendship

Song 5:16 "And he is wholly desirable. This is my beloved and this is my friend..."

John 15:13 "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends."

Leadership

Song 6:3 "...He who pastures {his flock} among the lilies."

John 10:16 "...and they shall become one flock {with} one shepherd."

Admiration

Song 7:6 "How beautiful and how delightful you are, {My} love, with {all} your charms!"

Rev 21:2 "...made ready as a bride adorned for her husband."

Attentiveness

Song 8:13 "{My} companions are listening for your voice-- let me hear it!"

John 10:27 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me"

If you want to know how spiritual Christ is in relation to His bride, the church, then incorporate these spiritual values in your marriage and watch it become obvious. Read the song, pattern after the song and appreciate the spirituality.

4) It is a life-long relationship

There are many different relationships that we will engage in our lifetimes.

- There is the teacher/student relationship
- The parent/child relationship
- The employer/employee relationship

Out of all the relationships we will have down here on earth, the relationship between husband and wife is to be the most enduring. The Song of Solomon re-enforces this belief.

It is a relationship that publicly is demonstrated to all without shame or regret.

Song 2:4 "He has brought me to {his} banquet hall, and his banner over me is love.

It is a relationship that is worthy to bring home for mom to see

Song 3:4 "Scarcely had I left them when I found him whom my soul loves; I held on to him and would not let him go, until I had brought him to my mother's house, and into the room of her who conceived me."

It is a relationship that is worthy of the very best protection available.

Song 3:7-8 "Behold, it is the {traveling} couch of Solomon; sixty mighty men around it, of the mighty men of Israel. All of them are wielders of the sword, Expert in war; each man has his sword at his side, {guarding} against the terrors of the night."

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Three times Solomon labels his bride with the endearing phrase “my sister”

- Song 4:10 "How beautiful is your love, my sister, {my} bride!..."
- Song 4:12 "A garden locked is my sister, {my} bride, a rock garden locked, a spring sealed up."
- Song 5:1 "I have come into my garden, my sister, {my} bride..."
- This communicates camaraderie of an enduring “help meet”(Gen 2:18) sent from God to help on the way to heaven. It is a relationship where both are each others. *Song 6:3 "I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine, He who pastures {his flock} among the lilies."*
- We will have many friends in this life that will come and go, but our marriage should be a life-long relationship. *Song 6:8-9 "There are sixty queens and eighty concubines, and maidens without number; 9 {But} my dove, my perfect one, is unique: she is her mother's only {daughter;} she is the pure {child} of the one who bore her."*
- It is a relationship that is until “death do us part” *Song 8:6 "Put me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm. For love is as strong as death..."*

There is nothing that you find in the Song of Solomon to communicate a temporary relationship between the king and his wife. They are committed for the rest of their life in this bond of holy matrimony. We would do well to heed this message today in a society that has made marriages disposable and shacking-up the standard.

### Closing Story

I once was at a hospital room sitting with a deathly ill woman. She was having trouble sleeping so I asked if she wanted me to read some Bible to help her get to sleep. She whispered “yes”. When I asked her what she wanted me to read, she responded, “The Song of Solomon”. I asked her if there was anything else she wanted me to read. She was persistent and I gave in. For the next 25 minutes, I read to her from the Song of Solomon. Imagine for just a moment being one of the nurses of this hospital, walking the halls at 9:30 at night and hearing a young man saying to an old woman *Song 7:1-3 "How beautiful are your feet in sandals, O prince's daughter! The curves of your hips are like jewels, the work of the hands of an artist. 2 "Your navel is {like} a round goblet which never lacks mixed wine; your belly is like a heap of wheat fenced about with lilies. 3 "Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle."*

I noticed that the sound of footsteps that so commonly filled the air in this hospital had stopped. There was a small gathering of nurses and aids that had gathered outside the room, probably thinking that I was the sickest idiot on the planet. Seeing their shadows and hearing their snickering, I immediately spoke in a loud and clear voice, “Song of Solomon, chapter 7 verse 4.” Their curiosity was officially over and they went back to work. I was very embarrassed, but finished the book.

I could not understand why she wanted me to read the Song of Solomon. Philippians I could see and even Romans, but the Song of Solomon? I finally figured it out when I spoke with her daughter a few days later. Her daughter said years prior that her father left the mother for another woman. She entered the marriage with the idea of being in it for life, for that is what she was taught growing up in the church. After twenty-five years of a marriage that included verbal and emotional abuse, the husband came home and said he wanted a divorce. She was extremely upset and even had to be treated for depression. She would often find herself reading the Song of Solomon to envision the marriage that she always wanted to have, but did not. She was married for life, but it takes two to make it work. Years later on her deathbed, she simply wanted to be reminded of the serious relationship God desired her to have and that Christ had with the church.

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What would happen if couples would adopt the Song of Solomon standards of commitment? I am persuaded that marriages would be strong and long. The husband/wife relationship is the most serious of all human relationships and the Song of Solomon communicates this very fact.

What is the contribution of the Song of Solomon to the church? It teaches that marriage is a physical, emotional, spiritual and life-long commitment, four lessons people desperately need to apply in the church today. The Song of Solomon gives us a deep look at Jesus our Savior through the eyes of a marriage.