



Walking Thru The Bible

ECCLESIASTES

SONG OF SOLOMON

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I. Author. 1:1 Solomon appears to be the author of the book. He was the most famous and powerful man in the world in his day. His wisdom and literary attainments were unequalled by any other.

II. Key Word. "Vanity" occurs some 37 times, and the phrase "under the sun" some 28 times and refers to worldly life and wisdom.

III. Theme. The theme of Ecclesiastes is that all earthly life is vanity (empty, futile). The experiences of Solomon prove this. This book is a dramatic autobiography of his experiences and reflections as he searched for satisfaction in life.

Solomon could not find happiness and meaning in a worldly sensuous life. Solomon saw earthly life at its best, yet his soul was never satisfied. Solomon tried to find satisfaction in the wisdom of science (1:4-11) and turning to a materialistic philosophy (1:12-18) but it was all empty. He turned to the pleasures of building (2:4), gardening (2:5), cattle breeding (2:7), art collecting and music (2:8). He sought satisfaction in fatalism (3:1-15) and in the stoic's philosophy (ch 4), ritualism and ceremony (ch 5) but these were all in vain. He tired wealth (ch 6), and the enjoyment of a reputation (ch 7) but he found all these vain and futile.

There is no hope found in anything this world offers. It is only in the hope of immortality which God gives us that we have real hope (ASV 3:11 the word "eternity" is considered a better translation than the term "world.") Solomon's soul was never satisfied though he had everything this world could offer one. Full satisfaction can only be found in what God has for man. We are blessed because Christ has brought life and immortality to light (2 Tim. 1:10).

Careful Study Someone selecting a few verses from this book without understanding the whole could be left with a wrong impression. One must read the whole book and get Solomon's grand conclusion in the last chapter to understand the message of Ecclesiastes.

Solomon's conclusion is that life without God is full of weariness and disappointment. The turning point in the book is Eccl. 8:12 "Yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God." The full meaning of the book is found in the last chapter-- "Fear God and keep his commandments for this is the whole duty of man." (12:13).

SONG OF SOLOMON

I. Title and Author. This little book of eight chapters has been title many ways. The Hebrew title is "the Song of Songs," which means the most superlative song or as we would say, "the Best of Songs." Verse 1 asserts that Solomon wrote this song among the 1005 which we wrote (I Kings 4:32).

II. The Content of the Song. The son is a poetic representation of the sentiment of lovers, some of it quite frank in intimate admiration and desire for each other. It is plain from the spacing in the Hebrew and the change of person, number and gender of the personal pronouns and verb endings that the speakers shift from male to female and from the single male and female to a plurality of women termed in the text the "daughters of Jerusalem." But there is no scene description or stage or drama directions.

The traditional view is that there are two lovers, Solomon and a woman of Shulam, a town seemingly in northern Palestine, and a chorus of women from Jerusalem (either court attendants or the royal harem).

III. Interpretation. There have been many different methods employed to discover the meaning and significance of the book.

1. *The Allegorical Interpretation.* The Jewish attempt to make it an allegory see the story as love of God for Israel. This view seems to account for the Song as the scripture to be read at the Passover festival by later Judaism.

A variant of this view held by some early church fathers thought the song dealt with the Christ and His love for his bride the church. This view has been widely accepted and accounts for many of the interpretative chapter headings in many versions (e.g. ch. 1-3 "The Mutual Love of Christ and His Church"). It is seen in the poetic adoptions in our songs as "Jesus, Rose of Sharon" and "the Lily of the Valley." Oddly enough however, if the interpretations

were carried through correctly, the church, not Christ, would be represented by these titles.

J.W. McGarvey said of this view: "I tried hard to see something prophetic in it, but I failed, and I have never yet succeeded. I am not surprised, therefore, that all very recent interpreters have abandoned the idea that the Shulamite in some way represented the church, and Solomon the Lord Jesus. There is no sustained analogy in any part of the song to anything connected with Christ or the church."

2. *The Dramatic View.* A view that originally the poem was a drama in which the settings and actions were supplied by pantomime or stage curtains. Some see the story as a love play in which Solomon's love for a young Jewish country maiden is portrayed.

3. *The Collection View.* Some think the book is not a unit but rather a collection of wedding songs such as were used at wedding festivals and as are still used today in some middle eastern countries. But the "Song of Solomon" does seem to have a plot which develops throughout and it is not likely that a collection of isolated poems would give a story like this.

4. *A Modernist View.* One recent modernistic view (cf. Interpreters' Bible) has claimed the song was borrowed from pagan religious rites. This view proposes that the song was taken over by Israel and gradually lost its identity with paganism. This view has nothing but conjecture to support it.

5. *A View of Pure Married Love.* The Bible Commentary says "The simplest and most natural (interpretation) appears to be that which regards it as a poem of pure wedded love." Edward J. Young says, "And it reminds us, in particularly beautiful fashion, how pure and noble true love is."

The Song of Solomon is a song about the beauty and holiness of married love. In the context of Solomon's political marriages, the Shulamite taught him the beauty of monogamous love. The book has some great lessons for a time when we face the abuse of marriage and the perversion of sexuality in our time.

Two Are Better Than One

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

- 9 Two are better than one;
because they have a good reward for their labour.
- 10 For if they fall, the one will lift up his companion:
but woe to him who is alone when he falls;
for he has no one to help him up.
- 11 Again, if two lie down together, they will keep warm:
but how can one be warm alone?
- 12 Though one may be overpowered by another,
two can withstand him;
and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

(Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; *The New King James Bible*)

Introduction:

- Following a period of dissatisfaction with marriage there is now a growing trend of respect for the Biblical arrangement of marriage.
- Still far too many marriages are ending in divorce. There is evident something serious is happening between "here comes the bride" and "here comes the judge."
- The strength and value of marriage can be seen in this passage. "Two are better than one: because they have a good reward for their labour." **Why are two better than one?**

1. Support

- Two are better than one because you have someone to support you and someone you can support. V. 10.
- The importance of the home in this "dog eat dog" age.

2. Share

- Two can be better than one because we have someone to share with. Verse 11 says, "Furthermore if two lie down together they keep warm, but how can one be warm alone?" (NASV)
 - A basic purpose of marriage is intimacy (Gen. 2:24).
- Do you recall the sharing of decisions in the beginning? How wonderful and helpful.

3. Strengthen

- Two are better than one because there is strength in numbers. (cf. Verse 12 "And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him." NASV).
- Marriage provides strength for facing the **dilemmas** of life.
- Marriage provides strength for avoiding the **deception** of life.
- Marriage provides strength for fulfilling the **demands** of life.

Conclusion: