

# The Wisdom Literature

Lesson #21

Song Of Solomon

## Outline

### I. ***The Courtship (1:1-3:5)***

- A. The Shulammite to herself (1:1-4a).
- B. The daughters of Jerusalem to the king (1:4b).
- C. The Shulammite (1:5-7).
- D. The daughters of Jerusalem (1:8).
- E. Solomon to the Shulammite (1:9-10).
- F. Daughters of Jerusalem to the Shulammite (1:11).
- G. The Shulammite (1:12-14).
- H. Solomon to the Shulammite (1:15).
- I. The Shulammite to Solomon (1:16-2:1).
- J. Solomon to the Shulammite (2:2).
- K. The Shulammite to Solomon (2:3-6).
- L. Solomon to the daughters of Jerusalem (2:7).
- M. The Shulammite to herself (2:8-13).
- N. Solomon to the Shulammite (2:14).
- O. A chorus (2:15).
- P. The Shulammite to herself (2:16-3:4).
- Q. Husband to daughters of Jerusalem (3:5).

### II. ***The Procession For The Marriage (3:6-11)***

### III. ***The Consummation Of The Marriage (4:1-5:1)***

- A. Solomon to his bride (4:1-15).
- B. The bride to Solomon (4:16).
- C. Solomon to his bride (5:1a).
- D. God to the couple (5:1b).

### IV. ***The Honeymoon Is Over (5:2-6:13)***

- A. Wife to daughters of Jerusalem: The wife rebuffs her husband (5:2-8).
- B. Daughters of Jerusalem to the wife: A reminder about her husband (5:9).
- C. Wife to the daughters of Jerusalem: She remembers his beauty (5:10-16).
- D. Daughters of Jerusalem to wife (6:1).
- E. Wife to daughters of Jerusalem (6:2-3).
- F. Husband to wife (6:4-10).
- G. Wife to herself (6:11-12).

- H. Daughters of Jerusalem to wife (6:13a).
- I. King to daughters of Jerusalem (6:13b).

V. ***The Marriage Deepens (7:1-8:4)***

- A. Husband to wife (7:1-9a).
- B. Wife to husband (7:9b-10).
- C. Wife to husband the next morning (7:11-8:3).
- D. Husband to daughters of Jerusalem (8:4).

VI. ***The Maturity Of Love (8:5-14)***

- A. The question (8:5a).
- B. Solomon's reminiscence (8:5b).
- C. The wife to her husband (8:6-7).
- D. The brothers of the Shulamite (8:8-9).
- E. The wife to everyone (8:10-12).
- F. The husband to his wife (8:13).
- G. The wife to her husband (8:14).

**Notes**

***Song Of Solomon 1:1-3:5***

- The title for this little book, "Solomon's Song of Songs," is taken from the literal translation of the first two words of the Hebrew text. It means "the greatest of all songs." It is a story which discusses two young people in love, and their faithfulness to each other. Ewald says, "The Canticles are embellished by rich oriental imagery and contains very beautiful descriptions of natural scenery." "Life may be hard and its drudgery a grinding yoke, but with love all tasks are sweet" (cf. Genesis 29:20).
- The main characters include the maiden of Shunem, the "Shulamite" (6:13); King Solomon, "beloved" (1:6; 2:8; 3:7); the Shulamite's brothers (1:6; 2:15); "the daughters of Jerusalem" (1:5; 2:7; 3:10; 5:8, 16); and, "the watchmen" (3:3; 5:7).
- The first part, which ends in 3:6, is set in the village of Shunem, in the tribal boundary of Issachar, in the northern part of the land of Israel. Solomon and his retinue come to this area of his kingdom for a visit, sees the beautiful country maiden, and is enamored with her.
- The book begins with the girl expressing her deep desire for physical expressions of love by her lover. We are quickly introduced to the association of love with the most pleasant tastes and smells. Love is so delightful that it should be accompanied with all that is pleasant, like perfumes.
- The maiden is self-conscious about her darkness. Kedar was a territory southeast of Damascus where the Bedouin roamed. Their tents were

made of the skins of black goats. She explains that her color is due to her exposure to the sun as she worked the vineyards for her brothers. She obviously is from a family where the girls had to work. Mention is made in the text of her brothers, a sister, and her mother.

- Now the dialogue between the lovers quickens. Three times he speaks, and twice she responds. They are becoming more direct in their expressions of love. A common language is developing to show the mutuality of their love. He calls her "beautiful;" she responds with the masculine form of the same word: "handsome."
- We have seen thus far the beginnings of a free expression of love between a maiden and a man. The courtship has begun, and the desire for each other has been intense. She is weak with passion. At that point the maiden appealed to the daughters of Jerusalem in her concern that the emotions of her and her lover not take them beyond the proper pace of pure love. So we now see them separated but longing for each other.
- The lover is the maiden's obsession night and day. So in a dream she seeks him. She goes about the city in the night asking those whom she meets about her beloved. She finds him and will not let him go until she has brought him into her mother's home, into the very room where she was conceived. She is not looking for illicit consummation of their love. She wants consummation, but even in her dream she wants that consummation to be right.

### ***Song Of Solomon 3:6-11***

- The second part, which ends in 8:4, is set in Jerusalem. King Solomon returns from Issachar to Jerusalem in a wedding procession, bringing the maiden of Shunem with him from her home to his city for the wedding. in his harem.
- The wedding "carriage" is identified as belonging to Solomon. In fact, it appears that he oversaw its building.
- In vs. 11 we are told that Solomon wears "the crown" (a wedding crown, not a kingly crown) with which his mother crowned him for his wedding day.

### ***Song of Solomon 4:1-5:1***

- The bride has now come to the groom. The time for consummation has arrived. The bride in biblical fashion is veiled (cf. Genesis 24:65; 29:23-25; 38:14), but her lover is now free to enjoy her physical charms. The result is a physical inventory of the details of her beauty.
- The beloved has come to her lover. Her beauty is overwhelming. She has captured his heart. He wants her to be his forever. The invitation

"come with me" is literally in Hebrew "with me," twice repeated. His desire is to have her with him.

- The geographical references here are significant. They all speak of places in northern Israel. The indications are that the bride was originally from that area.
- The maiden now responds to her lover's praise and his cry for her to cast her lot with him. The language is figurative; she picks up the metaphor that he has used of the locked garden. She invites her lover to enter her garden, make it his own, and enjoy its fruits. The language used here of love's consummation is classic in its chasteness, a character possible only through use of symbolic language. The beauty of expression fits the holiest of all human relationships.

### ***Song of Solomon 5:2-6:13***

- The next scene, sometime after the wedding night, shows the bride refusing to let her husband in (vss. 2-3), regretting it, finding that he had left (vss. 5-6), and then searching for him (vss. 7-8). The king had left myrrh on the door (vs. 5) as a reminder that he had been there. The watchmen mistook her for a criminal (vs. 7).
- When reminded by the daughters of Jerusalem of how much Solomon meant to her, she bursts into an ecstatic description of him (vss. 10-16).
- Now the daughters of Jerusalem inquire of the bride as to where her lover is. They want to assist her in finding him. The bride's response to the friends' inquiry assures them that she has not really lost him. The anxiety in her dream was without foundation. She is her lover's, but he is also hers. And he now is browsing in his garden of spices among the lilies. In 5:13 she has described his lips as lilies that drip with myrrh. The erotic implications in this language seem clear. Her fears were unwarranted. As he possesses her, she possesses him.
- The lover speaks again in poetic ode about his beloved's beauty. She is like a great city to be taken. She is without equal among women. Even the ladies of the royal harem acknowledge her superiority.
- Before she knew it, Solomon had placed his wife in his own chariot, a sure sign of their reconciliation. To the women's request to gaze upon the Shulammite, Solomon observes that they like to gaze on her as if they were watching a festive dance.

### ***Song of Solomon 7:1-8:4***

- Solomon now extols the physical beauty of his wife. Although the Song is really the bride's song, there are three occasions when the groom describes her beauty in detail and only one where she reciprocates. This poem reflects the perpetual charm of the female form to the male.

- Now the maiden responds. There is no holding back. She belongs to him. We are reminded of that first couple that God gave to each other and commanded to be one flesh (Genesis 3:16). His desire for her easily equals hers for him. She is at no disadvantage. She relishes the security of her relationship to her husband.
- The bride continues to speak about leaving the security of their bed chamber and going into the fields and villages with him. Yet she is reluctant to leave the freedom that they have behind closed doors to express their love for each other. She wishes Solomon were her natural brother so that she could express her affection for him in public, a thing improper for a married couple to do in that culture.
- Love has its ecstasy when it is right, but it also has its pain when it cannot freely express itself. It is the better part of wisdom, she informs her friends, not to permit love to be awakened until the time is right. Love like this should have no shadows or constraints.

### ***Song Of Solomon 8:5-14***

- The drama is now almost over. The couple have followed her desire and now return from the trip into the fields and the villages. The friends, daughters of Jerusalem, spot the couple and call attention to them as they return. The bride leans on her lover. The bride pays no attention to the call of the friends. She speaks only to her lover.
- Vss. 6-7 are perhaps the two most important verses in the Song of Solomon. An engraved stone or metal seal was a mark of ownership in the ancient world. Possession of another's seal indicated mutual access and possession. Her love is so total and so strong that she wants their mutual possession of each other to be as lasting as life.
- True human love is extolled as the most valuable and important quality and characteristic of human beings. Love's demands are all-consuming. External forces cannot quench or drown it. Its value is greater than all the possessions one might ever possess. In all of human literature there are few passages on the power of love compared with this unit.
- She has now consummated her relationship with her beloved. She has tasted the mysteries of sexual love with her spouse. She is looking back with joy that she came to those sacred moments as a virgin. She thinks of her younger sister and longs for her to know the same joys that she now experiences. So she expresses her concern for the protection of her sister. She with her groom commit themselves to guard her sister from the loss of something precious. She affirms vigorously that she kept herself chaste for her husband.
- In contrast to Solomon, who had great wealth, the Shulammitte had only herself to give, which she gladly did, asking only that Solomon remember her brothers.

- The closing two verses come from our groom and his bride. She seems to be in a garden with her friends. He calls to her. He wants to hear her voice. She who began the Song wishing for the kisses of his mouth answers.