

Awakening Love

Nov 11, 2018 ~ Song of Songs 8.3-4,6-7

Solomon Wrote It ~ 1.1 “The song of songs, which is Solomon’s”

- Conservative commentators agree that Solomon wrote this book (*song*)
- Read 1 Kings 4.29-34 ~ “And God gave Solomon .. wisdom of Solomon”
- Solomon wrote 1,005 songs / But this is the “song of songs” / “greatest”
 - You might say that this is “Solomon’s Greatest Hit”

Song of Solomon ~ a Most Controversial Book

- III: Reason SoS chosen ~ June ‘18 (me 19 / GD-or-PK 8 / 11 left – 8 done)
 - Song of Solomon, Zephaniah, and Haggai still no messages
- Commentators agree Solomon wrote it / But that’s about all they agree on
- They disagree on nearly everything else
 - “What is the title of the book?”
 - “Is it a single story or is it an anthology?”
 - “What is its genre? – Is it literal or allegorical?”
 - “Is it only an elaborate typology / allegory or is there a double meaning?”
 - “Is it poetry and if so is it 1 poem or many? How many? 14, 23, 31?”
 - “Is it a drama and if so why does it lack narration or staging?”
 - “If it’s a drama are there 2 main characters or 3?”
 - “Are the 2 men (king and shepherd) the same or are they antagonists?”
 - “Was the Shulamite forced to marry the king and abandon her beloved?”
 - “Has the Shulamite eloped with her beloved and escaped the king?”
 - “Or is Solomon her one true love as many commentators say?”
- I’ll answer none of these questions definitively – requires much more study
- III: Not possible – Every serious commentator of SoS has gone insane
 - “That’s no exaggeration...!”
 - I’ve been teasing Tabitha lately / Accusing her of exaggerating
 - III: 1st Nat’l Tower evac – Tabitha saw a “gazillion emergency vehicles”
 - Right after “gazillion” in parens is (“no exaggeration”)

“Why is Understanding the Book so Difficult?”

- Language unique / Read pg41 excerpt “The Song of Solomon” –G Lloyd Carr
- Also, over 70 words common to the OT not found in this book
 - Ex: temple, tabernacle, ram, ox, bull, altar, priest, atone, bless, sin, grace, evil, wicked, covenant, worship, sabbath, offering, holy, righteousness
- Paragraphs differ amongst commentators – speakers added (10% not clear)

Xition: I won’t address all these questions, but I must address some . . .

1 - "Is Solomon the Beloved?"

- The 2nd most critical question is to identify the "beloved" – "Is it Solomon?"
- Most commentators accept this / Perhaps they're right / I don't think so
 - Non-inspired headers popularize it leading to broad acceptance
- "Solomon" – 7 occurrences – He's addressed directly only in **8.12**
 - I view that as a disparaging reference (**read 8.7 then 8.12**)
 - **Read 8.12a** (NIV) ~ "But my own vineyard is mine to give"
 - I'll address this later when we come to end of book
- "king" – 5 occurrences – The first two in **ch 1** are puzzling
 - **v12** ~ "While the king is at his table"
 - **v4** ~ "the king has brought me into his chambers" / **NIV**: "Let the king"
- Some regard this title "king" as proof the beloved is Solomon
 - But if that's true does the role of "shepherd" also refer to him?
 - We're to take "king" literally and "shepherd" figuratively
 - But if that's possible, we can also reverse it
 - We can take "king" figuratively and "shepherd" literally
- **NIV**: Eliminate non-inspired headers / You see a man referred to as "king"

2 - "Of What Genre is The Song of Solomon?"

- The most critical question is to identify the genre of the book
- For thousands of years (*no exaggeration*) it was taken as allegory
- The Jews allegorized it / The Christians did as well
- What this means is they dispensed with every literal aspect of it
 - **4.5** ~ Hippolytus (~200AD) refers to "breasts" as Old & New Testaments
 - Origen (same time) referred to Bridegroom/Bride as Jesus and Church
 - Jerome (4th C) and Bernard of Clairveax (12th C) same views
- The reformers and Spurgeon maintained that perspective
 - **Read 7.7-8** ~ Obvious sexual content was minimized or ignored
 - *MH* says breasts of **7.8** are church's "pious affection towards Christ"
 - Nearly all older online commentaries present this perspective
- There were a few mavericks but some wanted book thrown out of canon
 - Others were opposed by mainstream and marginalized

But if Not Allegory How Do We Make Sense of it?

- Literal / Narrative / Drama / Poetry / Cultic Poetry or Love Poetry
- "Does it tell a complete story or is it an anthology?"
- "Are the stories chronological or do they skip through time?"

Xition: All views have strengths and weaknesses – thus many views

I'll Share from a Poetic, Literal, Chronological View

- I won't present a complete argument for this view / too much time
- I'll walk through the text sharing a plausible perspective
- Let's start at the beginning

Shulamite and Beloved Courting

1. **Read 1.1-6** ~ Shulamite is talking aloud to other "girls" about beloved
 - **III: Love** ~ **Read pg27** excerpt "**A Song for Lovers**" –GCS Lewis quote
2. **Read 1.7-10** ~ Shulamite asks and Beloved replies where they can meet
3. **Read 1.11-14** ~ Again Shulamite and other women discuss her beloved
4. **Read 1.15-17** ~ Shulamite and Beloved exchange compliments
5. **Read 2.1-3** ~ Shulamite and Beloved soliloquize c/one another

Shulamite and Beloved Engaged

1. **Read 2.4-7** ~ Shulamite shares with other women and warns them (1st)
 - She warns them because she knows the weakness of her own flesh
2. **Read 2.8-13** ~ The beloved visits her home to take her away
3. **Read 2.14** ~ She appears to hide from him
4. **Read 2.15** ~ Do her brothers intervene?
5. **Read 2.16-17** ~ She bids her beloved flee away
6. **Read 3.1-4** ~ Shulamite has vivid dream of her beloved
7. **Read 3.5** ~ In response to dream she again warns other women (2nd)
8. **Read 3.6-11** ~ Solomon's wedding procession (*unrelated to Shulamite*)

Shulamite and Beloved Marrying

1. **Read 4.1-5** ~ Beloved describes the Shulamite's beauty
2. **Read 4.6-11** ~ Beloved speak his vows to his bride
3. **Read 4.12-15** ~ Beloved describes the chastity of his bride
4. **Read 4.16** ~ Shulamite gives herself to her beloved – no more warnings
5. **Read 5.1a** ~ Beloved and Bride consummate their marriage
 - **Metaphor:** Her garden goes from closed to opened to entered
6. **Read 5.1b** ~ Beloved encourages friends to rejoice with them

Shulamite's Chastity Maintained up to Marriage in 5.1

- Commentators are too quick to judge this couple as immoral
- **Read pg46** excerpt "**The Song of Solomon**" –G Lloyd Carr
 - from "**Song of Love: A Biblical Understanding of Sex**" –H Gollwitzer
- This portion from **4.12 thru 5.1** is the key to the entire book

Xition: I'll have to move faster and so will skip some parts . . .

Newlywed Life

- **5.2-8** ~ Bride has another dream sequence
- **5.9-6.3** ~ Bride extols virtues of her husband with other women
- **6.4-10** ~ Groom extols the virtues of his bride
- **6.11-13** ~ Commentators find this section tough to understand
- **7.1-5** ~ Groom describes beauty of his wife / **Read** circled words
- **Read 7.6-8a** ~ Obvious metaphor for sexual intimacy
- **Read 7.9b-13** ~ Bride sets up a romantic getaway
- **Read 8.1** ~ Bride wishes she could openly display affection

3rd and Final Warning to Other Girls

- **Read 8.3-4** ~ Shulamite urges patience upon other girls

Bride's Instructions to Her Husband

- **Read 8.6** ~ Plea for her husband to remain faithful to her
- **Read 8.7** ~ Love described as a gift beyond value
- These area direct assault upon Solomon's life choices
 - And the words are Solomon's own
- Ecclesiastes was an open admission by Solomon of his failures c/wisdom
- Song of Solomon is an open admission of his failures c/love

Closing Scenes

- **8.8-10** ~ Flashback over recent years – brothers and sister
- **Read 8.11-12** ~ Disagreement over who is speaking here
 - I addressed this earlier c/Solomon not being the beloved
 - The Message ascribes this to a man (though Solomon regarded as Beloved)
 - Vineyard owner ~ **Read pg218** excerpt "**Song of Songs**" –T Longman III
- **Read pg 106** excerpt "**Search the Scriptures**" –C Vanderwaal
- **Read 8.13-14** ~ Closes with the newlyweds voices

Read Prv 5.15-21 ~ Song of Solomon isn't alone in celebrating love

Charge:

Married – "Revel in the gift of the spouse God has given you"

Single – Heed the warning: "Do not stir up nor awaken love until it pleases God"

Jude 24-25 ~ "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy; To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen."

Awakening Love - Handout

Nov 11, 2018 ~ Song of Songs 8.3-4,6-7

1. What do nearly all conservative scholars agree about concerning this book?
2. What do many conservative scholars disagree about concerning this book?
3. How many songs did Solomon write? How many do we have in Bible?
4. Give one reason why the book is so difficult to understand:
5. What were the two difficult questions Elder Swab tried to address?
6. What genre did the Church ascribe to this book for thousands of years?
7. What popular book by John Bunyan epitomizes that style?
8. Elder Swab views the book from a _____, _____, _____ view.
9. What did Elder Swab title the 3 major sections of the book from chapter 1 through chapter 5 verse 1? i) 1.1-2.3 _____, ii) 2.4-3.11 _____, and iii) 4.1-5.1 _____.
10. What did Elder Swab title the 3 sections of the book from chapter 4.12 through chapter 5.1? i) _____, ii) _____, and iii) _____.
11. How many times did the Shulamite warn her single friends not to awaken love?
12. In Ecclesiastes Solomon admitted that his wisdom failed him. What is his admission in this book? _____
13. Song of Solomon is a celebration of what? _____