

Song of Songs



Song of Solomon

Bible Study

Context of the Book

The Song of Solomon, also known as the Song of Songs or Canticles, is a collection of Hebrew love poetry that celebrates the beauty, intensity, and sanctity of human love and marriage. Beyond the literal interpretation of a romantic union, it is widely viewed throughout Church history as an allegory depicting the passionate, covenantal love between God and His people—or, more specifically, between Christ and the Church. It explores the themes of pursuit, longing, vulnerability, and mutual delight in intimacy.

Background and Authorship

Traditional authorship is ascribed to King Solomon, the third king of Israel, who was renowned for his God-given wisdom and prolific literary contributions (1 Kings 4:32). As a collection of songs, it reflects the Solomonic era's poetic style and imagery, emphasizing the kingly stature of the groom and the humble yet profound beauty of the Shulammite bride.

Song of Solomon: Chapter 1 – The Longing

Setting the Scene

- The Shulammite woman begins her journey with a profound cry for intimacy, seeking the kisses of her Beloved. She acknowledges her own sense of unworthiness, describing herself as darkened by the sun, yet beautiful in His eyes. The chapter establishes a foundation of desire and the search for where the Beloved feeds His flock.
1. What does the initial request for a "kiss" signify about the nature of the relationship she seeks?
 2. How does her self-description as "black but comely" reflect the tension between human shame and divine acceptance?
 3. Why is she concerned about being like "one that turneth aside" from the flocks of His companions?
 4. In what ways does the Beloved's response validate her beauty despite her insecurities?
 5. How does the imagery of "spikenard" and "myrrh" describe the atmosphere of their communion?

Key Verses and Meanings

- **Song of Solomon 1:2** – "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine." True satisfaction is found only in the direct experience of God's affection.
 - **Song of Solomon 1:5** – "I am black, but comely... as the curtains of Solomon." We are fully known in our flaws yet fully beautiful in His grace.
 - **Song of Solomon 1:7** – "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest." The soul's primary task is to find the place where the Shepherd provides rest.
1. (Song 1:2) What are the "earthly wines" you typically turn to for comfort instead of His love?
 2. (Song 1:4) What does it mean to pray, "Draw me, we will run after thee"?
 3. (Song 1:5) How can you reconcile your "darkness" with the "beauty" God sees in you?
 4. (Song 1:7) Where do you go when you feel you have "turned aside" from the Shepherd?
 5. (Song 1:15) How does the Beloved's declaration "Behold, thou art fair" change your spiritual posture?

- **Intimacy vs. Shame:** The shift from observing God from a distance to being held by Him, moving past the shame that often informs our identity.
- **The Vigilance of Love:** Recognizing that "little foxes" (small compromises or emotional distance) must be addressed to protect the growth of the relationship.
- **Identity Through Love:** Understanding that we are not defined by our "ordinariness" but by the value placed on us by the One who loves us.

Song of Solomon 2:1–17

Setting the Scene

- The Shulamite woman calls herself a simple flower of the field.
 - Her beloved responds that she stands out like a lily among thorns.
 - They find rest, safety, and sweetness in each other's presence.
 - The Shulamite woman's journey is not just about romance, but about overcoming the emotional distance we often place between ourselves and God. Her vulnerability invites us to move past the "sauna" of life's hardships and find genuine rest in His love.
1. How does recognizing God's unique value for you change your view of your own "ordinariness"?
 2. What are the specific "thorns" in your life right now that distract you from God's beauty?
 3. What stops you from fully resting in His presence?
 4. How can you invite more vulnerability into your relationship with God?
 5. In what specific ways does His love provide you with safety?

Key Verses and Meanings

- **Song of Solomon 2:1** – "I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys."
 - The bride sees herself as a simple flower, but her Beloved sees a masterpiece; our identity is rooted in His perception.
- **Song of Solomon 2:3** – "As an apple tree among the trees of the woods, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down in his shade with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste."
 - His shade is a place of shelter and active rest.
- **Song of Solomon 2:4** – "He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love."
 - Love as a banner is a public declaration, replacing our private shame.

- **Song of Solomon 2:15** – "Catch us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes."
 - Addressing small compromises ("little foxes") is essential to prevent emotional drift.
 - **Song of Solomon 2:16** – "My beloved is mine, and I am his. He feeds his flock among the lilies."
 - Secure trust is built on mutual belonging.
1. (Song 2:1) If you truly believed you were a "lily" in God's eyes, how would your daily self-talk change?
 2. (Song 2:3) What practical steps can you take this week to "sit in His shade"?
 3. (Song 2:4) What does it mean to let "love" be the banner—or the public identity—over your life?
 4. (Song 2:15) Identify one "little fox" (a small habit or compromise) currently encroaching on your spiritual vine. How can you catch it?
 5. (Song 2:16) How does the mutual declaration "I am His" anchor you during difficult seasons?

Song of Solomon: Chapter 3 – The Persistent Pursuit

Setting the Scene

- The Shulammite experiences a night of searching, where her Beloved is not immediately present. Her persistence leads her into the streets until she finds Him and refuses to let Him go. The chapter concludes with the majestic sight of King Solomon's procession, signifying the security and glory of the marital covenant.
1. What does the "bed by night" search represent in our spiritual desert seasons?
 2. Why is it significant that the watchmen could not give her the answer she needed?
 3. What does her refusal to "let Him go" teach us about active faith?
 4. How does the description of the chariot of Solomon provide a sense of spiritual protection?
 5. How does the public glory at the end of the chapter contrast with the private search at the beginning?

Key Verses and Meanings

- **Song of Solomon 3:2** – "I will rise now, and go about the city... I will seek him whom my soul loveth." Encountering God often requires a willingness to move past our comfort zones.
 - **Song of Solomon 3:4** – "It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him, and would not let him go." Persistence in seeking leads to a firm grasp of His presence.
 - **Song of Solomon 3:10** – "...the midst thereof being paved with love." The structures of God's kingdom are built on the foundation of His affection.
1. (Song 3:1) When God feels distant, is your first reaction to keep seeking or to give up?
 2. (Song 3:3) Why can't other people (watchmen) find the Beloved for you?
 3. (Song 3:4) What does "holding on" to God look like in your daily prayer life?
 4. (Song 3:6) What is the "incense" or sacrifice you bring as you come out of the wilderness?
 5. (Song 3:11) How can you celebrate the "crown" of joy God has placed on your head today?

Song of Solomon: Chapter 4 – The Garden of the Soul

Setting the Scene

- The Beloved speaks an extended blessing over the Shulammite, detailing her beauty with exquisite imagery. He invites her to come with Him from the dangerous heights into the safety of their union. He finally describes her soul as a "garden enclosed," a private sanctuary of fruit and fragrance reserved for Him alone.
1. How does the Beloved's detailed praise counteract the Shulammite's earlier insecurities?
 2. What is the significance of being invited away from "the lions' dens" and "the mountains of the leopards"?
 3. What does the metaphor of a "garden enclosed" suggest about our inner spiritual life?
 4. How do the "pleasant fruits" and "spices" represent the character traits developed in intimacy?
 5. What does her invitation for the "north wind" and "south wind" to blow imply about growth through trials?

Key Verses and Meanings

- **Song of Solomon 4:7** – "Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee." Under the covering of Christ, we are viewed as completely flawless.
 - **Song of Solomon 4:12** – "A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed." Our hearts are a sacred space meant primarily for God's enjoyment.
 - **Song of Solomon 4:16** – "Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out." We welcome both the cold and warm seasons of life to release God's fragrance through us.
1. (Song 4:7) Do you struggle to believe that God sees "no spot" in you? Why?
 2. (Song 4:9) How does it feel to know that your focus on God "ravishes" His heart?
 3. (Song 4:12) How are you currently protecting the "enclosed" nature of your heart?
 4. (Song 4:15) Is your spiritual life a "well of living waters" or has it become stagnant?
 5. (Song 4:16) What "spices" or fruits are you currently asking God to release in your character?

Song of Solomon: Chapter 5 – The Hesitant Heart

Setting the Scene

- The Beloved knocks at the Shulammite's door, but she hesitates to open it, having already settled for the night. By the time she rises, He has withdrawn, leaving only the scent of myrrh on the lock. This chapter portrays the pain of missed opportunity and her subsequent search where she describes His matchless beauty to others.
1. What are the "garments" or comforts that we are often reluctant to put off when God calls?
 2. Why does the Beloved leave myrrh on the door even when He departs?
 3. How does the harsh treatment by the watchmen reflect the difficulty of spiritual dry spells?
 4. How does describing the Beloved's excellence help her overcome her own despair?
 5. What does the "chiefest among ten thousand" say about our priorities?

Key Verses and Meanings

- **Song of Solomon 5:2** – "It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me." God constantly seeks re-entry into the closed areas of our hearts.
 - **Song of Solomon 5:6** – "I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone." Discipline often involves the temporary withdrawal of the sense of His presence to stir our hunger.
 - **Song of Solomon 5:16** – "His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend." Christ is not only our Lord but the ultimate Friend of our souls.
1. (Song 5:2) In what area of your life is God currently "knocking" for deeper access?
 2. (Song 5:3) What excuses are you using to avoid "putting on your coat" and following Him?
 3. (Song 5:10) Can you articulate why Christ is the "chiefest" in your life to someone else?
 4. (Song 5:16) What specific attribute of His "loveliness" do you cherish most today?
 5. (Song 5:16) How does viewing God as your "Friend" change the way you approach Him?

Song of Solomon: Chapter 6 – Restoration and Beauty

Setting the Scene

- The search concludes as others are drawn to help the Shulammite find her Beloved. They find Him where He has always been—in His garden. Despite her previous hesitation, He greets her with renewed affirmation, comparing her beauty to the majestic cities of Tirzah and Jerusalem, confirming that His heart has not changed.
1. Why is it that our testimony of His beauty (Chapter 5) often leads others to want to find Him too?
 2. What does it teach us about God's grace that He was in His garden all along?
 3. How does the "terrible as an army with banners" imagery describe the power of the bride's beauty?
 4. Why does the Beloved single her out among "sixty queens and eighty concubines"?
 5. What is the significance of the "chariots of Amminadib" in the context of being overwhelmed by love?

Key Verses and Meanings

- **Song of Solomon 6:3** – "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine: he feedeth among the lilies." Restoration is marked by the re-establishment of mutual belonging.
 - **Song of Solomon 6:10** – "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?" The church in her maturity is a powerful, radiant force.
 - **Song of Solomon 6:12** – "Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadib." God's love can suddenly transport us from despair to overwhelming joy.
1. (Song 6:3) How does this declaration differ from her earlier statements in Chapters 2 and 3?
 2. (Song 6:4) How can "beauty" be a spiritual weapon ("terrible as an army")?
 3. (Song 6:9) What does it mean to be God's "undefiled" one?
 4. (Song 6:11) Do you regularly "go down into the garden" to see if your spiritual fruits are budding?
 5. (Song 6:13) How do you respond when the world (the Shulamite's companions) calls for you to return to them?

Song of Solomon: Chapter 7 – Celebration of Union

Setting the Scene

- The focus shifts to the full celebration of the relationship, with a detailed description of the bride's beauty from head to toe. The tone is one of deep mutual enjoyment and harvest. The Shulammite, now fully secure, invites her Beloved to go out into the vineyards with her to share the fruits of their love.
1. How does the description of her "feet with shoes" signify a new readiness for mission?
 2. What does the imagery of "Carmel" and "purple" suggest about her royal identity in Him?
 3. Why is it important that she is the one inviting Him to the fields in this chapter?
 4. What do the "mandrakes" and "all manner of pleasant fruits" represent in terms of spiritual maturity?
 5. How does the mention of fruits "new and old" describe the depth of a long-term relationship with God?

Key Verses and Meanings

- **Song of Solomon 7:5** – "...the king is held in the galleries." Our love has the power to "capture" the attention of the King of Kings.
 - **Song of Solomon 7:10** – "I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me." The ultimate shift is from focusing on our desire for Him to resting in His desire for us.
 - **Song of Solomon 7:12** – "Let us get up early to the vineyards... there will I give thee my loves." True ministry is simply the overflow of our private love for God.
1. (Song 7:1) Are your "feet" currently shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace?
 2. (Song 7:6) How often do you simply tell God how "pleasant" He is to you?
 3. (Song 7:10) How does knowing His "desire" is toward you change your confidence today?
 4. (Song 7:11) Where are the "fields" or "villages" God is inviting you to go with Him?
 5. (Song 7:13) What are the "new and old" fruits of your life that you are laying up for Him?

Song of Solomon: Chapter 8 – The Seal of Love

Setting the Scene

- The final chapter portrays love in its most mature and invincible form. The Shulammitte desires a love that is public and permanent, like a seal on the heart and arm. It concludes with the understanding that love is a fire that cannot be quenched by any trial or purchased with any wealth, ending with a final call for the Beloved to hasten to her.
1. Why does the Shulammitte desire to be as a "brother" to her Beloved in public?
 2. What is the difference between a "wall" and a "door" in the context of our spiritual character?
 3. How does the imagery of "jealousy as cruel as the grave" describe the intensity of God's love?
 4. Why is it that "all the substance of a house" cannot purchase love?
 5. How does the final invitation to "make haste" reflect the heart of the believer waiting for Christ?

Key Verses and Meanings

- **Song of Solomon 8:6** – "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death." God's love is a permanent marking that defines our internal and external lives.
 - **Song of Solomon 8:7** – "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it." True spiritual love is indestructible and persists through the greatest hardships.
 - **Song of Solomon 8:14** – "Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices." The end of the journey is a longing for His swift return.
1. (Song 8:5) Who is currently "leaning" on their Beloved as they come up from the wilderness?
 2. (Song 8:6) Is God's love the primary "seal" that people see on your arm (actions)?
 3. (Song 8:7) What "floods" are currently trying to quench your love for God?
 4. (Song 8:10) What does it mean to "find favor" (or peace) in His eyes?
 5. (Song 8:14) Does your heart cry "Even so, come Lord Jesus" with the same urgency as this bride?

Conclusion: Living the Song

The journey through the Song of Solomon is not merely an intellectual study of poetry; it is a spiritual map of the soul's progression toward intimacy with God. Over these eight chapters, we have traced a path from the initial, desperate cry for presence in Chapter 1 to the settled, confident security of being "sealed" upon the heart of the Beloved in Chapter 8.

The great takeaway of this book is that our spiritual walk is defined not by our performance, but by the pursuit and the promise of the One who loves us. We have learned that the "little foxes" of compromise must be caught to protect our intimacy, that the "darkness" of our own flaws is fully covered by His grace, and that ultimately, our identity is not found in our own "ordinariness" but in the value placed upon us by the King of Kings.

Final Reflections for Your Heart:

- **Intimacy is a Lifestyle, Not a Season:** The Song teaches us that we move in and out of seasons of closeness. Even when He feels distant, He is often waiting in the garden, inviting us to seek Him with persistence and faith.
- **The Beauty of Mutual Belonging:** The most powerful refrain of this book—"I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine"—is the bedrock of the believer's life. We are anchored in the reality that Christ has claimed us as His own.
- **The Call to the Field:** Intimacy with God is never meant to be a private luxury; it is the fuel for our mission. As we sit in His shade and feast on His love, we are prepared to go out into the vineyards of the world, carrying the fragrance of His presence to everyone we encounter.

As you close this study, remember that the Song does not end. It is an invitation to continue "leaning on your Beloved" as you come up from the wilderness of life, awaiting the day when the distance is bridged forever and we see Him face to face.