

## NOTES ON THE SONG OF SOLOMON (1:1)

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### Prologue (v.1)

**1:1** *The song of songs, which is Solomon's.* | This is the title of this book. It is commonly called "Song of Solomon". It is also called "Canticles" (from the Latin word meaning "song").

1. This book is a "song". It was intended to be sung. But the music to it has been irretrievably lost. However, the text yet remains. And it is a great blessing to God's people.
2. This song is "the song of songs". In this term, as also in "holy of holies", "king of kings", and "lord of lords", "A noun is repeated in the genitive plural in order to express very emphatically the superlative degree which does not exist in Hebrew" (E.W. Bullinger in *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*). Therefore, as the "holy of holies" was the foremost holy place, so is this "song of songs" the foremost song. Saints will attest to this, if others will not. It is a foretaste of the "new song" to be sung in glory by the wife of Jesus Christ (Revelation 14:3-5).
3. This song of songs is "Solomon's".
  - i. Solomon is the writer of this song. He wrote 1005 songs (1 Kings 4:32, where we read that he also wrote 3000 proverbs). This song describes his courtship and marital relationship with his wife, who is identified as "the Shulamite" (twice in 6:13), which name means "the perfect" or "the peaceful". (The definite article before her name probably indicates that it was Solomon's pet name for her.) Other major characters in this Song are the "daughters of Jerusalem" (1:5; 2:7; 3:5,10; 5:8, 16; 8:4).
  - ii. Solomon represents Jesus Christ in this song. This song therefore describes Jesus' courtship and marital relationship with his wife, who is typified by the Shulamite. The wife of Jesus Christ is His church (Ephesians 5:22-32). The "daughters of Jerusalem" in this song typify members of Christ's church and wife.
    - 1) Christ is typified by Solomon. For example:
      - i) Solomon's name means "Peace" (Hebrew *shelômôh*); Christ is Peace – for "this One shall be peace" (Micah 5:5) and "He Himself is our peace" (Ephesians 2:14).
      - ii) Solomon, being peaceful by nature, was the least warlike of all the kings of Israel or Judah; Jesus Christ is the least warlike of all the kings of this world, and the "Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).
      - iii) "Now Jehovah loved Solomon" and "called his name *Jedediah*" or *Loved of Jehovah* (2 Samuel 12:24f); Jehovah loves Christ and manifests Him to be the *greater* Jedediah when He calls Him "My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17 / 17:5; also Matthew 12:18, alluding to Isaiah 42:1).

- iv) "God gave Solomon wisdom" (1 Kings 4:29-31); God made Christ to be to His people "wisdom from God" (1 Corinthians 1:30).
- v) "Solomon's fame was in all the surrounding nations" (1 Kings 4:31); Christ's fame is in all nations.
- vi) "Men of all nations ... came to hear the wisdom of Solomon" (1 Kings 4:34); men of even more nations are coming to hear the wisdom of Christ.
- vii) One who came to Solomon said "indeed the half of the greatness of your wisdom was not told me. You exceed the fame of which I heard" (2 Chronicles 9:6 / 1 Kings 10:7); all who come to Christ say the same of Him.
- viii) Under Solomon's reign "Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking and rejoicing" (1 Kings 4:20); the same is true of the church under Christ's reign.
- ix) Under Solomon's reign "Judah and Israel dwelt safely, each man under his vine and his fig tree ... all the days of Solomon" (1 Kings 4:25); the same is true of the church under Christ's reign.
- x) In both Solomon and Christ, God fulfilled His promise to David in 2 Samuel 7:12 that "When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom": this prophecy was fulfilled in Solomon *immediately*, for he later said "So Jehovah has fulfilled His word which He spoke; and I have filled the position of my father David, and sit on the throne of Israel, as Jehovah promised" (1 Kings 8:20a); this prophecy was fulfilled in Christ *eventually* (Acts 2:30f): "30 Therefore, [David] being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, 31 he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ ..." (See Jesus Christ's descent from Solomon in Matthew 1:1-16, especially vv.6f.)
- xi) In both Solomon and Christ, God fulfilled His promise to David in 2 Samuel 7:13a that "He shall build a house for My name": this prophecy was fulfilled in Solomon *immediately*, for he later said "I have built a temple for the name of Jehovah God of Israel" (1 Kings 8:20b); this prophecy was fulfilled in Christ *eventually*, for His people are "a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:21f).

xii) In both Solomon and Christ, God fulfilled His promise to David in 2 Samuel 7:14 that “I will be his Father, and he shall be my son”: this prophecy was fulfilled in Solomon *immediately*, for David himself declared later that “Jehovah said to me, ‘It is your son Solomon who shall build My house and My courts; for I have chosen him to be My son, and I will be his Father’” (1 Chronicles 28:6); this prophecy was fulfilled in Christ *eventually*, for the Father declared “I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son” (Hebrews 1:5).

-- Surely in Christ “a greater than Solomon is here” (Matthew 12:42 / Luke 11:31).

2) Christ in this Song is:

- i) “the king” (1:4, 12)
- ii) shepherd (implied in 1:7; 2:16; 6:2, 3)
- iii) “my beloved” – about twenty-five times (1:13, 14, 16; 2:3, 8, 9, 10, 16, 17; 4:16; 5:2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 16; 6:2, 3 [twice]; 7:9, 10, 11, 13; 8:14)
- iv) “my friend” (5:16)
- v) “a bundle of myrrh ... between my breasts” (1:13) (note the plurality in “bundle”, and the place of marital endearment “between my breasts”)
- vi) “a cluster of henna blooms in the vineyards of En Gedi” (1:14) (note the plurality in “cluster” and “blooms”; “henna” is a beautiful flower; “vineyards” are a fruitful place; “En Gedi” was a lovely and gardened place west of the Dead Sea)
- vii) “an apple tree among the trees of the woods” (2:3) (an “apple tree” is domesticated and noted for its fragrant blossoms and sweet fruit, while “trees of the woods” are wild and generally have no flower or fruit)
- viii) “love” – as in “love *itself*” (2:7; 3:5; 8:4)
- ix) “my love, my fair one” (2:10, 13)
- x) “the one I love” (3:1, 2, 3, 4)

3) Christ’s wife in this Song is:

- i) “fairest among women” (1:8; 5:9; 6:1)
- ii) “my love” (1:9, 15; 2:10, 13; 4:1, 7; 5:2; 6:4)
- iii) “the rose of Sharon” (2:1)
- iv) “the lily of the valleys” (2:1)
- v) “a lily among thorns” (2:2)
- vi) “my dove” (2:14; 5:2; 6:9)
- vii) “my spouse” (4:8, 9, 10, 11, 12; 5:1)
- viii) “my sister-spouse” (4:9, 10, 12; 5:1) (note italics in “my sister, *my* spouse”, which indicates a word added by translators; the term means “my sisterly bride”, a step beyond “my betrothed”)
- ix) “a garden enclosed” (4:12 (see also “my garden, my sister-spouse” in 5:1)
- x) “a spring shut up” (4:12)
- xi) “a fountain sealed” (4:12)

xii) “my perfect one” (5:2) (see also “my sister, my love, my dove, my perfect one” in 6:9)

xiii) “my beloved’s” (6:3; 7:10)

xiv) “prince’s daughter” (7:1) (though born a *commoner* physically, born of *God* and therefore of *nobility* spiritually)

xv) “O love” (7:6)

-- Overview of this song.

i. It is not written in chronological order.

ii. It may be outlined as follows (from Richard C. Moulton’s outline in his *A Suite of Seven Idyls* – an *idyl* being a “little picture”):

- 1) The Royal Wedding Lived Over Again (1:1-2:7)
- 2) The Bride’s Courtship Reminiscences (2:8-3:5)
- 3) The Occasion of the Betrothal Recalled (3:6-5:1)
- 4) The Bride’s Troubled Dream Related (5:2-6:3)
- 5) The King’s Meditation on His Bride (6:4-7:10)
- 6) The Bride Longs to see Her Old Home (7:2-8:4)
- 7) The Renewal of Love at Lebanon (8:5-14)

iii. It has the following historical background (adapted from H. A. Ironside in *Addresses on the Song of Solomon* as summarized by Merrill Unger in *Unger’s Bible Handbook*): “King Solomon had a vineyard in the hill country of Ephraim, about 50 miles N of Jerusalem (8:11). He let it out to keepers (8:11), consisting of a mother, two sons (1:6) and two daughters – the Shulamite (6:13), and a little sister (8:8). The Shulamite was ‘the Cinderella’ of the family (1:5), naturally beautiful but unnoticed. Her brothers were likely half-brothers (1:6). They made her work very hard tending the vineyards, so that she had little opportunity to care for her personal appearance (1:6). She pruned the vines and set traps for the little foxes (2:15). She also kept the flocks (1:8). Being out in the open so much, she became sunburned (1:5). One day a handsome stranger came to the vineyard. It was Solomon disguised. He showed an interest in her, and she became embarrassed concerning her personal appearance (1:6). She took him for a shepherd and asked about his flocks (1:7). He answered evasively (1:8), but also spoke loving words to her (1:8-10), and promised rich gifts for the future (1:11). He won her heart and left with the promise that some day he would return. She dreamed of him at night and sometimes thought he was near (3:1). Finally he did return in all his kingly splendor to make her his bride (3:6-7).”