

# Song of Solomon

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By Phil Kayser at Dominion Covenant Church on 2019-08-26

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## I. Introduction: My own view of this book set forth simply (cf. Eph. 6)

Song of Solomon is yet another book that abounds in controversies - controversies about the subject matter, the author, the structure, who is the beloved, the speakers, and even the nature of the love being described. Is it platonic love, spiritual love, sexual love? What is it? Berkhof outlined eight different views of the book while some commentaries have shown at least 19 views that contradict each other.

And given that many interpretations of this book, it may seem arrogant for me to rule out views that are held by very respectable leaders. And I can appreciate that perspective. But I am 100% convinced that I understand the book, and as always, each of you can be Bereans and evaluate whether I have made an adequate case. And I have given you an extended outline so that I don't have to preach as long.

Let me quickly describe my own view. I believe that this is primarily a book on romance, marriage, and sexual love being a delightful and intoxicating gift from God and only secondarily being an image of the relationship between Christ and the church. You won't find any crude or vulgar language in this book. You won't find any pornographic crassness like you do in some expositions of this book. Sex is not portrayed as an idol. Nor is it shunned as an evil thing. Indeed, as the couple experiences and expresses their ecstasy, God speaks His total approval in the one place that His voice speaks from heaven - chapter 5:1b - which unfortunately our translation mislabeled. That is the very heart and center of this book - God's blessing upon marital love. This is the only place in the Bible where God gives such detailed and practical guidance on this important topic.

Commentaries that hold to my basic viewpoint show detailed ways in which this book takes us back to the garden of Eden with its imagery of being naked and unashamed. Numerous studies have demonstrated a rich interplay between the first chapters of Genesis and the Song of Songs<sup>1</sup> - so much so,

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<sup>1</sup> Three examples of such studies are: Francis Landy, "The Song of Songs and the Garden of Eden," JBL 98 (1979): 513-528; Francis Landy, *Paradoxes of Paradise: Identity and Difference in the Song of Songs* (Sheffield, Eng., 1983), pp. 183-265; Phyllis Trible, "Depatriarchalizing in Biblical Interpretation," JAAR 41 (1973): 42-47; Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Philadelphia, 1978), pp. 145-165.

that some people see this as a second Adam and Eve in a second garden of Eden. I think that is going too far, because as we will see, sin is present in this book as well. But the Garden of Eden imagery is so pervasive, that I won't even bother to highlight all the places where it is seen. Let me just give a high level look.

All of this book (with the exception of their brief memories of the past) seems to occur in the springtime (2:10-13; 7:12), when trees are blossoming and fragrant. New life is breaking forth in the fields in 7:11-13 and some of the scenes appear to be in a garden location, as in chapters 4, 6, and 8 (4:12,15; 6:2,11; 8:13). You hear the birds of paradise in 2:12, the gentle bleating of sheep and goats in 1:8 and 4:1-2. Perfumes, spices, and the swirling aromas of flowers, shrubs, and trees are described so well you can almost imagine smelling them. It mentions saffron, myrrh, nard, cinnamon, henna, frankincense, and aloes. The luscious taste of apples (2:3,5; 8:5), raisins (2:5), grapes (2:13,15; 7:12), figs (2:13), pomegranates (4:3,13; 6:7,11; 7:12; 8:2), honey (4:11; 5:1), and other garden delicacies are presented to our senses. And in the midst of all this garden imagery, a husband and a wife stand in awe of each other's beauty - both the arousing clothed-beauty of sandals, robes, necklaces, and gowns (7:1; 5:3; 3:6-11) and the unclothed beauty of their naked bodies as they admire each other. As Westminster professor, James T. Dennison words it,

All these rich sensations occur in the experience of two persons - a man and a woman. A man and a woman sensuously tasting, seeing, smelling, hearing, feeling love. Was it not so in the beginning?... Love which tasted very good; love which felt very good; love which ear and eye and nose sensed was supremely, superlatively, very good! Did not God himself make it so? Did not God himself make this love very good?<sup>2</sup>

And this book answers with a resounding "Yes!" This book is God's affirmation of the holiness of sex and the fact that it reflects God's goodness and love for us in some way. It beautifies what sin has made ugly.

The one difference with the original garden of Eden is that this book obviously shows sin at work to disrupt the marriage union and to ruin the beauty of paradise. It is a post-Fall union of husband and wife - sinners who need God's grace. And there are many indicators that they are believers - calling her a sister as well as a bride in the same verse being one. If she is spiritually a sister, she is a believer. He speaks of her as being pure - a religious term.

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Davidson points out that all six days of creation are alluded to in the poem. See [https://faculty.gordon.edu/hu/bi/ted\\_hildebrandt/otesources/22-songofsongs/text/articles/davidson-songofsongs-auss.htm](https://faculty.gordon.edu/hu/bi/ted_hildebrandt/otesources/22-songofsongs/text/articles/davidson-songofsongs-auss.htm)

2 James T. Dennison, Jr., "Solomon's Sublime Song," unpublished class notes.

So in addition to five very beautiful descriptions of marital union (paradise like descriptions), there are two descriptions (via nightmare sequence), of what it looks like for couples to take other for granted, and what it looks like for marriage to grow stale and humdrum. Those nightmares describe rather well the frustrations, loneliness, and exasperation that has taken place in many marriages. But by putting them into two parallel nightmares within the overall chiasm, the author does not spoil the beauty of the 7 day marriage ceremony because even those two nightmares are quickly resolved as the bride wakes up with relief that it was just a nightmare, and seeking Solomon's embrace, she finds comfort in a real sexual union with her husband. But those two dreams are powerful ways of communicating how sin can negatively impact marriage and what to do about it.

So in addition to sin being added to paradise, this book also shows how God's grace fixes what sin destroys and enables paradise to be restored in the marriage over and over - if it is worked at. Dennison states,

Solomon and his Shulamite taste love and marriage outside the garden of Eden. Now, outside the garden, love and marriage are affected by tension, alienation, isolation, even manipulation.

And yet, precisely that condition is the reason Solomon's love song is in the Bible. After the garden, from this side of the Fall, men and women need a revelation of what love ought to be - of what it once was - of how God made it - of how that first marriage remains a model even after the Fall. That model is now realized only through the eschatological marriage - the marriage of Solomon's Lord and the Shulamite's antitype. Christ Jesus has a Bride... In that mystical union, the garden returns; the sensuous is restored; the springtime love is made new.

The new order invades the old; the eternal penetrates the temporal... Only this redemptive-historical approach allows the believer to fully comprehend Solomon's sublime Song. Only the eschatological perspective - the Christ-centered approach - makes sense of the Song of Solomon.<sup>3</sup>

And I wish that Dennison had written more - perhaps a commentary on this book, because his approach reflects the discussion of marriage that is found in Ephesians 6, as well as making sense of Psalms 45 and 72 that are tightly linked to the Song of Solomon.<sup>4</sup> It is my conviction that Song of Songs is

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3 James T. Dennison, Jr., "Solomon's Sublime Song," unpublished class notes. Young is another commentator who takes this approach rather than the allegorical approach. He says, "The Song does celebrate the dignity and purity of human love. This is a fact which has not always been sufficiently stressed. The Song, therefore, is didactic and moral in its purpose. It comes to us in this world of sin, where lust and passion are on every hand, where fierce temptations assail us and try to turn us aside from the God-given standard of marriage. And it reminds us, in particularly beautiful fashion, how pure and noble true love is. This, however, does not exhaust the purpose of the book. Not only does it speak of the purity of human love; but, by its very inclusion in the Canon, it reminds us of a love that is purer than our own." Young, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 336.

4 Jamieson, Fausset and Brown say, "the Song seems to correspond to, and form a trilogy with, Psalms 45 and 72, which contain the same imagery; just as Psalm 37 answers to Proverbs, and the Psalms 39 and

definitely God's instruction on how grace can enable us to have joy, meaning, and even ecstasy restored to tired and broken marriages. I will later recommend a commentary to you, and gives far more detailed instruction than I dare give from the pulpit. It would not be appropriate for children. But after figuring out the structure, I was able to immediately see how the book of Song of Solomon is an incredibly transformational book for marriage. I love it.

But of course, not all Christians take this view of the Song of Songs. So before we can appreciate what it does teach, I have to show what it does not teach.

## **II. Faulty views disproved**

### ***A. Faulty view one - that Song of Solomon is purely an allegory without any reference to marriage, romance, or sex***

The first faulty view of this book is that Song of Solomon is purely an allegory. This view claims that nothing in this book relates to marriage, romance, or sex, and that every detail has spiritual meaning that transcends the physical.

The problem is that no one who uses this approach has been able to give objective inspired Biblical rules of interpretation for this supposed allegory that will give us a united interpretation. It is hard to find any two commentaries that hold to the allegorical approach that can even agree.

Even on the macro level there are so many interpretations. Roman Catholics often use Song of Songs as an allegory of Jesus and Mary having mutual admiration for each other's spiritual virtues and their joint mediatorial graces being given to the church. It's weird. For example, they base the statement, "you are altogether beautiful, my darling, and there is no blemish in you" (4:7) as proof that Mary did not have a sin nature. It is worse than weird; it is blasphemous to make Mary the Shulamite. Chapter 4 does not describe Mary.

On the other hand, some Roman Catholics (and actually some modern charismatics) taught that it is an allegory of each individual believer being drawn in mystical marriage to Jesus, where we are purified of self-love and dissolved into God's love in the ecstatic experiences of what they call the

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73 to Job." Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible, vol. 1 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 414–415. But furthermore, the bridal imagery throughout the prophets of the Old Testament, and found in Ephesians and Revelation, is intertwined with the symbols of the Song of Solomon.

beatific vision. This bridal mysticism has become very common today in charismatic circles like IHOP, where advocates sometimes say that each of us should think of ourselves as females married to Jesus. That by itself ought to clue you in that something is very very wrong. The Bible does not authorize me to think of myself as a woman. Indeed, some of the descriptions of their ecstatic (and even orgasmic) relationships with Jesus are demonic to the core. But certainly the sexual orientation shift that is required to hold to bridal mysticism is absurd, perverse, and heretical.

Other Roman Catholics took it as an allegory of each believer being united to Jesus as they partake of the eucharist. So it is the eucharistic interpretation.

On the other hand, Luther said that it had nothing to do with marriage, but that it was an allegory of Solomon and the civil state and why having a strong state is so good. The bride is supposedly the happy and peaceful state under Solomon's rule. Another version of this is that the groom is Hezekiah and the bride is the northern ten tribes whom he wishes would be reunited into one nation with Judah.

But admittedly, most evangelicals who embrace this view see it as an allegory of Jesus united to the church. Now, on the surface that seems harmless enough - until you get into the details, where no two commentaries seem to be able to agree. And it is in these details that you see there is no anchor of objective rules of interpretation. So, for example, are the two breasts of the bride the Old and New Testaments (as some say), or the church from which we feed, or love for God and neighbor, or the blood and the water, or the Lord's Supper and Baptism, or the outer and inner man? I have commentaries that give those and other bizarre interpretations of the bride's two breasts. No. They are literal breasts. That's all they are. They don't symbolize anything. But they do enrapture the husband. One commentary says that the 80 concubines of chapter 6:8 are 80 heresies that will eventually plague the church. Things really do get wild and woolly on the allegorical interpretation, and it is because their hermeneutics are not grounded in Scripture. Scripture requires a straightforward grammatical historical interpretation. And that's what I will be giving it today.

My third argument against this viewpoint is that in every Biblical allegory, there is something written into the text itself that clearly shows it to be an allegory. So, for example, Isaiah 5:7 says, "...the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are His pleasant plant." He explains the allegory. It is clear within the text itself that he is using a

vineyard as an allegory of God's relationship to the nation and to the individuals within that nation. There is nothing like that whatsoever in this book.

Fourth, nowhere does the New Testament quote or interpret this book as an allegory. And so for these and several other reasons I have not been able to embrace this approach even though many people I respect have done so. What they do get right is that they at least see Christ in this book.

***B. Faulty claim two - that Song of Solomon has nothing to do with Christ and is only about marital love (cf. Luke 24:25-27,44,45; John 5:39)***

The second faulty view does not see Christ in this book. This is the opposite extreme. It is the view that this book says nothing about Christ and the church and is only about marital love. That seems to be a very common view today. But that contradicts Luke 24, which says that Jesus taught about Himself from all of the writings of the Old Testament. There must be something in this book that points to Jesus. On my interpretation it does. A literal marriage between Solomon and his bride reminds us that all marriage is to image the relationship between Jesus and the church. And it is only by our union with Jesus that our marriages can be transformed. Grace must transform everything in life, including sex. And those who refuse to apply grace to sex don't understand that grace reverses the effects of the fall far as the curse is found.

I don't have time this morning (nor would you have the patience) for me to refute all 19 views of Song of Solomon.<sup>5</sup> I didn't even list them in your outline. Most of them are worthless, and I regret having bought the commentaries.

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5 Fenton Farrar outlined the following: (1) the love of the Lord for the congregation of Israel (Targum); (2) it relates the history of the Jews from the Exodus to the Messiah (R. Saadia Gaon); (3) it is a consolation to afflicted Israel (Rashi); (4) it is an occult history (Ibn Ezra); (5) it represents the union of the divine soul with the earthly body (Joseph Ibn Caspe); (6) or of the material with the active intellect (Ibn Tibbon); (7) it is the conversation of Solomon and Wisdom (Abravanel); (8) it describes the love of Christ to His Church (Origen, and the mass of Christian expositors, except Theodore of Mopsuestia, the school of Antioch, and most modern scholars); (9) it is historico-prophetical (Nicolas of Lyra); (10) it is Solomon's thanksgiving for a happy reign (Luther, Brenz); (11) it is a love-song unworthy of any place in the sacred canon (Castellio, Dr Noyes); (12) it treats of man's reconciliation to God (Ainsworth); (13) it is a prophecy of the Church from the Crucifixion till after the Reformation (Cocceius); (14) it is an anticipation of the Apocalypse (Hennischius); (15) it is the seven days epithalamium on the marriage of Solomon with the daughter of Pharaoh (Bossuet); (16) it is a magazine for direction and consolation under every condition (Durham); (17) it treats in hieroglyphics of the sepulchre of the Saviour, His death, and the Old Testament saints (Puffendorf); (18) it refers to Hezekiah and the ten tribes (Hug); (19) it is written in glorification of the Virgin Mary. (Many Roman Catholic commentators) Farrar, F. W. History of Interpretation: 1886.

But among the worthwhile books that do say that this book is about marriage, romance, and sexual love, there are other differences of view that mess up on major parts of this book and as a result obscure the meaning and application. So please bear with me as I dispose of those. I'll try to make practical applications as we go through them.

***C. Faulty view three - that Song of Solomon is an anthology of independent poems, not one connected song written by one author (but see 1:1 and the chiasmic structure)***

The next evangelical view in your outline is correct about this being about a literal marriage, but it is faulty in thinking that the book is an anthology of independent poems written by many authors and not one single song with a story line.<sup>6</sup> Rodney disposed of this view a few months ago.

But look at the very first verse. It says, "The song [singular] of songs, which is Solomon's." Song of songs is a Hebrew construction much like Holy of holies, vanity of vanities, Lord of lords, etc. It means that this singular song is the best of all songs or the song above all other songs. It is the Hebrew way of expressing a superlative. But by calling the whole book a singular "song," the author is indicating that it is a unified song, not simply a collection of independent songs. That immediately rules out some interpretations that miss a great deal.

The very fact that no two scholars who hold to this theory can come up with the exact number of independent songs I think testifies to its unity. For example, some think there are seven songs, some say eight, some say there are twelve; Goulder thinks there are 14 songs, while Longman thinks there are 23. When you read those commentaries you realize that they have a hard time showing where some songs end and start. And the reason is that they are so tightly integrated that it is hard to pull them apart without losing something.

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<sup>6</sup> Paul Haupt wrote that the book was "simply a collection of popular love-ditties, and these erotic songs are not at all complete . . . neither are they given in their proper order" (Paul Haupt, "The Book of Canticles," *AJSL* 18 [1902]: 205. The following commentaries take the view that it is simply an anthology: H. L. Ginsberg, "Introduction to the Song of Songs," *The Five Megilloth and Jonah* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1969), 3; Robert Gordis, *The Song of Songs and Lamentations: A Study, Modern Translation, and Commentary* (New York: Ktav, 1974), 17–18; Marvin Pope, *Song of Songs, Anchor Bible* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1977), 40–54; Marcia Falk, *Love Lyrics from the Bible: A Translation and Literary Study of the Song of Songs* (Sheffield: Almond, 1982), 3, 69; Robert Davidson, *Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon, Daily Bible Study Series* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 98; Othmar Keel, *The Song of Songs: A Continental Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 17–18; and Tremper Longman III, *Song of Songs, NICOT* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 54–56.



And the more you dig into the Hebrew structure of the book, the more you realize that it shows incredible unity of thematic and literary design that could only be pulled off by one author. Recent scholars have produced page after page of the interlocking structures of this book,<sup>7</sup> but I have just reproduced in your notes one example of structuring phrases from Alden's commentary. It's on page 3 of your outline. Alden shows how 14 phrases in the first half are perfectly paralleled in a chiasmic fashion with the identical fourteen phrases in the second half. Others have gone into more detail than that, but even the simplified chart on page 3 all by itself makes nonsense of the view that this is just an anthology of unrelated poems. How did unrelated poems happen to have so many identical phrases in exactly the right places?

I don't have the time to show it, but that chart also rules out the love triangle theory that says that Solomon is a bad guy in this book who is trying to woo a woman away from a poor shepherd that she had been betrothed to. We will look at that in a bit, but that chart is very helpful in ruling out quite a few faulty interpretations.

But as in every other book of the Bible, structure is so important to interpretation. Other commentaries have shown an overarching chiasmic structure that overlays this one.<sup>8</sup> And Davidson has done fantastic work on showing an incredibly beautiful symmetry in both the macro-structure as well as in the tiny details of the verses. There is no way I could have reproduced all of his work for you or you would have a 20 page outline. But based on that work, he came to the following conclusion (and I quote): "The astoundingly intricate symmetry between each of the matching pairs in the literary-structural outline seems to rule out the possibility of a redactor

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7 See for example the recurring refrains, themes, words, phrases, and elements brought out by Roland Murphy, "The Unity of the Song of Songs," VT 29 (1979): 436–443; in *The Song of Songs: A Commentary on the Book of Canticles or the Song of Songs*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 64–67. Also see Exum's analysis of the stylistic and structural indications of unity in J. Cheryl Exum, "A Literary and Structural Analysis of the Song of Songs," ZAW 85 (1973): 47–79. Also see the astounding work of Fox that makes him come to the conclusion that "there is no reason to posit an editor to explain the Song's cohesiveness and stylistic homogeneity. The most likely explanation of these qualities is that the Song is a single poem composed, originally at least, by a single poet." He does this on the basis of a network of repetitions, associative sequences, consistency of character portrayal, and narrative framework. Michael V. Fox, *The Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs* (Madison: U of Wisconsin, 1985), 209–222.

8 Though there are differences of view on this structure, there is very helpful material in the following: David Dorsey, "Literary Structuring in the Song of Songs," JSOT 46 (1990): 81–96; Duane A. Garrett, "Song of Songs," in *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, The New American Commentary, (Nashville: Broadman, 1993), 14:376; G. Lloyd Carr, *The Song of Solomon: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentary (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1984), 44–49; J. Cheryl Exum, "A Literary and Structural Analysis of the Song of Songs," ZAW 85 (1973): 47–79; William H. Shea, "The Chiasmic Structure of the Song of Songs," ZAW 92 (1980): 378–396; Edwin C. Webster, "Pattern in the Song of Songs," JSOT 22 (1982): 73–93.

imposing an artificial structure upon a miscellaneous collection of love poems.”<sup>9</sup> Whatever other difficulties are present in this book, I think it is crystal clear that this is a unified work written by a single author with a unified thematic and literary design.

#### ***D. Faulty view four - that this was not written by Solomon***

But who is this author? The ancient Jews and early Christians said it was Solomon. And that’s what the New King James says here, “The song of songs, which is Solomon’s.” That is by far the most natural way to translate the Hebrew of the first verse. But numerous evangelicals have tried their utmost to deny Solomonic authorship. They paraphrase it as “The song of songs, which is dedicated to Solomon,” or “which is about Solomon.” But they don’t translate that same phrase that way in other places of Scripture. Here is their main hangup - they are embarrassed that a divine book on marital love could have been written by a pervert like Solomon who messed up his marriages so badly. I hope to show in a bit that Solomon was actually monogamously and faithfully married to his first wife for somewhere between 7-13 years and that this book was about that first marriage. This is not his marriage to his second wife, the daughter of Pharaoh, even though he was also monogamously married to her for 16 or 17 years after the first wife died. It was only at the age of 50 that he started adding numerous other wives - and Ill give you the reason why he did it later. But the early Solomon was a faithful man. He was faithful until about age 50.

But even if you don’t believe this is about his first marriage, I don’t know how it is possible to deny authorship to Solomon. Solomon’s name is mentioned again in verse 5, three times in chapter 3 (3:7,9,11), and twice in chapter 8 (8:11-12). In fact, the Shulamite woman speaks to him as “You, O Solomon,” and her name is the feminine counterpart to Solomon - sort of like saying, “Mrs Solomon.” Solomon’s name is Shelomah and her name is simply the feminine of that. In addition, three times the Shulamite calls the one that she loves “the king” (Song 1:4, 12; 7:5). I don’t know how it is possible to get around it without claiming (as some commentaries do) that the writer was pretending to be Solomon.

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9 Richard M. Davidson, “The Literary Structure of the Song of Songs Redivivus,” in *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*. 14/2 (Fall 2003): 44-65. Luter said much the same: “To reiterate from a slightly different angle, the idea that a later edited anthology of previously existing, independently written love poetry—whether by Solomon, another writer, or multiple authors—would result in the extensively detailed inverted parallelism seen above is completely illogical, if not nonsensical. The conclusion that must be drawn related to this precisely presented evidence from linguistic parallelism is that the Song of Songs is a unified document.” A. Boyd Luter, *Song of Songs: Evangelical Exegetical Commentary*, ed. H. Wayne House and William Barrick (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2013), So.

***E. Faulty view five - that this portrays a love triangle with Solomon seeking to woo a woman away from her true love, a country shepherd***

But there is a fifth faulty view that objects by saying that the loved one is called a shepherd, and that Solomon was not a shepherd. But that is not true. His father, David, was a shepherd and clearly taught his son Solomon to be a shepherd in his youth. In Ecclesiastes 2:7 Solomon said that he had huge flocks of sheep. He was indeed a shepherd. And the Scripture also says he was a naturalist and a gardener who got his fingers dirty.

But on their theory, there is a love triangle, with the Shulamite maid being betrothed to a poor country shepherd whom she loves and Solomon is a bad guy trying to woo her away from the shepherd she loves so that he can add her to his huge harem of women. So Solomon is the lustful bad guy, and this book shows how true love wins out over Solomon's sinful lust. I have read a number of evangelical and even one Reformed commentary that take this position - and it is so confusing that it is hard to get much benefit from the book.

Many recent scholars have rightly criticized this view and have shown how artificial that interpretation is throughout the book, and how it necessitates sudden breaks in the dialog that you would never guess were there based on the structure or grammar. It is the theory that drives the interpretation, not the structure or grammar. Let me give you some examples of how artificial this is. Starting to read at chapter 1:2. They say that verse 2 is not being said to the king, but to the peasant shepherd:

2 Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth— For your love is better than wine. 3 Because of the fragrance of your good ointments, Your name is ointment poured forth; Therefore the virgins love you. 4 Draw me away!

Then the chorus says,

We will run after you [the "you" is masculine singular].

Then the Shulamite says,

The king has brought me into his chambers.

They claim this is either a kidnapping or at least an attempt to woo her away from her beloved. It is a sudden yanking of this verse out of context. But weirdly, the chorus does not agree. It says,

We will be glad and rejoice in you [feminine singular]. We will remember your [masculine singular] love more than wine.

The chorus claims that both the woman's and king's love is good. The Shulamite then agrees that the man that they are talking about is indeed lovable:

Rightly do they love you [singular masculine].

Does it really make sense that the lowly shepherd is loved by all the virgins - the virgins mentioned repeatedly in this book? No. He would be unknown by them. And as Carr points out, it is forced for the male being talked about to alternate so rapidly between Solomon and the shepherd. But if that was the only problem, maybe you could buy the theory. But there are far more difficult passages for this view.

For example, where it is hard for them to explain chapter 1, their explanation of chapter 3:6-11 is utterly bizarre - at least the explanations of the love triangle that I have read. This theory has to either say that this poem is out of place (as Murphy does) or that the Shulamite and the man are pretending to be king Solomon - that they are play acting at their wedding. But it is beyond weird to have your beloved shepherd pretend to be her would-be kidnapper king or to pretend to be the one who has tried to woo her away from him. Try to put yourself in that woman's place or in that young man's place. Would that be erotic? Not at all. It would be the opposite. It would sicken you. Would not that supposed peasant-shepherd be jealous? Of course he would. He would probably want to have nothing to do with Solomon. Yet they either say that this paragraph doesn't belong here or that the good couple is play-acting as if the shepherd is Solomon. It is neither psychologically likely nor morally pure.

But if you hold that the king, shepherd, and beloved are all the same person (Solomon), then this passage fits the flow of the book perfectly. Look at chapter 3:6-11. The Shulamite says about her groom on the wedding night,

6 Who is this coming out of the wilderness Like pillars of smoke, Perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, With all the merchant's fragrant powders? 7 Behold, it is Solomon's couch, [Does that seem like pretending? I don't think so - "Behold, it is Solomon's couch"] With sixty valiant men around it, Of the valiant of Israel. 8 They all hold swords, Being expert in war. Every man has his sword on his thigh Because of fear in the night. 9 Of the wood of Lebanon Solomon the King Made himself a palanquin: 10 He made its pillars of silver, Its support of gold, Its seat of purple, Its interior paved with love By the daughters of Jerusalem. 11 Go forth, O daughters of Zion, And see King Solomon with the crown With which his mother crowned him On the day of his wedding, The day of the gladness of his heart.

It makes no sense that this is describing someone who is not Solomon. But if it is describing Solomon on his wedding night (as I believe), then you are forced to say that chapter 4 is also Solomon and that Solomon is saying to the bride, "Behold, you are fair, my love! Behold, you are fair!" and then giving descriptions of adoration over her inner and outer beauty and each of them being hot over each other. Then verse 16 has the Shulamite inviting the husband to consummate the marriage. Chapter 5 verse 1 has the husband sexually possessing her and consummating the marriage. And the last phrase

of chapter 5:1 has God saying to the couple as they engage in the marriage act, “Eat, O friends! Drink, yes, drink deeply, O beloved ones!” God is praising and approving of this act of love.

Sadly, people have their opinions of Solomon so poisoned by the few years of backsliding at the end of his life that they import that here. It is inconceivable to them that God would call Solomon and the Shulamite “O beloved ones!” But that’s exactly what God said about Solomon in 2 Samuel 12:24. That verse says that the LORD loved Solomon and the next verse has God (through Nathan the prophet) calling Solomon Jedidiah, which means beloved of Yehowah.

Anyway, the love triangle theory completely messes up the structure of the book and the grammatical flow of the book, and the logic of the book’s progression.

Furthermore, if Solomon was a wicked king taking a betrothed maid away from her countryside shepherd, then the woman would have been equally guilty of unfaithfulness by wooing both men at the same time - which she clearly does. She woos the king and she woos the shepherd (in my view, the same person). In 1:4 she rejoices that the king has brought her into his inner chambers. Shame on her if she is betrothed to someone else! In chapter 1:12-14 she clearly wears perfume that will please the king and then says that the sachet of perfume between her breasts is like her beloved. What confusing language on the love triangle theory (because even if they force that to be said to the shepherd it would be wrong because she isn’t married to him yet on their theory). But what beautiful language if there is only one lover (Solomon) and one loved one (the Shulamite).

Let me just give one more argument. If you take the time to look up who is speaking the parallel phrases in the phraseology chiasm on page 3 in your outlines, I think you will see that making the shepherd and the king as two different people completely destroys the intentional parallels that are found there too. So on many levels I believe this has to be a good marriage between two good people. It is a God-approved marriage.

***F. Faulty view six - that this was written by Solomon after he had a huge harem of women and that it therefore endorses polygamy***

But an even more troubling viewpoint has been put forth by numerous evangelical scholars in the last few years, and that is that Solomon is the beloved, but the Shulamite is just one of a thousand wives and concubines,

and that he is seeking to set her mind at ease with that situation as he makes love to her. This viewpoint claims that the book endorses polygamy and even mentions Solomon's harem. And because this viewpoint is so common in evangelical circles, I want to spend more time refuting it. It can be resoundingly refuted from numerous angles.<sup>10</sup> I'll just highlight the main ones.

**The date contradicts this interpretation. This book was written before Solomon's temple was being built (logical deduction of facts in 1:5,9,14; 2:1,7; 3:5,9,10; 4:1,4,8; 5:8,16; 6:4; 7:4,5; 8:4,11 versus absence of any mention of the temple), which places the book before the 4th or 5th year of his reign.**

First of all, the date of this book does not allow for polygamy because this book had to have been written very early in Solomon's reign and be describing scenes before his reign when he was the heir apparent. Some people claim it was written by Hezekiah, but that is impossible. For example, there are verses that mention both Tirzah (6:4) and Jerusalem (1:5; 2:7; 3:5,10; 5:8,16; 8:4) as being part of the same country, which means that this book was written before Solomon's death, while the kingdom was still united. So it couldn't be written by a later king (as some modern commentaries claim).

But more importantly, constant comparisons of the Shulamite and the Beloved to the most beautiful buildings in the land (1:14; 4:4; 7:4; 8:11) and the most beautiful geographical sites in the land (1:5,9,14; 2:1,7; 3:9; 4:1,8; 6:4; 7:4,5; 8:11) makes the total silence about the temple a deafening silence - almost necessitating that the temple is not yet been built. This is especially significant when 19 of the most beautiful buildings and geographical sites become images of the beauty of both the bride and the groom. As unbelievably gorgeous as the temple was, this has led many scholars to place the writing of this before the tenth year of Solomon's reign (at a minimum), or even before the fourth year of his reign when the temple began (1 Kings 6:1). It is inconceivable that far less significant comparisons would dominate when the most beautiful thing in all of Israel and one of the wonders of the world would not factor into these images of beauty at all. So that is just one of many arguments that place this book very early in Solomon's reign, and as ancient Jews insisted, is describing his marriage to his first wife.

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<sup>10</sup> For other reasons, see Erick Mendieta, "Solomon on Monogamy: Is Song 6:8-9 Really Speaking About Solomon's Harem?" (paper presented at the annual meeting of Andrews University's Celebration of Research; Berrien Springs, Mich., 8 November 2012). Also see <https://answersingenesis.org/bible-questions/does-song-solomon-teach-sexual-immorality/>

**The reality of Solomon's first marriage mandates this. Solomon was monogamously married to one wife from 7-13 years (depending on other assumptions) before monogamously marrying his second wife, the daughter of Pharaoh. This is deduced from the following.**

But there is more. If you study all the tiny details of Solomon's early life you begin to realize that Solomon had been married a minimum of seven years to the wife of his youth and to her alone, and a couple of scholars think it may have been closer to 13 years. There is a pretty decent Answers in Genesis article that argues 13 years. How do they arrive at this conclusion? Well, it's rather simple logic.

***Rehoboam was born to his first wife, Naamah the Ammonitess, one year before Solomon came to the throne (logical deduction of 1 Kings 14:21,31).***

First, let me read 1 Kings 14:21. This tells us Rehoboam's age when he first came to the throne. It says,

And Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah. Rehoboam was forty-one years old when he became king. He reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put His name there. His mother's name was Naamah, an Ammonitess.

If Rehoboam was 41 years old when he came to the throne, and if his dad's reign was exactly 40 years (which it was), then simple math tells us that Rehoboam was born at least a year before his father, Solomon, became king. If he was born a year before Solomon became king, he had to have been conceived 9 months before that. So that would mean Solomon would have had to have been married two years before He became king. So Solomon was already married at least two years before his father, David, had died.

***Since Solomon's birth date can only be guessed based on a range of Biblical data, his guesstimated marriage age to Pharaoh's daughter is made to be 21 (Ussher) 24 (FNJ), 33 (CMI article), and 50 (Faulstich). Only the latter two ages can account for Solomon having daughters old enough to marry to his governors shortly after coming to the throne (See sequence from 1 Kings 3 to 1 Kings 4:11,15). For two daughters to have been born before Rehoboam, Solomon must have been married 4 years before Solomon came to the throne. Another 3 years (minimum) before Pharaoh's daughter makes Solomon monogamous with first wife 7 years.***

But 1 Kings 4 makes it clear that he must have been married to her even before that date. Let me explain that next point. People are all over the map on how old Solomon was when he married Pharaoh's daughter. Ussher guesses that he was 21, Floyd Nolan Jones says 24, a recent AGI article<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> <https://answersingenesis.org/bible-questions/does-song-solomon-teach-sexual-immorality/>

rather convincingly says 33 (that's what I believe), and Faulstich says 50. I won't be dogmatic on this since we don't have enough Biblical evidence to even nail down the date of his birth with absolute precision.

But there is one fact that completely rules out the first two dates and stretches Solomon's marriage a few years earlier. 1 Kings 4:11,15 says that Solomon had two daughters to marry off to his newly established governors, and he appears to have done so before the temple was started in chapter 5. Well, that in turn means that he married off daughters before he was married to Pharaoh's daughter. Even assuming that these daughters were born before Rehoboam (which I accept - in fact it is a certainty), on Ussher's unlikely guesstimate of his age (which did not factor these daughters in, and which gave David 14 years in Jerusalem before Solomon was born), Solomon married off one of his daughters at the age of 6. That just does not seem likely. It's not a slam dunk argument because it is sometimes hard to know the order of events in those chapters. But I bring this up to show that there is plenty of evidence for the wife of this book to have been Naamah.

One legitimate objection that people have raised is that the law of God forbade people from marrying Ammonites - and Naamah is an Ammonitess. So they claim that there are still ethical problems with attributing this story to Solomon. But that is actually only true if an Ammonitess was an unbeliever. In our Life of David series, we saw that Nahash the King of Ammon was soundly converted to the true faith and came into covenant with David (he mentions that in 2 Sam. 10:2). At least outwardly his nation became a confessing country. And it wasn't just Nahash that was converted. God also converted his wife, his daughter Abigail, and his two sons Hanun and Shobi. When Nahash died, David's father married Nahash' widow (an Ammonitess), and adopted her daughter Abigail. So David's step-mother and step-sister were both believing Ammonites. And while Hanun faked conversion and later turned on Israel, his brother Shobi was genuinely converted and helped David even into his old age (2 Sam. 17:27).<sup>12</sup> So David's whole family was in close friendships with converted Ammonites and the nation was in covenant with God for at least a few years. It is therefore no surprise that one of those converted Ammonites could have married Solomon.

And more to the point of the symbolism of this book, it portrays a beautiful picture of Christ's inclusion of Gentiles within His bride, the church. But the key point is that this first marriage occurred during the time that God approved of Solomon and while Solomon was humble before the Lord, and

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12 [https://kaysercommentary.com/Sermons/LifeOfDavid/2%20Samuel%2010\\_1-5.md](https://kaysercommentary.com/Sermons/LifeOfDavid/2%20Samuel%2010_1-5.md)



totally faithful.

**Even if we make a late date for this book, the reality of Solomon's second marriage mandates monogamy. Solomon was monogamously married to the daughter of Pharaoh for up to 17 years (see CMI article for details)**

But even if you were to assume that this was his second wife, you would still be driven to the conclusion that Solomon was still a monogamous man with even her for up to 17 years. And only in 1 Kings 11 did he start adding wives and concubines (the text says "in addition to" the daughter of Pharaoh). So Pharaoh's daughter preceded those wives, and those wives were added "in addition to" her. That means that Solomon was a monogamist until he was at least 50 years old. 1 Kings 11:4 indicates that he was quite old, so it may have been even beyond 50. But I'm trying to be conservative here. I'm convinced he became a polygamist only after God raised up adversaries against him, and rather than repenting, he tried to address these dangers as a backslidden person with political alliances via marriage. But in any case, the rest of the points that I am going to skip over now prove that Solomon was a monogamist for up to 30 years - perhaps even more.

***Note singular "wife" in 1 Kings 9:16; 2 Chron. 8:11.***

The next point shows that Naamah had died by the time Solomon married Pharaoh's daughter because 1 Kings 9:16 speaks of only one wife - the daughter of Pharaoh. Obviously Naamah was dead - perhaps in childbirth. Some years later, 2 Chronicles 8:11 still speaks of only one wife - his wife.

***Only after the compromises of 1 Kings 10 does he add women "in addition to the daughter of Pharaoh" (1 Kings 11:1; The same progression from 1 Kings 10 to 1 Kings 11 can be seen Ecclesiastes)***

While I don't think that the woman of this book is an Egyptian, there would be no problem with that interpretation if Naamah had died first and if Pharaoh's daughter had converted as per Deuteronomy 21's mandates. Several scholars have shown that Solomon was monogamous all the way up to 1 Kings 11, though there is evidence that his backsliding may have begun with an illicit relationship with the Queen of Sheba in chapter 10. But he didn't marry her. His failure to repent just precipitated his backsliding.

In any case, the first years of Solomon's marriage to the daughter of Pharaoh were a monogamous marriage to a professing believer. And the reason we know she was a professing believer is that Solomon had no problem with building a house for her in Jerusalem in her early years (1 Kings 9:24), but

later he removes her from Jerusalem, saying, “My wife shall not dwell in the house of David king of Israel, because the places to which the ark of the LORD has come are holy” (2 Chron. 8:11). That change only makes sense if she had apostatized from the faith at that point. And that same chapter shows Solomon being totally loyal to the Lord still. It was not until his 50s in 1 Kings 11 that he began adding wives.

So we have two candidates for the monogamous bride of the Song of Solomon. There are several reasons I think it was Naamah, the most obvious one being her intimidation by the visiting dignitaries and their wives. I doubt very much that Pharaoh’s daughter would have been intimidated by pomp and circumstance. But more importantly, I doubt very much that the daughter of Pharaoh would have had to work for a living as a shepherdess before marrying him. Everything in this book fits Naamah, including her darker complexion.

***Apparently Pharaoh’s daughter apostatized and returned to the faith of Egypt only later in the marriage (deduction of the change in Solomon’s attitude to her in 1 Kings 3:1; 7:8; 9:24; versus his much later attitude toward her in 2 Chron. 8:11). This deduction strongly implies that she was at least outwardly a convert to the true faith earlier, but then later identified with Egypt.***

***It was only “when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God” (1 Kings 11:4)***

1 Kings 11:4 says, “For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God.” When he was old.

***When he repents and comes back to the Lord, he promotes monogamy (Eccl. 9:9)***

But we saw last week that he came to repentance and strongly commanded monogamy in Ecclesiastes 9:9.

**Song of Solomon illustrates the monogamous one flesh union mandated in Genesis 2.**

But let’s look at some internal evidences in this book that the Song of Solomon illustrates the monogamous one flesh union mandated in Genesis 2. Not the 1000 shall become one, but the two shall become one.

***Song 6:8 is not referring to Solomon's harem, but the wives and concubines that came from surrounding nations to attend the public wedding. In response to the bride's insecurities in the presence of all these attendants of the visiting dignitaries, Solomon brings comfort:***

The accusation of polygamy is brought from Song of Songs 6:8, which says, "There are sixty queens and eighty concubines, and virgins without number." Ha! Proof positive, they say, that she is being added to his harem. But my question comes, "Do these queens, concubines, and virgins belong to Solomon or do they belong to the guests who had come to this seven day wedding?" I believe it is the latter, and the text itself absolutely mandates that it be the latter. And there are many reasons for this.

**Since a king could only have one queen, these queens were from elsewhere**

First, while a backslidden king could have many wives, he could legally have only one queen. So if there were 60 queens, they had to be the queens from other countries who had been guests at the seven day wedding. It is definitionally impossible for Solomon to have had multiple queens. And so Carr points out that it doesn't say, "Solomon has" or "I have" 60 queens and 80 concubines. It simply says that there are that many at this grand wedding ceremony.

**The word for "queens" (6:8-9) is always and only used for foreign queens**

Second, the word for "queens" that is used in verses 8 and 9 is unusual. It is a word that only and always refers to non-Israelite queens and never once in all of literature to queens of Israel - not even later foreign queens of Israel. Carr points out that the only other place in the Bible where this word is used is in Esther, where both Vashti and Esther are called queens. But even Ahasuerus could only have one queen at a time, right? So this is one of several hints that dignitaries, kings, and queens from up to sixty countries attended this grand wedding. It explains why this peasant girl was so intimidated by her lack of sophistication. She felt totally out of place. In any case, Carr's commentary says, "The word is never used of wives of Judean or Israelite kings."<sup>13</sup>

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13 G. Lloyd Carr, *The Song of Solomon: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1984), p. 148.

**Solomon comforts her with promises of monogamy: 1) she is his dove, a bird that mates for life. 2) she is perfect for him and he needs nothing more, 3) she is “the only one” for him, 4) he had pledged “to her mother” [Hebrew] that she would be “the only one.” 5) She was pure [literal Hebrew of “favorite”] spiritually in comparison to the other women. 6) Even the foreign queens, concubines, and their maidens praised her.**

Third, Solomon is making her feel secure and comfortable in his love. She would hardly feel secure by fleeting words that said, “Don’t worry dear. Compared to my 60 wives and 80 concubines and all the maidens who hang around this joint, you are the coolest.” Nope. Not at all. That would have been deflating, not encouraging. “Don’t remind me that I am not your one and only.”

So what is the comfort? In the next verse Solomon gives four reasons why she should not be intimidated by all the women at this seven day wedding. “My dove, my perfect one, is the only one, the only one of her mother, the favorite of the one who bore her. The daughters saw her and called her blessed, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her.”

The first reason that he gives is that she is his one and only. He gives three phrases to reinforce that she will always be his one and only wife.

First, he calls her “my dove.” Doves were known to mate with only one bird and to be faithful to that bird for life. By calling her a “dove” he is clearly saying that she is his one and only mate for life. It was a well known symbol of monogamy. In this book he calls her his dove and she calls him her dove. It was a symbol of steadfast loyalty to one mate.

The second reason that he gives is that she is his perfect one. The Hebrew word *tamati*, gives the idea of completeness with nothing more needed. He has no need for anyone besides her. She completes him; she is a perfect fit for him. That speaks of monogamy. It certainly does not describe polygamy. And it is definitely a comfort to say that she is perfect.

The third phrase, that she “is the only one,” is as clear a reference to her being his only wife as you could get. As Hawker interprets these three phrases, “Though there be among men, and the great ones of the earth, those who have concubines and wives without number; yet, my beloved is but one, and the only one of my love; and so fair, so lovely, so undefiled...”<sup>14</sup> Or as Matthew Poole expresses it, “[you are] the only beloved of my soul, my only spouse, in comparison of whom I despise all others.”<sup>15</sup>

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14 Robert Hawker, *Poor Man’s Old Testament Commentary: Proverbs–Lamentations*, vol. 5 (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2013), 219.

15 Matthew Poole, *Annotations upon the Holy Bible*, vol. 2 (New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1853),

The next phrase reinforces this when it says that she was “the only one of her mother,” or more literally, “the only one to her mother.” We know from chapter 8 that her mother had other sons and one other daughter, so several commentaries point out that she was not an only child. The NKJV mistranslated that phrase. Apparently there was no father who was alive, and when I give the background story to this book, I will point out that Solomon gave her poor mother a dowry and pointed out that she would be the only one for him.

The next phrase “the favorite of the one who bore her” has a word, *barar*, that never means favorite. The dictionary says “pure.” He thought of the queens and concubines of other countries as tainted by sin, and saw her as pure before God. So he encourages her to have a Godward focus and not view herself from the perspective of these concubines and queens, for whom he does not care at all. She needs to have her security in the fact that God views her as pure and so does he.

And the last reason he gives as to why she should not be intimidated is that everyone at this banquet was oo-ing and ah-ing over her beauty and all of them praised her - “The daughters saw her and called her blessed, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her.” He is basically saying that everyone sees her as special.

So, far from being a blemish in this book, chapter 6:8,9 is one of many references to Solomon’s total commitment to be married to one wife for life. That he broke this pledge of monogamy approximately 30 years after this wedding, when he started adding wives to his second wife does not negate the fact that he was committed to monogamy here, and God by inspiration is definitely teaching monogamy. Solomon was indeed the perfect symbol of Christ and the church.

***Other indicators of monogamy in this book:***

But there are many indicators throughout this book that it is teaching the importance of monogamy. Even those who think these queens and concubines belong to Solomon inconsistently admit that the rest of the book advocates monogamy over and over again and that it even puts monogamy into Solomon’s lips. I will only give 9 proofs. And I am giving you these proofs because without them the whole book is spoiled.

**She is the only “signet ring” on his heart and on his arm (8:6) - a ring that is ordinarily never taken off (see Jer. 22:24).**

In chapter 8:6 we find that the Shulamite is the only “signet ring” on Solomon’s heart and on his arm. According to Jeremiah 22:24, signet rings were normally not taken off. But more to the point, people only had one signet ring for security sake. If they lost a ring, others could counterfeit their signet signature. That is a strong description of her being his only wife. She is the only signet ring on his heart and arm.

**True love (as opposed to lust) is jealous to have total monogamy (8:6)**

The same verse gives as the reason why she can be his one and only that “love is as strong as death, jealousy as cruel as the grave...” True love always has godly jealousy as its counterpart. Just to illustrate, God is love and therefore one of His names is Jealous. Exodus 34:14 says, “For you shall worship no other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.” If the love that defines this book has jealousy as strong as death, nothing but death can separate this couple and no other competitors will be tolerated. True jealousy would never tolerate polygamy. And in fact, nothing but death did separate Solomon from his first love, Naamah.

**True love reflects God’s love (“flame of Yehowah” 8:6), which is a monogamous love**

The same verse describes true love as having flames of fire, a most vehement flame, which literally is rendered by many versions as the “flame of Yehowah.” This is the only place where God’s name occurs in the book - chapter 8:6. If the love of this book reflects the love of God for the church, it is a monogamous love for sure. You could never call polygamy the flame of Yehowah.

**Nothing can quench this true love (8:7)**

The next verse, says, “Many waters cannot quench love, nor can the floods drown it.” That’s what makes this different from the lust of polygamy. True love stands the test of time. It cannot be extinguished. It cannot be substituted.

**True love cannot be purchased for any amount of money (8:7)**

Verse 7 also says, “If a man would give for love all the wealth of his house, it would be utterly despised.” This indicates that true love cannot be purchased for any amount of money.

**Nothing but “death” can come between the two (8:6-7). Polygamy definitely separates true love.**

**The very name “Shulamite” is the feminine of Solomon’s name, and is a Hebrew way of expressing her to be Mrs. Solomon (his other half so to speak)**

Next, her name, Shulamite, is the feminine of Solomon, and is the Hebrew way of expressing her to be Mrs. Solomon (his other half so to speak). That too is a strong statement against polygamy. There is only one Shulamite, or Mrs. Solomon. So even her name implies that she is the only female counterpart to Solomon.

**There is exclusive possession - “I am my beloved’s and my beloved’s is mine” (6:3; 2:16; 7:10)**

And finally, I counted 29 times that the possessive “my” is used in connection to beloved, and it is used by both the bride and the groom. For example, “I am my beloved’s and my beloved’s is mine.” There is an exclusive ownership of each other. As 1 Corinthians 7:2 says, “Let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.” And then verse 4 goes on to say, “The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.” Did you husbands realize that your wives have authority over your bodies? They have authority. And the boldness of the bride in the Song of Solomon to claim Solomon’s body as her own is remarkable. She takes initiative. She even speaks more than he does. Though her sexual desires wane more easily than his, you see passionate attraction to his body by her as well. Through and through this book is a book that calls us to be faithfully and totally committed to each other. As Wayne Mack worded it, “Marriage is a total commitment and a total sharing of the total person with another person until death.”<sup>16</sup>

### **III. The background to Naamah and her marriage to Solomon**

Let me give quickly you the background to this beautiful beautiful love story. It is a kind of Cinderella love story. In my notes (which will be online this week) I will give references for the details of this story that I am telling. Naamah was from an Ammonite family who had converted to the true faith sometime after king Nahash of Ammon had converted and when that king

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<sup>16</sup> Wayne Mack, *Strengthening Your Marriage* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1977), p. 4.

had become close friends with King David. The faith spread rather widely in Ammon as it did in other countries.<sup>17</sup> From chapter 8 we learn that the family had immigrated to the hill country of Ephraim, about 50 miles north of Jerusalem (8:11). However, by the time Solomon knew them, the father had apparently died, and the family now consisted only of the mother (1:6; 3:4; 6:9; 8:1,5), two sons (1:6; 8:1,8), Naamah (who was a kind of Cinderella figure in this story) and another sister of Naamah who is unnamed, but mentioned twice (6:3; 8:8). This family had found a job in one of Solomon's vineyards (8:11), and she was so skilled that she was managing the whole vineyard on behalf of the family, who were either leasing it to Solomon or Solomon was leasing it to them - I ran out of time to figure out which. But the family and Solomon both made money off of the vineyard. We aren't told why her brothers were angry with her. Some have assumed that they were only step-brothers, but that is only a guess. But in 1:6 she is embarrassed early on the first day of the wedding ceremonies at how suntanned she had become, and she sheepishly tells Solomon, "Do not look upon me, because I am dark, because the sun has tanned me. My mother's sons were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard I have not kept." She sees all of these fair-skinned queens and is intimidated because she is a working girl who had been trying to support a family.

But that statement of hers also indicates that she had a tremendous work ethic, something that Solomon really appreciated. Women must treat their position as wives and mothers as a job that they do their best at. They must have a work ethic and do all their work as unto the Lord. Laziness should never characterize their lives. Naamah certainly was industrious. Apparently she pruned the vines and set traps for the little foxes (2:15). She also kept flocks of sheep (1:8) and was used to the outdoors, unlike the pompous queens and concubines that were at the same banquet and had fair skin.

One day Solomon noticed Naamah's industry, just like his great-great grandfather Boaz noticed the industry and godliness of Ruth in the book of Ruth. Back then she was apparently managing the entire vineyard for the family and doing so well at managing it that she brought Solomon 1000 shekels profit in that year and gained 200 shekels profit for her family (8:11). There is one passage that may indicate that Solomon had asked her to manage more than one vineyard, but I can't be certain of that. But it says she was made keeper of the vineyards (plural).

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<sup>17</sup> For conversions of various kings like Toi, Joram, Hiram, etc., see my Life of David series. Sprinkled through the series are also mentions of the Cherethites and Pelethites (Philistine groups) who became fiercely loyal to Yehoah and other Gentile converts like Ornan the Jebusite.



Because of her diligence and godliness, she at some point captured Solomon's heart. In chapter 8:6 Solomon reminisces about her having first fallen in love with him under the apple tree near her mother's home. He finally asks her to marry him. But her insecurity at being a peasant and him being the heir apparent to the throne is seen all through the book. She probably wondered if she would be up to the job of being a king's wife. But Solomon assures her that he has seen all that she has done for his vineyard and all that she has faced with her family and that she is the one for him. As I mentioned earlier, Solomon promised her mother that she would be his only bride. I'm sure her mother and family were well off as a result of the bride price.

So Solomon sends a wedding procession to escort his new bride-to-be to the palace in Jerusalem. And the book opens up as she is preparing for the banquet on day one of the wedding ceremonies.

#### **IV. The proposed structure of the book**

In your outlines I have copied a phrase outline from Alden that shows a clear chiasmic development. That's on page 3.

## Proposed Chiastic Structure and Outline of Song of Solomon

From R. L. Alden.

- A 1:1–4a “Take me away”
- B 1:4b Friends speak
- C 1:5–7 “My own vineyard”
- D 1:8–14 “Breasts,” “silver,” “we will make”
- E 1:15–2:2 “House”
- F 2:3–7 “His left arm” “daughters of Jerusalem ... so desires,” “apple,” “love”
- G 2:8–13 “Fragrance,” “come my darling,” “blossoming”
- H 2:14–15 “Vineyards,” “show me”
- I 2:16–17 “My lover is mine”
- Ja 3:1–5 “The watchmen found me”
- Jb 3:6–11 Description of carriage, “gold,” “Lebanon,” “daughters of Jerusalem”
- Jc 4:1–7 Description of girl, “Your eyes ... hair ... teeth”
- K 4:8–15 “Myrrh,” “spice,” “honey,” “honeycomb,” “wine,” “milk”
- L 4:16 “Into his garden”**
- L’ 5:1a “Into my garden”**
- K’ 5:1bc “Myrrh,” “spice,” “honey,” “honeycomb,” “wine,” “milk”
- Ja’ 5:2–9 “The watchmen found me”
- Jb’ 5:10–6:1 “Gold,” “Lebanon,” “daughters of Jerusalem”
- Jc’ 6:4–11 Description of girl, “Your eyes, ... hair ... teeth”
- I’ 6:2–3 “My lover is mine”
- H’ 6:13–7:9a [10a] “Vines,” “wine,” “that we me gaze on you”
- G’ 7:9b–13 [10b–14] “Fragrance,” “come my darling,” “blossom”
- F’ 8:1–5 “His left arm,” “daughters of Jerusalem ... so desires,” “apple,” “love”
- E’ 8:6–7 “House”
- D’ 8:8–9 “Breasts,” “silver,” “we will build”
- C’ 8:10–12 “My own vineyard”
- B’ 8:13 “Friends”
- A’ 8:14 “Come away”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Duane A. Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, vol. 14, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 375.

I have also made a chart that shows how the whole book is developed like a chiasm with two inclusios - another common Hebrew technique of writing. That’s on page 5. And that is an amalgam of research from several commentaries.

## Chiastic Structure of Song of Solomon

By Phillip Kayser

Note: This outline shows both reverse parallelism (i.e., chiasm) and block parallelism (i.e., panel writing). This chiasm overlays the more detailed phrase chiasm developed by R. L. Alden (see separate chart). It also beautifully overlays the development of the story line that happens over 8 days (see separate outline). There are further structural intricacies that go much deeper than even these outlines, showing God's handiwork at every point.

A Wedding Day 1 (1:2-2:7) How they relate to relatives and others

- a female (1:2-7)
- b male (1:9-11)
- c female (1:12-14)
- d male (1:15)
- c' female (1:16-17)
- b' male (2:1-2)
- a' female (2:3-7)

B Wedding Day 2 (2:8-17) – A walk in the gardens

C Wedding Days 3-4 (3:1-5:1)

Dream 1: Lost and Found (3:1-5)

Praise of Groom I (3:6-11)

Praise of Bride I (4:1-7)

Praise of Bride II (4:8-15)

**D Invitation by bride (4:16)**

**D Possession by groom**

**E God's total approval of the sexual union (5:1)**

C' Wedding Days 5-6

Dream 2: Found and Lost (5:2-8)

Praise of Groom II (5:9-6:3)

Praise of Bride III (6:4-12)

Praise of Bride IV (6:13-7:10)

B' Wedding Day 7 (7:11-8:4) – A walk in the gardens

A' An 8<sup>th</sup> Day after the wedding (8:5-14) How to relate to relatives and others

- a unnamed voice about female (8:5a)
- b male (8:5b)
- c female (8:6-7)
- d male brothers (8:8-9)
- c' female (8:10-12)
- b' male (8:13)
- a' female (8:14)

But the second outline on page 4 is perhaps the most useful one to have in front of you when you are reading through the book. It shows the linear progression of the story through this book and helps to make sense of the bits and pieces.

## Linear Story Development of Song of Solomon

By Phillip G. Kayser

- Day 1 of wedding (1:2-2:7) with sexual union in 2:4-7
1. Preparing for banquet in the palace (1:1-8)
  2. At the banquet table (1:9-14)
  3. In the bridal chamber for consummation of wedding (1:15-2:7)
  4. Sexual union (2:4-7)
  5. Charge to singles to not awaken love prematurely (2:7)
- Day 2 of wedding (2:8-17) with sexual union in 2:16-17
1. After having risen early, Naamah sees Solomon playfully approaching the bridal chamber (2:8-9)
  2. Solomon invites her for a romantic walk in his vineyard (2:10-14)
  3. At some point her brothers tease her about catching foxes (2:15)
  4. She ignores them and invites Solomon to a private place to have sex (2:16-17)
- Day 3 of wedding (3:1-5) - Bad Dream #1 followed with comfort of sexual union in 3:4
1. Bad Dream of losing husband (3:1-3)
  2. Relief at finding Solomon and clinging to him, resulting in sexual union (3:4)
  3. Charge to singles to not awaken eros prematurely (3:5)
- Day 4 of wedding (3:6-5:1) with sexual union in 4:16-5:1
1. Praising groom I (3:6-11)
  2. Praising bride I (4:1-15)
  3. **Bride's invitation to sexual union (4:16)**
  4. **Groom's possessing her sexually (5:1a)**
  5. **God's statement of approval (5:1b)**
- } These two verses form the thematic heart of the book when viewed as a chiasm. See more detailed outline of chiasm and inclusios. God's approval in 5:1b is the very center.
- Day 5 of wedding (5:2-6:3) – Bad Dream #2 followed with comfort of sexual union in 6:2-3
1. Nightmare of husband leaving her because of her inattentiveness to his sexual desires (5:2-6)
  2. Her more slowly aroused sexual longings now frustrated too (5:6-7)
  3. Charge to singles not to arouse love too quickly (5:8)
  4. Bad thoughts that he is not worth it (see 5:9; 6:1)
  5. Bad thoughts resisted with praise of his body (5:10-16) and affirmations that Solomon is beloved and friend.
  6. Intimacy restored in sexual union (6:2-3)
- Day 6 of wedding (6:4-7:10)
1. Praising bride (6:4-10)
  2. Praising groom (6:11-13)
  3. Solomon praising bride (7:1-9)
  4. Bride deeply satisfied in sexual union with Solomon (7:9-10)
- Day 7 of wedding (7:11-8:4)
1. Wife asks Solomon if they can go for a walk in the gardens (7:11-13)
  2. She wishes they could make out right there, but realizes it would not be proper (8:1-2)
  3. They have sex in the garden (8:3)
  4. Charge to singles to not awaken love before its time (8:4)
- A later visit to the relatives (8:5-14)
1. A relative excited to see them visit (8:5a)
  2. Solomon reminisce that she first fell in love with him under the apple tree (8:5b)
  3. Bride gives beautiful teaching on the nature of true love (8:6-7)
  4. The relatives ask advice about their other sister (8:8-9)
  5. She gives her advice (8:10-11)
  6. She asks Solomon to allow her brothers to manage the vineyard and to earn the 20% of profits (200) that Solomon's vineyard brought in (1000). Marriage does not do away with love of family.
  7. As they leave, Solomon playfully whispers a desire to hear her call him (8:13) and she responds with her earlier code words (8:14) for him to chase her sexually once again. The hint is that the cycle of love goes on.

Rodney had shown in one of his sermons on this book that there is an undeniable forward progression through the book. The question is, when does the progression start?

Glickman and some others start it at courtship. And it is a respectable and understandable position. But he recognizes that this is problematic because chapters 1-2 have so much sexually charged words and actions. He just says

that they are looking forward to these things, not actually engaging in them. But several commentaries have pointed out that this is reading into the text and that it is more natural to see these things as actually happening that day. There was indeed sexual activity.

Let me give you examples of things that in a Hebrew culture would have been utterly inappropriate for courtship. Chapter 1:2 - "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth." In 1:4, the Shulamite is brought into the king's bed chambers - his inner chambers. That would be utterly inappropriate for courtship. In 1:13 she is virtually inviting the king to lie between her breasts just as the perfume sachet has been lying all day between her breasts. In 1:16 they are on Solomon's couch or bed. There is a Hebrew word for fondling. And sexual union clearly happens in chapter 2:4-7 where she is lovesick (in other words she is overwhelmed with sexual desire) and his left hand is under her head and his right hand is embracing her, which many commentaries have shown is a clear picture of him lying on top of her. That is not courtship; that is marriage. Much later in the book he reminisces about courtship that had happened before chapter 1, and it was without kisses, hugs, or any of this stuff. It was standard Hebrew courtship. Chapters 1-2 are not standard Hebrew courtship. Commentaries are reading 21st century practices into the text, and it's not there.

So Dillow's exegesis is much more on the mark. He shows that chapter 1 had to have started on the day of the wedding, where she is in the palace preparing for the first banquet in the first 8 verses, is at the banquet in verses 9-14 by his side, and both are later talking sexually in the inner chambers in 1:15-2:7 and the first of seven sexual unions is found in 2:4-7, with an immediate charge to singles not to imitate any of this stuff and not to awaken sexual love before it is time. Unfortunately, Dillow assumes that the rest of the book happens over the next few years. But it's an assumption. It's much more natural to see the later unions as occurring on every night of the seven day wedding ceremony.

So you will notice in my outline on page 4 that I have taken advantage of the studies of another person who points out that like many royal weddings, this wedding was a seven day celebration with sexual union at the end of each day. The eighth day is later and records a visit to her relatives in the country. And day eight ends differently. Though day eight does not have any sexual union, you know that is exactly where they are headed. The book ends with Solomon whispering to her that while others are listening to her voice right now, he wants to hear it too. And she playfully uses a codeword she had used earlier in the book to suggest that he chase her romantically and sexually

once again. She wants him to take the initiative. And so it hints that the cycle of love will continue to go on in the years to come. It's a beautiful open ended conclusion to the book.

I believe that this storyline is my biggest contribution to the Song of Solomon studies. It simplifies the story, removes the need for awkward interpretations, reconciles it with the chiastic structure, and turns the whole story into a beautiful and divinely sanctioned love story. The potential for love to grow jaded is only narrated in two nightmares that the woman has of losing her husband's love and what she does about it in her nightmare. Those sections have perfect teaching lessons for those whose marriages have gotten jaded. And though I don't agree with his outline of the book, the best exposition of it that I have found is Joseph C. Dillow's book, *Solomon on Sex: The Biblical Guide to Married Love*.

I don't think it would be appropriate for me to get into the kind of depth of teaching that he does in an audience that includes children. But I would love to teach a class on this sometime. In the meantime, let me just highlight a few central themes in the book, and we'll end.

## **V. Central themes**

### ***A. Love is mutual.***

The first central theme is that sexual love is mutual with either party initiating. The woman and man both initiate love making and both are very active in love making. And interestingly, the woman talks far more than the man - 81 verses for the woman compared to 49 verses for the man. And no, I won't make a joke about that. The poem begins with the woman speaking and closes with the woman speaking. And I'm not going to joke about that either, though it may indicate that God is OK with letting her have the first and the last word - so long as he is truly leading. And Davidson points out that her descriptions of her husband's body are just as eloquent as the man's descriptions of her body. Both are just as passionately in love with each other, even though there are two hints that she could easily slip in her passion if she was not careful. But this book does not in any way demean a woman. It just recognizes that there are differences in how each one approaches sexuality - big difference that newlyweds must not be blind to.

***B. Marriage is intended to be a lifelong committed and monogamous relationship***

I think I have already adequately demonstrated the next central theme - that God's intent for marriage is for it to be a lifelong monogamous commitment of one man to one woman.

***C. Marital love is enhanced by atmosphere, aesthetics, tastefulness, play, beautiful accents, perfume, things worn, and variety***

But one of the things that you see throughout this book is that marital love is enhanced by the atmosphere, aesthetics, tastefulness, playfulness of the partners, colorful accents, perfumes, things worn, and not worn, and variety. Chapter 4:9 says, "You have ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; you have ravished my heart with one look of your eyes, with one link of your necklace." That a necklace could accentuate by adding to the aesthetics of the moment makes perfect sense - as does the smell of her perfume in the next verse. I won't get into each of these points, but marital love should be creatively worked at to bring new life and joy to the marriage. And atmosphere, aesthetics and attitudes is a big part of that. Relational wisdom 360 that we looked at yesterday is a big part of it.

***D. Love is not hampered by leadership and submission; it is enhanced***

Several authors have shown how marital love is not hampered by the Biblical concepts of headship and submission. Rather, it is hugely enhanced in this book. She invites; he possesses. He invites and she suggests that he pursue. There are many metaphors of her submission, and she finds supreme comfort in that position as well as erotic satisfaction. For example, in 2:3 she says, "With great delight I sat in his shadow..." To sit in his shadow is to be under his leadership and protection - and her submission brought her sexual delight. It's when we fight against the God-given roles for males and females that we lose the glories of Edenic lovemaking. In 8:5 she leans on her beloved (another symbol of dependence) and finds great delight in doing so. This is what grace enables and what sin loses.

***E. Sexuality brings wholeness to the couple***

Murphy points out that one of the key themes in Songs is "the presence and/or absence of the lovers to each other."<sup>18</sup> There is tension and anxiety

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<sup>18</sup> Roland E. Murphy, "A Biblical Model of Human Intimacy: The Song of Songs," in *Concilium: Religion in the Seventies*, vol. 121: *The Family in Crisis or in Transition*, ed. Andrew Greeley (New York, 1979),

when they are alienated from each other and there is wholeness when they are united. You especially see this in the two terrifying dream sequences (that are parallel to each other in the chiasm) where she thinks she has lost her husband's love, only to awake with relief that it was just a nightmare and to experience the comfort of his love all over again. But even in the other sections, there is longing for each other and only closeness brings wholeness.

### ***F. Marital love involves using the right side of your brain***

Another theme that is obvious is that marital love involves using the right side of your brain. For left brained people like me this means work. If I want to grow in this, I will need to constantly up the ante on creativity. So this book has been a rebuke to me. In an essay totally unrelated to this book, Daniel Wallace said,

The Holy Spirit does not work just on the left brain. He also works on the right brain: he sparks our imagination, causes us to rejoice, laugh, sing, and create. Few Christians are engaged and fully committed to the arts today. Where are the hymn writers? Where are the novelists? Painters? Playwrights?<sup>19</sup>

And I would add, where are the men and women who are willing to work at the creative side of our sexual relations or are we stuck in the same hum drum rhythms that have worked for thirty years?

### ***G. Sexuality is pleasurable, good, and beautiful in God's eyes***

One of the most obvious themes in this book is that sexuality within marriage is pleasurable by God's design, is good by God's design, and is beautiful in God's eyes. When God looked on His creation at the end of day 6, He declared that it was very good. And just as Adam and Eve were naked and not ashamed in Genesis 2, the same is true in this Song, even though the woman is initially insecure about her looks. But Solomon makes her totally secure. And it is impossible to miss the pleasure each finds in the other's conversation, presence, and body. It is compared to every imaginable smell, sight, and taste that is pleasurable. The joy of marital love is compared to the blossoms and fruit of the apple tree (2:3; cf. 4:16; 5:1, 13), to the fragrant smells of the vineyards (2:13), costly perfumes of myrrh and frankincense (3:6), the scent of Lebanon (4:11), and the beds of spices (5:13; 6:2). But the ecstasy they both experience as they caress and touch each other makes them almost sick with desire in seven places in this book - all seven days (1:2;

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p. 63.

<sup>19</sup> Daniel B. Wallace, "The Uneasy Conscience of a Non-Charismatic Evangelical," Online: [/docs/soapbox/estsw.htm](http://docs/soapbox/estsw.htm).



2:3-6; 4:10, 11; cf. 5:1; 7:6-9; 8:1, 3). She speaks of being lovesick - or love crazy; almost to distraction. He says how overwhelmed his heart is by one glance of her eyes (4:9; 6:13). It is a mysterious and powerful reaction of body and soul that Proverbs 30:19 says is beyond our understanding. But God created it and said it was very good.

***H. But it is also a song that warns people not to awaken eros love before its time.***

But lastly, this is also a book that warns single people over and over not to awaken romantic love before its time. And in context it is saying to avoid all of the things that led them irresistibly into having sex. Those things include kissing passionately. That is sexual foreplay. It includes touching parts of the body, hugging, etc. The book as a whole outlines many things that can awaken the power of sexual love before its time, and if you are single, that is inappropriate.

Paul worded the same truth this way in 1 Corinthians 7:1. He said, “It is good for a man not to touch a woman.” That is not a prohibition of all touch. The Bible is OK with some mild forms of physical affection, so long as those forms don’t ignite the fires of Eros. The primary meaning of the word “touch” is any touch that causes burning to take place, to light a fire, or to kindle a fire. So it is talking about any touch that arouses sexual desires. The derivative meanings of that word “touch” in the dictionary are to have close physical contact, to cling to, to touch intimately, or to have sexual contact.<sup>20</sup> The point is, any touch that starts arousing sexual desire should be stopped immediately if you are not yet married to that person. That is not legalism. That is obedience to 1 Corinthians 7:1. That is obedience to Song of Solomon, which charges singles to not awaken this powerful passion of marital love before it’s time. That kind of touch is reserved for foreplay within marriage.

Now, we will have to end there. But if you read the Song of Solomon with my linear story outline as a guide, I think it will open up to you. And as it does, may God bless you. Amen.

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<sup>20</sup> BDAG dictionary lists six definitions: 1. to cause illumination or burning to take place, light, kindle, 2. to make close contact, 3. cling to, 4. to partake of someth., w. cultic implications, have contact with, touch, 5. to touch intimately, have sexual contact, 6. to make contact with a view to causing harm, touch. Any of definitions 1 (metaphorically), 2, 3 or 5 could be in view and would fit the context of not arousing and/or satisfying sexual desires.

## **VI. Stuff I won't deal with in the sermon**

### ***A. The speakers in this Song***

**The Shulammitte woman (Song 1:2-4a, 1:4c-7, 1:12-14, 1:16-2:1, 2:3-13, 2:15-3:11, 4:16, 5:2-8, 5:10-16, 6:2-3, 6:11-12, 7:9b-8:4, 8:5b-7, 8:10-12, 8:14),**

**Friends of the Shulammitte (Daughters of Jerusalem) (Song 1:4b, 1:8, 1:11, 5:9, 6:1, 6:10, 6:13a, 8:5a)**

**Solomon (Song 1:9-10, 1:15, 2:2, 2:14, 4:1-15, 5:1, 6:4-9, 6:13b-7:9a, 8:13),**

**God (Song 5:1e “Eat friends, drink and imbibe deeply O lovers”)**

**Shulammitte's brothers (Song 8:8-9)**

### ***B. Author: Solomon (1:1,4,5,12; 3:7,9,11; 7:5; 8:11-12)***

### ***C. Key words***

**beloved (31 uses in 26 verses - Song 1:13; 1:14; 1:16; 2:3; 2:8; 2:9; 2:10; 2:16; 2:17; 4:16; 5:2; 5:4; 5:5; 5:6; 5:8; 5:9; 5:10; 5:16; 6:1; 6:2; 6:3; 7:9; 7:11; 7:13; 8:5; 8:14)**

**love (28 times in 25 verses - Song 1:2; 1:3; 1:4; 1:5; 1:7; 1:10; 2:4; 2:5; 2:7; 2:14; 3:1; 3:2; 3:3; 3:4; 3:5; 4:3; 4:10; 5:1; 5:8; 6:4; 7:6; 7:12; 8:4; 8:6; 8:7)**

**beautiful (15 uses in 13 verses - Song 1:8; 1:15; 2:10; 2:13; 4:1; 4:7; 4:10; 5:9; 6:1; 6:4; 6:10; 7:1; 7:6)**

**come (14 times in 9 verses - Song 2:10; 2:13; 4:2; 4:8; 4:16; 5:1; 6:6; 6:13; 7:11)**

**fair (in KJV) (11 times in 9 verses - Song 1:15; 1:16; 2:10; 2:13; 4:1; 4:7; 4:10; 6:10; 7:6)**

**darling (9 uses in 9 verses - Song 1:9; 1:15; 2:2; 2:10; 2:13; 4:1; 4:7; 5:2; 6:4)**

**vineyard (9 times in 6 verses - Song 1:6; 1:14; 2:15; 7:12; 8:11; 8:12)**

**wine (7 times in 7 verses - Song 1:2; 1:4; 4:10; 5:1; 7:2; 7:9; 8:2)**

**king (5 times in 5 verses - Song 1:4; 1:12; 3:9; 3:11; 7:5)**

**Solomon (5 times in 5 verses - Song 1:5; 3:9; 3:11; 8:11; 8:12)**

**find (4 uses - Song 3:1; 3:2; 5:6; 5:8)**

**fruit (4 uses in 4 verses - Song 2:3; 7:8; 8:11; 8:12)**

If Satan can sow confusion, it will keep people from being transformed by that book. And this was a book that was designed to transform marriages and make them conformed to the pattern Christ set in Ephesians 6. In fact, Ephesians 6 is a paradigm for interpreting the Song of Solomon because it shows how God designed literal marriage to image in a mysterious way the relationship of Christ to His church. Song of Solomon is doing exactly the same thing that Ephesians 6 is doing - only in more detail. It is discussing literal marriage and then using that literal marriage to speak of the mystery of Christ and the Church.

That is different than the allegorical approach which fails to apply the book to marriage at all. And it is different from the most common typological approach which applies every detail of marriage to Christ and the church, sometimes in bizarre ways. Instead of every detail being typical, Solomon and the Shulamite as real people are types of Christ and the church, and their literal marriage is an image of the divine - not the details, but the marriage as a whole. But the vast bulk of this book was designed to teach us about married life and to self-consciously make our marriages reflect well upon Christ.

This is yet another book where we are still in the infancy of understanding it. So differences of view will continue to happen even after I give this sermon - perhaps especially after I give this sermon. That's OK. Keep digging into the Word and asking God to open the eyes of your understanding. But I am 100% convinced that my view is the correct view, the simplest and most

straightforward view, and a view that can sustain any arguments that others might bring against it. If you later want a commentary that gives practical applications in a reliable way, I can give that to you.