

## Song of Songs

The title, “Song of Songs,” is a superlative, like “holy of holies” or “God of gods.” The greatest of songs. Whether “of Solomon” meant that it was written by Solomon or written and dedicated for Solomon isn’t definitive in the language, but Solomon has traditionally been considered the author. Recall that he was the writer of 1005 songs (1 Kings 4:32).

The Song of Songs is composed like a readers’ theater, with multiple parts. Job has a somewhat similar structure. In the Song the parts are not named as they are in Job, but most English translations now set off the parts with in text notation of when “she” speaks, when “he” speaks, and when “others” comment. These notations are based on the masculine and feminine, singular and plural, inflections in the Hebrew text and are very helpful for understanding the scenes.

The overarching theme of the book is “your love is better than wine,” (1:2) and “many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it. If a man offered for love all the wealth of his house, he would be utterly despised” (8:7).

The love in Song of Songs is that of bride and groom, husband and wife. They embrace each other sensually, and also as family and in friendship. Read as a portrait of how husband and wife should and can delight in each other, the Song is beautiful and encouraging. Since the Lord’s relationship with his people is often described in terms of husband and wife, bridegroom and bride, we can also see the devotion and delight of Jesus and the Christian/church in one another, with ourselves as the feminine to his masculine. Like the bride in the Song we can say, “The King has brought me into his chambers” (1:4). And like the bride, we can find the chief shepherd by following the tracks of the flock (1:8).

Songs we sing celebrate Jesus as “rose of sharon” and the “lily of the valley.” However, in 2:1 that’s the bride’s reference to herself, and is a self-deprecating statement. She’s just one more flower among the multitude of ordinary wildflowers. However, He sees her as the lily among thorns (2:2), outstanding among women.

The beauty of God’s designed intention for the intimate relationship of a man and a woman in marriage is elegantly and alluringly pictured in the Song. This unique love is to be sought beyond wealth or appetites or appearances, and is to be cherished and nourished intentionally by words and deeds. Husbands and wives are to delight in one another, and to complement and compliment one another consciously and persistently. And of course, that applies to the Lord and the disciple as well.