

Welcome to

# Journey through the Bible



Book by book  
Bible study

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## The Song of Solomon

What kind of a book is this?  
What is it all about anyway?  
How do we interpret it?

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## The Song of Solomon

What is the message,  
the enduring value of the book?

A love poem celebrating the love,  
courtship and marriage of a man  
and a woman, demonstrating the  
dignity and purity of true love

*"My lover is mine and I am his"*

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## Some issues surrounding the book

- ☆ Like the book of Esther, God is not mentioned explicitly in the book.
- ☆ Jewish authorities debated the issue and confirmed its canonicity in 90 A.D.
- ☆ Though originally included, debate has been whether it should remain.
- ☆ Read at the Passover in the synagogue
- ☆ Some recent scholars have treated it as songs of a pagan cultic ritual.

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### What kind of literature is it?

A lyrical poem with dramatic dialog  
A refrain provides unity, 2:7; 3:5; 8:4  
Repetition of characters, imagery serve to unite the scenes together  
Seven idylls (lyric poems) tell the story  
True love grows and triumphs in the end!

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### How should we interpret the Book?

Natural, literal, normal interpretation-  
Song of Solomon is a lyric poem which has both unity and logical expression- most evangelical scholars interpret it this way. The major parts of the Song are said to deal with courtship (1:2-3:5), a wedding (3:6-5:1) and maturation in marriage (5:2-8:4).

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### The Literal Sense

“literal sense” = the usual, customary and socially accepted meaning conveyed by words or expressions in their particular contexts.

The “literal sense” does not exclude the figures of speech (figurative language) where they are part of normal communication.

The “literal sense” does not exclude the spiritual meaning (not ‘spiritualization’) or application.

*If the literal sense makes common sense, seek no other sense or we shall end up with non-sense!*

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*Love is exclusive. Marital love is what the Song celebrates. The ceremonial settings of Poems III and V should be proof enough of this. We are not dealing with extramarital dalliance, which would not evoke the cheers of the daughters of Jerusalem and the other companions. Nor are we viewing premarital experimentation, against which the culture would have closely guarded, as the final chapter of the book testifies. No effort is spared, no literary device is left idle in making clear that the partners are pledged fully to each other and only to each other.*

David A. Hubbard, *Song of Solomon*, p. 260

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## The Literal Sense

Song of Solomon is a JEWISH LOVE SONG.  
In order to interpret the meaning of this book  
we need to understand two things...

The Jewish mind  
Jewish Songs / Poetry

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## Jewish and Western Interpretation



### JEWISH MIND

Dynamic  
Understanding.  
Impressions.

What something  
or someone DOES  
(function).



### WESTERN MIND

Static  
Understanding  
Images

What something  
or someone IS  
(descriptive)

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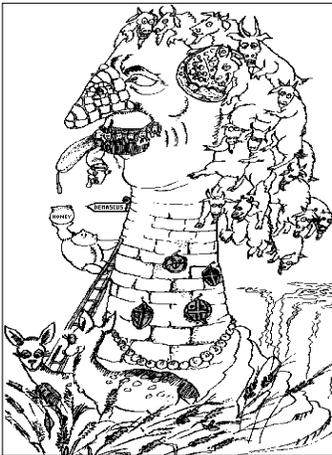
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### JEWISH THINKING

would look at the  
function of each  
image given and  
see the beautiful  
character of the  
Bride being  
described

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## SONG of SOLOMON: My Beloved is Mine and I am His

Key verses: 6:3; 8:7, I am my lover's and my lover is mine. Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot wash it away

Key Words:  
Lover, Love,  
Bride, Heart,  
Beautiful,  
Garden.

### True Love Triumphs

Courtship

Wedding

Married  
Life

1:1

Reminiscing

Love Expressed

How beautiful you are my darling!  
How handsome you are, my lover!

I am a rose of Sharon,  
a lily of the valleys

My lover is mine and I am his.  
He browses among the lilies

3:6

Celebrating

Love Experienced

I found the one my heart loves.  
I would not let him go

King Solomon, on the day of his  
wedding his heart rejoiced

You are a garden fountain,  
Let my lover come into his garden.  
I have come into my garden my  
bride

5:2

Growing and Renewing

Love Tested and Triumphant

I belong to my lover  
and his desire is for me

Place me like a seal over your heart,  
for love is as strong as death  
Many waters cannot quench love;  
rivers cannot wash it away.

If one were to give all the wealth of his  
house for love, it would be utterly scorned

8:14

Solomon  
970-960 BC.

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### Some key words/ideas in the book:

- ☆ “beloved” is repeated 31 times!
- ☆ “love” appears 15 times
- ☆ Repetition of characters and imagery serve to unite the scenes together
- ☆ Seven idylls (lyric poems) tell the story
- ☆ True love grows & triumphs in the end!

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### Outline of the Song of Solomon:

A series of seven love poems

1. Mutual love of Shulammite & Solomon 1:1-2:7
2. The bride’s reminiscences of courtship 2:8-3:5
3. Celebrating the betrothal and wedding 3:6-5:1
4. The troubled course of true love 5:2-6:3
5. King Solomon’s meditation on the bride 6:4-7:9
6. Bride’s longing for her home in Lebanon 7:10-8:4
7. Renewal of first love at Lebanon 8:5-14

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### Spring: The blossoming of love,

Arise, my darling,  
my beautiful one, come with me.  
See! The winter is past;  
the rains are over and gone.  
Flowers appear on the earth;  
the season of singing has come,  
the cooing of doves  
is heard in our land.  
The fig tree forms its early fruit;  
the blossoming vines spread their fragrance.  
Arise, my darling, ... (2:10-13)

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### The foundation of love, mutual fulfillment

My beloved is mine  
and I am his (2:16)

I am my beloved’s  
and my beloved is mine (6:3)

I belong to my beloved,  
and his desire is for me (7:10)

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### **The intensity and strength of love,**

Place me like a seal over your heart,  
like a seal on your arm;  
for love is as strong as death,  
its jealousy unyielding as the grave.  
It burns like blazing fire,  
like a mighty flame.  
Many waters cannot quench love;  
rivers cannot sweep it away.  
If one were to give  
all the wealth of one's house for love,  
it would be utterly scorned. (8:6-7)

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### **The process of love, Courtship: Love expressed**

"How beautiful you are my darling!  
O how beautiful! ...  
Like a lily among thorns  
is my darling among the young women.  
  
How handsome you are, my beloved!  
O how charming!  
(Song of Solomon 1:15-2:1)

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### **The process of love, Marriage: Love experienced**

"When I found the one my heart loves,  
I held him and would not let him go. (3:4)  
King Solomon, on the day of his wedding,  
the day his heart rejoiced! (3:11)  
You have stolen my heart, my bride;  
you have stolen my heart. (4:9)  
Let my lover come into his garden  
and taste its choice fruits. (4:16)

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### **The process of love, Married life: Love tested, triumphant**

Place me like a seal over your heart,  
like a seal on your arm;  
for love is as strong as death,  
its jealousy unyielding as the grave.  
It burns like blazing fire,  
like a mighty flame.  
Many waters cannot quench love;  
rivers cannot sweep it away.  
If one were to give  
all the wealth of one's house for love,  
it would be utterly scorned. (8:6-7)

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### The true nature of love:

Foundation is mutual fulfillment. 6:3

Strength of love = strong as death. 8:6

Process = wooing, betrothal, marriage

Experience of love = utter absorption, devotion, unquenchable, enduring, exclusive devotion to the one loved. 8:6-7

Fruit of true love = rest, joy, satisfaction,

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### Practical values of the book:

The value and dignity of the human body:

- ☆ It is created by God
- ☆ Good, beautiful, dignified, valuable
- ☆ Worthy of being treated with respect
- ☆ Requires care and attention- note the emphasis on cosmetics and perfumes,
- ☆ Merits keeping it pure along with our love
- ☆ Belongs to our spouse not just ourselves
- ☆ Described eloquently in chapter 4

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### Love that grows and endures:

Three principles for married couples:

- ★ Loving Words
- ★ Loving Works
- ★ Loving Ways

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**No class next week  
See you in two weeks!**

**The Prophets,  
“Fire in their bones”  
Read Obadiah,**



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