

## SONG OF SOLOMON

### Introduction

Author. The first verse of the book attributes the work to Solomon. Whether it was his actual experience or composed as the ideal experience is difficult to tell. The title, "Song of Songs", implies that this is the "best of songs" (compare the title, Holy of Holies).

Date. Assuming solomonic authorship the book would have been composed along with the majority of biblical wisdom literature in the 10th century B.C.

Occasion/Purpose. As with other wisdom literature which is transdispensational in its application, a specific occasion is difficult and really not necessary to identify. The purpose of the book (based upon what appear to be pivotal verses, 2:7; 3:5; 8:4) seems to be to warn young virgins to maintain chastity and preserve their purity until the time when it is appropriate for love to be aroused.

Message Statement. *True love, upon which a lasting marriage is built, will not gratify itself by indulging its desires before marriage.*

### Argument

- 1A **COURTSHIP & FULFILLMENT: THE COUPLE'S LOVE IS REWARDED** 1:1--5:1  
This section records the couple's courtship, wedding and wedding night.
- 1B Introduction 1:1  
Solomon is identified as the author.
- 2B Conversation Between the Bride-to-Be and the Daughters of Jerusalem 1:2-8  
These "Daughters of Jerusalem" (DOJ) are never explicitly identified and yet have a role throughout the song. It seems on the basis of the exhortations of 2:7 and 3:5 that they are probably the ones to whom the song is addressed. That is they are the young virgins who participate in the song as active participants and provide the active response or observation to enable the song to make its point. If the song was intended as a dramatic production they would fulfill the role of a chorus which observes and participates peripherally in the ongoing relationship between the bride and the groom.
- 3B The King Rejoices in the Beauty of His Bride-to-be 1:9-10  
Although the bride-to-be has humbly described herself, her king recognizes her beauty and

rejoices in it.

- 4B The DOJ Offer to Help Prepare the Bride for Her Wedding 1:11  
 The DOJ seem to understand the point of the King's favor in the bride-to-be and wish to be a part of the wedding.
- 5B Conversation Between the Bride-to-be and the King 1:12--2:6  
 The speakers in this section can be identified on the basis of changes in the gender of the pronouns and adjectives. It consists of a series of responses between the bride-to-be and her groom. As the conversation continues an awakening of love and desire for one another builds. As the bride-to-be describes the feelings which began to develop for the one to whom she is promised (1:12--2:6) she stops short and warns the young audience (2:7--3:5) that they must restrain such physical passion until the appropriate time.
- 6B The Soliloquy of the Bride-to-be 2:7--3:5  
 This section consists of a warning to the DOJ not to enter into a physical relationship before the proper time. The section opens and closes with the warning "Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires." The rest of the section seems to be a reminder to the audience that the bride-to-be faced all of the temptations to gratify these holy desires wickedly. First she considered her groom to be physically attractive. He was also romantically attractive in that he loved her and sought to know her. Because of their mutual commitment and their desire for one another it would have been easy to have aroused physical love before the time, but they did not. That which precedes this section and comes after it is designed to reinforce and validate the moral counsel given here.
- 7B The Wedding Procession 3:6-11  
 The beauty of the wedding procession teaches the joy and just celebration to be found in the marriage ceremony of those who have shown moral restraint and purity.
- 8B The Lovemaking of the Wedding Night 4:1--5:2  
 In very poetic and powerful terms this section describes the consummation of the marriage. Again, this portion seems intended for the young audience, who need to understand that the ultimate physical and emotional delight for which all long will be enjoyed by those who restrain such desires until the appropriate time. The groom expresses his delight in his new bride by comparing her to a locked garden. He, thus, honors her for preserving her delights for the one with whom they can be righteously shared. She then picks up on his imagery of the garden and invites him to enter and enthrall himself with her. The king then responds that he has done so.
- 2A CONFLICT & REUNION: THE LOVE OF THE COUPLE IS STRENGTHENED 5:2--6:13  
 The point of this section seems to be that because the relationship between the couple was a godly one based upon love rather than lust it was able to survive this difficult time. The bride narrates one of these difficult times and the reconciliation which eventually followed.
- 1B The Cause of the Problem 5:2-7  
 It seems that the cause of the problem was the bride's refusal to respond to the overtures of love of her new-found husband. When she finally responded it was too late and he had gone away. When she got up to search for him she was ill-treated by some of the watchmen of the city.
- 2B Her Attempt to Resolve the Problem 5:8--6:3  
 Twice in this section the DOJ query the bride concerning her husband. To the first question

the bride states her desire for her husband indicating that whatever bitterness or resentment she may have had have now been eclipsed by her desire for him. To the second question of his whereabouts, the bride responds with confidence that wherever he is now he will soon return because of the strength of their mutual love.

- 3B The Reconciliation of the Couple 6:4-13  
 While the bride was overcoming her bitterness and reviving her desire for her husband that he was doing the same. He recalls the delight of his bride and thus returns to his senses and to her. She humbles herself and the two are reunited.

- 3A CONTENTMENT AND SECURITY: THE LOVE OF THE COUPLE HAS MATURED 7:1--8:14  
 The point of this section is to describe the contentment and security which is the natural result of love based upon mutual commitment to one another's needs rather than selfish desires.

- 1B The Couple Express Their Love to Each Other 7:1--8:3  
 It is this contentment for which all long.

- 2B A Final Word of Counsel Concerning Moral Purity 8:4-14

- 1C The theme 8:4  
 The warning concerning purity is once again stated in order to state the theme of this last section and to leave the reader with the lasting impression of its importance. The three repetitions of the warning is not meant to imply the wickedness of sexual activity but to establish the danger in entering into such activity before the morally proper moment.

- 2C The uncontrollable power of love 8:5-7  
 The bride warns the young audience concerning the uncontrollable power of the love herein described. It cannot be quenched or controlled. It seems to be a universal fallacy that people can themselves control sexual passion when it is allowed to grow in wicked settings. One final reminder teaches that such is not the case. The flame once ignited cannot be quenched.

- 3C The understanding response of the DOJ 8:8-9  
 The DOJ seem to understand the point and take precautions with their younger sister. Their point is that they will restrict her if she is found to be promiscuous and will support her and do all they can to ensure her purity if she is chaste.

- 4C The blessedness of purity 8:10-12  
 The bride picks up on this metaphor and rejoices in her own purity and the blessedness which is shared with her husband as a result. Even the wealth of the king pales in comparison with the value of moral purity and love based upon it.

- 5C The exchange and delight of pure love 8:13-14  
 In a final celebration of their love the two lovers invite each other to delight in the experience which God has provided for them in this God-honoring marriage.



## Outline

1A	COURTSHIP & FULFILLMENT: THE COUPLE'S LOVE IS REWARDED	1:1--5:1
1B	<u>Introduction</u>	1:1
2B	<u>Conversation Between the Bride-to-Be and the Daughters of Jerusalem</u>	1:2-8
1C	The bride-to-be speaks of her desire for the king and rejoices in their courtship	1:2-4a
2C	The DOJ rejoice in this love	1:4b
3C	The bride-to-be expresses remorse at not being able to care for herself as she would like	1:5-6
4C	The bride-to-be asks where she can meet the king	1:7
5C	The DOJ offer to help prepare the bride for her wedding	1:8
3B	<u>The King Rejoices in the Beauty of His Bride-to-be</u>	1:9-10
4B	<u>The DOJ Offer to Help Prepare the Bride for Her Wedding</u>	1:11
5B	<u>Conversation Between the Bride-to-be and the King</u>	1:12--2:6
1C	The bride-to-be speaks	1:12-14
2C	The king speaks	1:15
3C	The bride-to-be speaks	1:16--2:1
4C	The king speaks	2:2
5C	The bride-to-be speaks	2:3-6
6B	<u>The Soliloquy of the Bride-to-be</u>	2:7--3:5
1C	Introduction: A warning not to arouse love before the proper time	2:7
2C	The physical attractiveness of the king	2:8-9
3C	The romantic attractiveness of the king	2:10-17
1D	His invitation to her	2:10-13
2D	His desire to know her thoroughly	2:14
3D	His resolve to avoid conflicts	2:15
4D	Their mutual commitment	2:16-17
4C	The yearning in her heart for the king	3:1-4
5C	Conclusion: A warning not to arouse love before the proper time	3:5

7B	<u>The Wedding Procession</u>	3:6-11
8B	<u>The Lovemaking of the Wedding Night</u>	4:1--5:2
1C	The king expresses his love for his bride	4:1-15
1D	His description of her	4:1-11
2D	His desire for her	4:12-15
2C	The bride invites the king to delight in her	4:16
3C	The king exults in his delight of his bride	5:1a
4C	The poet encourages the couple in their love-making	5:1b
2A	CONFLICT & REUNION: THE LOVE OF THE COUPLE IS STRENGTHENED	5:2--6:13
1B	<u>The Cause of the Problem</u>	5:2-7
1C	The bride refuses the overtures of her husband	5:2-6a
2C	She is ill-treated in her search for her husband	5:6b-7
2B	<u>Her Attempt to Resolve the Problem</u>	5:8--6:3
1C	She requests help from the DOJ	5:8
2C	Her desire for her husband	5:9-16
1D	The query from the DOJ	5:9
2D	The bride's response: He is physically attractive	5:10-16
3C	Her confidence in their love	6:1-3
1D	The query from the DOJ	6:1
2D	The bride's response: Their love will endure	6:2-3
3B	<u>The Reconciliation of the Couple</u>	6:4-13
1C	The king's remembrance of his bride	6:4-10
2C	The bride humbles herself and seeks her husband	6:11-12
3C	The chorus hails her return	6:13a
4C	The king notes that all enjoy looking at her	6:13b
3A	CONTENTMENT AND SECURITY: THE LOVE OF THE COUPLE HAS MATURED	7:1--8:14
1B	<u>The Couple Express Their Love to Each Other</u>	7:1--8:3
1C	The king to his bride	7:1-9a
1D	His description of her	7:1-5
2D	His desire to have her	7:6-9a

2C	The bride to her husband	7:9b--8:3
1D	At night	7:9b-10
2D	In the morning	7:11--8:3
1E	her desire to be with him	7:11-13
2E	her desire to have always been with him	8:1-2
3E	her desire to be in his embrace	8:3
2B	<u>A Final Word of Counsel Concerning Moral Purity</u>	8:4-14
1C	The theme	8:4
2C	The uncontrollable power of love	8:5-7
3C	The understanding response of the DOJ	8:8-9
4C	The blessedness of purity	8:10-12
5C	The exchange and delight of pure love	8:13-14

