

Analysis of

SONG OF SOLOMON

“THE BEAUTY OF LOVE AND MARRIAGE”

“I am my beloved’s, And his desire is for me.”

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A1 THE COURTSHIP: PREPARATION IN BETROTHAL² 1:1 - 3:5

B1 Recollection 1: The Fiancee’s Longing for Affection³ 1:1-8

C1 The Shulammitte to herself, yearning for the caresses and kisses of her lover 1:1-4a

C2 The daughters of Jerusalem⁴ to the King 1:4b

C3 The Shulammitte’s conversation with the daughters of Jerusalem 1:5-7

C4 The response of the daughters of Jerusalem 1:8

¹ Interpretation: “...This book is an historical record of the romance of Solomon with a Shulammitte woman. The “snapshots” in the book portray the joys of love in courtship and marriage and counteract both the extremes of asceticism and of lust. The rightful place of physical love, within marriage only, is clearly established and honored. Within the historical framework, some also see illustrations of the love of God (and Christ) for His people. Obviously Solomon does not furnish the best example of marital devotion, since he had many wives and concubines (140 at this time, 6:8; many more later, 1 Kings 11:3). The experiences recorded in this book may reflect the only (or virtually the only) pure romance he had.”

Contents: “A lyric poem in dialogue form, the book describes Solomon’s love for a Shulammitte girl. The king comes in [shepherd - JTB] disguise to her family’s vineyard, wins her heart, and ultimately makes her his bride.” *Ryrie Study Bible (RSB)*

² The three main points are taken from Jack S. Deere, Song of Solomon, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Jack S. Deere. The sub-headings are adapted from class notes by Harold Hoehner, Bible 604, Dallas Theological Seminary.

³ Place: The palace at Jerusalem. Time: Banquet, possibly before engagement itself. (Class notes by Harold Hoehner, Bible 604, Dallas Theological Seminary.)

⁴ Though some take this to mean variously “female wedding guests, ladies of the royal court, [or] concubines in the royal harem[, m]ost likely they refer to the female inhabitants of Jerusalem. That city is frequently referred to as the ‘mother’ of its inhabitants (cf. Isa. 51:18; 60:4; Ezek. 19:2, 10; Hosea 2:2, 5).” Jack S. Deere, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, I, 1012. See also note on 6:1.

B2 Recollection 2: The Expressions of Mutual Love ⁵ 1:9 - 2:7

- C1 Solomon to the Shulammite 1:9-10
- C2 The daughters of Jerusalem to the Shulammite 1:11
- C3 The Shulammite 1:12-14
- C4 Solomon to the Shulammite 1:15
- C5 The Shulammite to Solomon 1:16 - 2:1
- C6 Solomon to the Shulammite 2:2
- C7 The Shulammite to Solomon 2:3-6
- C8 Solomon to the Daughters of Jerusalem 2:7 ⁶

B3 Recollection 3: Pleasant Memories of Love 2:8-17 ⁷

- C1 The Shulammite to Herself 2:8-13
 - D1 She describes her beloved as he approaches her home 2:8-9
 - D2 She recalls his invitation to come outside 2:10-13
- C2 Solomon to the Shulammite: His desire for intimacy in their trysting place 2:14
- C3 A Chorus: Both resolve to keep anything from spoiling their relationship 2:15

⁵ Place: Palace at Jerusalem. Time: Engagement dinner. (Class notes by Harold Hoehner, Bible 604, Dallas Theological Seminary.)

⁶ Whether or not the speaker is Solomon (*RSB*) or the Shulammite (Harold Hoehner), the idea seems to be, “Don’t stir up or awaken feelings of love until it finds its proper resting place in the right one.” (Class notes by Harold Hoehner, Bible 604, Dallas Theological Seminary) “Let love develop naturally; do not force it.” (*RSB*)

⁷ Place: Lebanon, home of the bride. Time: Spring, perhaps just before the wedding procession takes her to Jerusalem. (Class notes by Harold Hoehner, Bible 604, Dallas Theological Seminary)

- C4 The Shulammitte to herself about her beloved 2:16-17
 - D1 Her security in their mutual loyalty 2:16a
 - D2 Her reference to his shepherding ⁸ occupation 2:16b-17a
 - D3 Her desire for him to come be with her 2:17b

B4 Recollection 4: The Shulammitte's Dream of Separation 3:1-5 ⁹

- C1 The Shulammitte's relating of her dream 3:1-4
 - D1 Her nocturnal longing for her beloved 3:1
 - D2 Her agonizing search for him 3:2-3
 - D3 Her bringing him to her mother's home 3:4
- C2 Solomon's real-time response to the daughters of Jerusalem: His request for courtesy for his beloved 3:5

A2 THE WEDDING 3:6 - 5:1

B1 Recollection 5: The Wedding Procession 3:6-11 ¹⁰

- C1 The description of Solomon's litter and litter-bearers 3:6-10
 - D1 The aromatic incense accompanying the litter 3:6
 - D2 The might men bearing the litter 3:7-8
 - D3 The appointments of the litter 3:9-10

⁸ 2:16b-17a: Solomon originally courted her under the disguise of being a shepherd. 1:4, in which she addresses him as king, is sequentially at a later time in their courtship.

⁹ Place: Perhaps the Shulammitte's home, or in Jerusalem. Time: Just before the wedding. (Class notes by Harold Hoehner, Bible 604, Dallas Theological Seminary)

¹⁰ Place: En route to Jerusalem. Time: Solomon taking the Shulammitte to Jerusalem from Lebanon. (Class notes by Harold Hoehner, Bible 604, Dallas Theological Seminary)

Obviously by this time, if Solomon in fact disguised himself as a shepherd in the initial phases of his courtship of the Shulammitte, he has long since cast aside his disguise -- the Shulammitte is cognizant of his royalty, and perhaps overwhelmed by his splendor!

- C2 The call for the daughters of Zion to gaze on the resplendent king on his wedding day 3:11

B2 Recollection 6: The Consummation of the Marriage -- The Wedding Night 4:1 - 5:1

- C1 Solomon to his bride 4:1-5
- C2 The bride to Solomon 4:6
- C3 Solomon to his bride 4:7-15
 - D1 Her physical and sensual beauty 4:7-11
 - D2 His desire to enter her locked garden 4:12-15
- C4 The Bride's invitation to enter her garden 4:16
- C5 Solomon's enjoyment of her garden 5:1a
- C6 God's blessing upon the couple 5:1b

A3 THE MATURATION OF MARRIAGE 5:2 - 8:14

B1 Recollection 7: Separation and Reconciliation (The Royal Spat) 5:2 - 6:13

- C1 The Shulammitte Wife to the Daughters of Jerusalem: Her description of her rebuff of her husband ¹¹ 5:2-8
 - D1 His desire to come to her 5:2
 - D2 Her reluctance 5:3
 - D3 His persistence 5:4
 - D4 Her belated emotional response 5:5
 - D5 His departure 5:6a
 - D6 Her unroyal search for him 5:6b-7

¹¹ Evidently one of the qualities that both Solomon and the female populace of Jerusalem admired in the Shulammitte was her openness, transparency, and vulnerability. Who of us would share our marital conflicts with the world?

- C2 The Shulammitte Wife's Looking for Help from the daughters of Jerusalem 5:8 - 6:3
 - D1 Her request for assistance from the daughters of Jerusalem 5:8
 - D2 The Daughters of Jerusalem to the Wife: Their reminding her about her husband 5:9
 - D3 The Wife to the Daughters of Jerusalem: Her "ecstatic description"¹² of him 5:10-16
 - D4 The Daughters of Jerusalem to the Wife: Their offer to help her find him ¹³ 6:1
 - D5 The Wife's Reply to the Daughters of Jerusalem: He has gone to his garden 6:2-3
- C3 The Return of Solomon 6:4-9 ¹⁴
 - D1 His adoring description of her 6:4-7
 - D2 His placing her in a class all by herself in his harem 6:8-9a
 - D3 His relating the praise of the admiring female court 6:9b-10
- C4 The Private and Public Reconciliation of the Couple 6:11-13 ¹⁵
 - D1 The Shulammitte wife to herself 6:11-12
 - E1 Her pensive, solitary departure to the orchard 6:11
 - E2 Private reconciliation: Solomon's placing of her in his royal chariot (in the orchard) 6:12

¹² *RSB*

¹³ The cooperation of the daughters of Jerusalem in helping the Shulammitte find her husband would be most inexplicable if they were rival members of the harem and not rather adoring women from the city's populace. See note ca1:5.

¹⁴ Place: Jerusalem. Time: After the separation. (Class notes by Harold Hoehner, Bible 604, Dallas Theological Seminary)

¹⁵ Place: Out in a nearby orchard. Time: After the royal spat.

- D2 The daughters of Jerusalem to the Shulammitte wife (Public reconciliation -- the drive back to the palace): Their desire to look on her beauty 6:13a
- D3 The King to the Daughters of Jerusalem: Solomon's public acknowledgment of their admiration of his wife's beauty 6:13b

B2 The Deepening of the Marriage 7:1 - 8:4

- C1 Recollection 8: Shared Admiration 7:1-10
 - D1 Solomon to His Shulammitte Wife: His Description of Her Physical charms 7:1-9
 - D2 The Shulammitte Wife's Response to her husband 7:9b-10
 - E1 Her pleasure in his pleasure 7:9b
 - E2 Her security in their relationship 7:10
- C2 Recollection 9: The Yearning for Time Together Alone 7:6 - 8:4
 - D1 The Shulammitte Wife to Solomon: Her desire to take a country trip together, perhaps to her own home territory in Lebanon 7:11-13
 - D2 The Shulammitte Wife to Solomon 8:1-3
 - E1 Her wish that she could publicly display her affection 8:1
 - E2 Her desire for their return to the privacy of her childhood home 8:2-3
 - D3 Solomon's Charge to the Daughters of Jerusalem 8:4
- C3 Recollection 10: The Reminiscing Trip to the Shulammitte's Home 8:5-14
 - D1 The Question of the Villagers: The villagers wonder who the woman is approaching on her lover's arm 8:5a
 - D2 Solomon's Reminiscence: Of the first time he found her, underneath the apple tree 8:5b

- D3 The Shulammitte Wife to Solomon: Her request for his undying love 8:6-7
- D4 The Shulammitte Wife's Reminiscence: Her brothers' protectiveness of her youthful virginity 8:8-9
- D5 The Shulammitte Wife's Reminiscence 8:10-12
 - E1 Of her success in retaining her virtue 8:10
 - E2 Of her success in bringing her husband Solomon her only gift -- her untarnished self 8:11-12
- D6 Solomon to his Wife: His reaching out to her for intimacy 8:13
- D7 The Shulammitte Wife to Her Husband: A glad response of intimacy 8:14

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