

## **Wisdom From Above For Living Here Below – Part 3**

### **SONG OF SOLOMON – LOVE IS BLIND**

#### **Explain OT Wisdom Literature**

- Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon

#### **Explain LIFE GRID**

- DOING (external, physical life) – Proverbs, Job
- FEELING (internal, spiritual life) – Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes
- CENTER (prayer, worship) – Psalms

### **SONG OF SOLOMON – LOVE IS BLIND**

The Song of Solomon is regarded today as probably one of the most obscure and difficult books in the Bible. At one point, it looked like it might even be excluded from the canon of Scripture because of its frank references to sexual love. But the Jews revered this book, and always sang these words at Passover in the spring.

This book was written by Solomon, the wisest and richest man in the ancient world. It is called the “Song of Songs” – a Hebrew idiom like “Holy of Holies” (King of Kings, Lord of Lords, etc.) meaning “chiefest, greatest, most superlative.”

**1 Kings 4:32** And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five.

**Song 1:1** The song of songs, which is Solomon's.

First and foremost, this is a love song describing with frankness and yet with purity the physical attraction of a man and a woman to each other. It shows human sexual desire as God intended it to be expressed – not pornographically or prudishly (both harmful extremes), but in purity.

The ancient Hebrew mind (because of its foundation in the Word of God) could not isolate and alienate the sexuality of man from God. The modern capacity of man to think of himself as a purely biological creature in a purely physical world is not evidence of his sophistication but of his spiritual poverty. God is the originator of man's sexuality.

Of course, we have not discovered the deepest message of this song until we pass behind the description of human love to read it as an expression of communion between man and God. The Jews took it to be an allegory of the love between Jehovah and Israel; we understand it on a deeper level as a type of the love between Christ and His Church.

The condescension of God to dwell among men as the Shekinah in the tabernacle pales in comparison to the incredible condescension we see in the New Testament, when God took on a body of flesh to walk among men as a man to “woo us” to Himself as His Bride.

In his younger days, before he became entangled with the gods of his many pagan wives, Solomon wrote this book on the joys of courtship and married love. He ultimately had 700 wives and 300 concubines.

**1 Kings 11:3** And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart.

He married many of his wives mainly to establish peaceful and profitable relations with their countries, but in so doing violated the law of the Lord.

**Deuteronomy 17:17** Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.

**But the Song of Solomon predates all of this, and we find here a story of King Solomon and his first, true love.**

Ancient eastern courtship differs in many ways from what we are familiar with, especially in the imagery of their expressions of love. For example:

- You have dove's eyes
- Your hair is like a flock of goats
- Your teeth are like a flock of sheep
- Your navel is like a round goblet
- Your belly is like an heap of wheat
- Your nose is like a tower

**Song 1:9 (NIV)** I liken you, my darling, to a mare harnessed to one of the chariots of Pharaoh.

If today a man compared his wife or girlfriend to a mare pulling a chariot, he would probably be in trouble, but in their day that simply meant “you are unique” – because a mare would not be harnessed among stallions.

#### **ILLUSTRATION: MARK LOWRY SONG – “BABY WHY NOT ME”**

Unlike modern novels, this book doesn't present an obvious story line, but it has a definite plot which is “discovered” as you read the book carefully. The cast of characters is small:

- King Solomon
- the “Shulamite” girl who becomes his wife
- the Shulamite's brothers
- the daughters of Jerusalem, who function as a “background chorus”

It is not always clear from the English who is speaking, but in most cases this can be determined by looking at the Hebrew pronouns (i.e. masculine, feminine, singular, plural). Most modern translations of Scripture attempt in some way to indicate who is speaking, but they can't be definite in every case. The KJV translators did not even attempt this.

**Song 2:1-3 (KJV)** I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys. As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters. As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.

**Song 2:1-2 (NIV)** **[Beloved]** I am a rose of Sharon, a lily of the valleys. **[Lover]** Like a lily among thorns is my darling among the maidens. **[Beloved]** Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest is my lover among the young men. I delight to sit in his shade, and his fruit is sweet to my taste.

In spite of what a familiar gospel song says, in this passage it is the SHULAMITE (THE BRIDE) who compares herself to a rose of Sharon and a lily of the valleys, not SOLOMON (THE GROOM). She is actually putting herself down, for she compares herself to a common crocus (rose) from Sharon and an ordinary hyacinth (lily) of the fields. But Solomon will have none of it, because that is not the way he looks at her – he compares her to a single beautiful lily among a bunch of thorns! (GOD DOESN'T SEE YOU THE WAY YOU SEE YOURSELF!)

The Shulamite responds by comparing Solomon to a beautiful apple tree in a forest, under which she could sit down and find protection from the sun and food to eat. It would be unusual to find an apple tree in a common forest, so she is actually saying that he is "one in a million." In another place, she describes him as "altogether lovely."

**Song 5:16** His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.

**Song 6:3** I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine: he feedeth among the lilies.

THERE IS EVEN MORE TO THIS STORY WHEN YOU STUDY IT ...

King Solomon owned a vineyard in the hill country of Ephraim, about 50 miles north of Jerusalem. It was here the Shulamite and her family worked as keepers.

**Song 8:11** Solomon had a vineyard at Baalhamon; he let out the vineyard unto keepers; every one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand pieces of silver.

She was the "Cinderella" of the family, with a natural beauty that went unnoticed. Her step-brothers (and sisters) treated her harshly and made her work outside so much that she became dark from the sun, and had no time to care for her personal appearance.

**Song 1:6** Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me: my mother's children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept.

Later, in the book of Ecclesiastes, Solomon tells us that he often undertook expeditions to discover what life was like in various levels of society, or to check on his vast land holdings. One day he disguised himself as a shepherd and went to check on this vineyard; he met the Shulamite and they fell in love, but she still did not know His true identity.

**Song 1:7** Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?

The beauty of the story is that the majestic King Solomon makes a long journey from the beautiful city of Jerusalem to the rough and dangerous mountain country CLOTHED LIKE A PEASANT, falls in love with a poor peasant girl who has absolutely nothing to offer him in return, and promises to take her away with him! His invitation is to a place that the Shulamite has never seen (and has to wait for) – so she must accept his marriage proposal BY FAITH.

**Song 2:10** My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.

**Philippians 2:5-11** Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The world just doesn't "get it" because they only see Jesus as a "humble shepherd" and not as the "king of kings." We have never seen Him in His ultimate glory either, but we love Him above all others anyway!

**Song 5:9-10** What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? what is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us? My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.

The day finally comes when the Groom returns as promised for his Bride. But, to her amazement, the Shulamite looks up from the field to see King Solomon returning for her in all his kingly splendor. She can hardly believe that this is her beloved “shepherd boy.”

**Song 3:6** Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?

Later, the women of Jerusalem will see the happy couple in their royal honeymoon procession and will also ask “who is this?” They can hardly believe that “Cinderella” has become Solomon’s beloved queen!

**Song 8:5a** Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?

**LOVE IS BLIND!** She lived for many months in love with Solomon, waiting faithfully for him, even though all she had was a promise.

**2 Corinthians 5:7** For we walk by faith, not by sight.

**1 Peter 1:8** Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:

**1 John 3:1-3** Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

**Matthew 12:42** The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.

**ECCLESIASTES (NEXT WEEK)** is the search of man throughout the world for something to satisfy his heart, but when he gains the whole world his heart is still empty because THE HEART IS GREATER THAN THE OBJECT OF LOVE. No matter what we try, it still feels “empty.”

But in the **SONG OF SOLOMON**, Christ is so magnificent that the heart which falls in love with Him will never be able to fully discover the depths of His love, because THE OBJECT OF LOVE IS SO MUCH GREATER THAN THE HEART. “The longer I serve Him, the sweeter He grows.”