

## THE SONG OF SOLOMON

INTRO: The Song of Solomon is one of the more difficult books of the Bible. Several different approaches have been taken in studying & teaching the book. There are 3 main views.

1. The allegorical view. Many scholars view the book as an allegory without a basis in historical fact. Some view it as representing the love between God and Israel in O.T. times, other view it as representing Christ and the church in the N.T. age.

2. Type & Antitype. Others view it as an example of type & antitype. They accept a historical basis for the book as depicting the love between Solomon and his favorite wife (usually said to be the daughter of Pharaoh). This love affair is said to be a type, with Christ's love for the church being the antitype.

3. Still others accept the book as being a historical narrative with its primary purpose to depict true love within the marriage relationship. Some believe there are two main characters: Solomon and a Shulamite maiden, whom he woos and wins. Others believe there are three main characters: that Solomon seeks to woo a maiden from Sheunem who is in love with a shepherd: that Solomon fails and true love triumphs.

In this study, we shall consider the literal approach. and the likelihood that there are three main characters. The book basically presents a

pageant, a musical, or opera. in which all the speeches are sung.

The main characters: the Shulamite maiden, her beloved shepherd friend, and King Solomon who tries to win her for himself. Minor participants: a female chorus referred to as the daughters of Jerusalem: the Shulamite's brothers, and perhaps other minor characters.

Reasons for taking the literal approach: (1) Nothing in the context suggests it is anything more or less than a story of romance between a woman and a man. (2) No other Biblical writer or speaker ever referred to it as allegory or typical. (3) The rule is: anything is considered to be literal unless it is necessary to consider it otherwise.

Reasons for taking the three character position: (1) That approach seems to be more in harmony with God's will regarding love and marriage. Solomon already had 60 wives and 80 concubines. 6:8. (2) The daughters of Jerusalem asked the Shulamite in 5:9. "What is your beloved more than another beloved?" That seems an unlikely question if her beloved were Solomon, (3) Though it is true that Solomon owned sheep, to view him as a shepherd seems far-fetched. (4) Twice the Shulamite describes herself as lovesick, a condition one usually experiences in the absence of her beloved rather than in his presence. 2:5: 5:8.

- I. THE FIRST SCENE. The royal tent.
  - A. The Shulamite & the daughters of Jerusalem interact, 1:1-8
  - B. Solomon & the Shulamite, 1:9-2:7.
  - C. Shulamite reminisces of her beloved 2:8-17

C. In a dream, the Shulamite seeks & finds her lover, 3:1-5

D. The royal procession entering Jerusalem, 3:6-11.

II. SECOND SCENE. In Solomon's palace.

A. Solomon seeks to flatter the Shulamite, 4:1-7.

B. She speaks (in her heart) to her shepherd, & in her thoughts, he answers: 4:6 thru 5:1.

C. The Shulamite dreams she is at home & her shepherd comes to visit, 5:2-6:3.

D. Solomon again tries to woo the Shulamite, 6:4-10, and she responds, vs. 11-13.

E. Solomon makes still another attempt, 7:1-9.

F. Her final response, 7:10 thru 8:4.

III. THIRD SCENE, in Issachar. The Shulamite & her true love are reunited, & true love wins out over lust & infatuation, 8:5 thru 14.

La Porte, TX (date unknown)

Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, November 9, 2003