

Song of Solomon

Song of Solomon 1:4 Take me away with you! Let's run off together! An elopement with my King-lover! We'll celebrate, we'll sing, we'll make great music. Yes! for your love is better than vintage wine. Everyone loves you of course and why not? (The Message)

One of the first questions that we might ask of the Song is, "who is it about?" If we just had the above verse then it would seem like Solomon would be the answer. But it gets more complicated than this... To get a more complete picture here is an outline of the book based on a reading of The Message.

1:1 Book Title

1:2-6 The woman proposes elopement (Black but beautiful)

1:7,8 The woman seeks to know where her lover is tending his flocks but he will not tell her (A Shepherd)

1:9-2:1 Pillow talk, before and after (wildflower)

2:2-7 The man and woman regard each other above all others, leading to intimacy (the apricot tree)

2:8-17 The woman watches for him, he comes in the spring and claims her, she seeks protection, leading to intimacy (spring)

3:1-5 The woman alone, sleepless, longing for her lover seeks him in the streets of the city until she finds him. She embraces him and holds him tight. (separation)

3:6-11 The appearance of King Solomon's carriage, idealized pomp and circumstance, a metaphor of her lovers preparation for the wedding (wedding)

4:1-7 The man speaks, she is perfect in every way, leading to intimacy (perfect)

4:8-5:1 She is to him a secret garden, a whole orchard of succulent fruits, leading to intimacy (secret garden)

5:2-16 He comes to her but she is already in bed, he persists but by the time she rises he is gone. She searches the city streets fruitlessly. He is all that she desires (heartsick)

6:1-3 His absence resolved, he is on the way to her, they belong exclusively to one another (I am my lover's and my lover is mine)

6:4-10 He expresses his wonder over her beauty and uniqueness, she's a woman

beyond compare, blessed and praised by all (ravishing)

6:11-7:13 A late winter day dream of the Shulammite (the woman) dancing spawns desire and brings the couple the satisfaction and even the ecstasy that they find only in each other. (dancing)

8:1-10 Reminiscing and contemplating the love that has become the lens through which all of life is seen. It is a love so large that nothing else matters. (love)

8:11-14 Solomon has vast vineyards and has attracted the attention of the masses but what he has is nothing compared to what the man calls my vineyard and what the woman calls my gazelle. (mine)

Solomon does not fit the profile of the man who has the leading role in the Song. The Song celebrates the intimacy of two who give themselves without reservation to each other. Solomon had a thousand wives and consequently was intimate with no one. But he could have come to see his error, and even though it was too late for him to have what he may have come to long for, he may have wished for others what he had missed for himself. The Song is wistful, imagined and hoped for love.