**SONG OF SOLOMON – INTRO**

*The Song of Songs…* - the ***BEST*** of all songs – ***the superlative*** of songs

**WHO WROTE IT?**

Solomon – probably NOT the author (3K BC?) – some of it might have been from Solomon

*…which is Solomon’s* – a superscript – similar to Proverbs

(1 Kgs 4:29-34) – God gave him the greatest wisdom on all sorts of topics/subjects

Some of the words might be early “proto” Hebrew – some are “newer” Persian

Are influences from early Mesopotamian & Egyptian love poetry (we borrow styles all the time)

Most likely a VERY GOOD Hebrew poet/editor/author

Some think it might have been a female author – The Woman speaks the most – initiates much of the interaction – would have an “insider” relationship to language & thought

Some think it was a guy selfishly romanticizing his “perfect woman” (basement dweller today)

Probably dates around 300-400 BC – post-exile in Israel

**WHO IS IT ABOUT?**

Traditional view(s) - about Solomon & his (arranged) marriage to an Egyptian princess ***OR*** the Shulamite maiden (Sng 6:13; 7:1) OR a love poem written about (from the perspective of) a country maiden who is in love with a shepherd but Solomon has taken her for his harem

**NOTE:** **The Song is about an exclusive, committed relationship**

NOT a strong point for Solomon – hundreds of “wives” – *many foreign women* (1 Kgs 11:1) – he “collected” wives – 700 wives – 300 concubines

Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Hittites – all women/tribes God warned Israel NOT to intermarry with – they would (AND DID) turn (the Israelites) hearts to other gods

(1 Cor. 6:14) – *do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers*

*Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD* (1 Kgs 11:6) – catastrophic result – after Solomon’s death - Israel was split as a nation – eventually conquered & the temple destroyed – Israel taken into exile

Solomon (Sng 8:11-12) – the example of someone who tries to buy love

**REFERENCES** – *Solomon, king* (and *shepherd*) – all honoring titles, contrasts, comparisons, metaphors & similes – NOT historical/literal persons/titles/positions – ***IT’S POETRY***

***THE WOMAN*** –speaks the most (65.5 of 117 lines) – she’s self-assured, confident & intelligent YET modest – The Man praises her beauty & character – she does the same

***THE MAN*** *–* we learn a lot about him from The Woman – he is caring, protective, gentle, honorable – TOGETHER – they are either engaged/betrothed OR newly married

***THE WOMEN –*** *daughters of Jerusalem/Zion*, young women/virgins – ***NOT REAL WOMEN*** – they are a literary device – ***a Chorus*** – they echo/amplify/agree with He/She says – a ***sounding board*** – provide a contrast to what’s being said – ***students*** – She teaches/warns them of the “ways of love” – see them as young, naive “city girls”

***BROTHERS*** – role of protecting the virtue/sexuality of their sister – Her “gate keepers” – they uphold & protect the social norms

***MOTHER*** – usually present in more sexual moments – MAYBE the role/representation of supporting, guiding, teaching The Woman?

***FATHER***??? – WHERE’S HER DAD??? – would be unrealistic (POETRY) for The Woman to not listen/obey Her father’s guidance & advice – POETICALLY would have created an unrealistic or overly “heavy” presence that would take away from the poets intent – DAD WITH A SHOTGUN hanging over the whole thing!!!

**PLACE IN THE BIBLE**

4 manuscripts of The Song found with The Dead Sea Scolls

ENGLISH BIBLE – part of the **wisdom & poetry section** (Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song)

HEBREW BIBLE – after Ruth ON PURPOSE (Proverbs, Ruth, Song) – ***Prvbs 31:10-31*** – the virtuous, Godly wife – ***RUTH*** – a confident & virtuous woman – ***SONG*** – a confident, virtuous woman –

**NOTE** – also helps us understand why Song is in the canon – presents a strong, confident, beautiful yet modest & virtuous woman WHO IS TO BE TREASURED by men/a man – his is to woo her in honor – pursue & respond to her as a most valued intimate companion

Some didn’t think is should be (w/Ecclesiastes) part of Scripture – thought Ecclesiastes was TOO SARCASTIC – The Song – TOO EXPLICIT

THE PURPOSE – The Song is intended to be redemptive – redeeming emotional & physical love as God intended – within the bounds of marriage

It’s not just about marriage – it includes/relates to aspects of dating, courtship/engagement, betrothal – about going to far – *it gives us warning about the power – even danger of the most powerful of emotions & physical expressions of the most intimate of human relationships*

**READ** – (**Sng 2:7; 8:6-7**)

**ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION** – Jewish – God & Israel – the Law & the Prophets – Christian – Jesus & the Church – the Old & New Testaments

**READING/UNDERSTANDING HEBREW POETRY**

***NO*** – it doesn’t rhyme & ***NO*** meter/rhythm (e.g. iambic pentameter) any one can decipher – ***it might*** in rare places in the original language – a play on words – like puns

#1 – Heb. Poetry has short, tight lines (colons) – it’s TERSE & intense

#2 – Parallelism – considered THE MARK of Hebrew poetry – saying the same thing twice but using different words ***AND*** – the second line amplifies or adds a nuance to the first line/colon – *“a” and what’s more, “b”*

#3 – LOTS of imagery – LOTS of simile (*is like*) & metaphor (symbolic/representative) – trees, flowers, perfumes, scents, oils, jewels, animals, sheep, deer, gazelles, mountains, streams, rivers, pastures, halls, houses, towers, walls, windows

***ALL INTENDED*** to create emotion, imagination – for the reader to enter into the world of the lovers – to connect with the images & ideas – we “fill in the blanks”

***YES*** – there is A LOT of “PG-13 & 18” imagery – it is a sensual & passionate poem! – IT’S SUPPOSE TO BE…BUT…*it is NOT intended to be erotica or pornographic* – to read it, approach it and/or understand it as such *TOTAL MISSES THE POINT!!!* (***MORE LATER***)

**NOTE**– early Hebrew commentator (Origen) suggested The Song be read ONLY by mature men (and women!) – IT’S SPICEY

**Bernard of Clairvax** – the need to master Ecclesiastes & Proverbs BEFORE handling The Song – PRETTY SMART – keeps our “feet on the ground” with The Song

The imagery – similes – metaphors are intended to be TASTFUL (or the subject) – NOT meant to titillate – it treats a delicate topic & relationship with evocative language WITHOUT being crass, offensive…nasty (LIKE TODAY)

***Natural/Literal Reading*** – it’s about love IN MARRIAGE – The Song gets REAL PERSONAL…BUT – to head into the exotic, erotic, pornographic is THE WRONG DIRECTION – the Song is expressive but NOT DIRTY

***MATT. 5:27-30 STILL APPLIES***

**AS WISDOM LITERATURE**

The application of God’s will to the daily affairs of life – The Song describes love – intense, EXCLUSIVE, and faithful love in spite of obstacles & difficulties

The Song indirectly BUT PASSIONITELY reveals God’s will for the special relationship between a man & woman

A CRUCIAL ROLE – imagine the Bible WITHOUT the Song – would be left with very little AND MOSTLY NEGATIVE words about a God-given & wonderful & beautiful aspect of humanity

Sexuality is an important aspect of our lives – the human experience - God uses The Song to encourage & warn us about it’s power in our lives

THE WORLD knows it – has WRECKED IT – we have wrecked it – bought into a false god

THE SONG celebrates Godly human sexuality & love – AFFIRMS love, intimate relationships, sensuality & sexuality – *THE CHURCH has been pretty bad at addressing the issue!!!*

We don’t talk about it BUT – THE WORLD “worships” it!!! – has become the “end all & be all” of pretty much EVERYTHING

PEOPLE IDENTIFY their very existence by their sexuality – LGBT – NOW wants NO constraints – turned into an ALPHBET of perversion of what God intended

“Making Love” – IS NOT making “love” – you don’t “make love” – LOVE IS A RELATIONSHIP – NOT A PHYSICAL ACT

THE SONG – communicates issues of Godly human love & relationships – ***love is mutual, exclusive, total & beautiful*** – WE HAVE CHEAPENED IT & contorted it into something almost unrecognizable

God speaks of Israel as adulterous – Ezekial GETS GRAPHIC – God commanded Hosea to marry an prostituted/unfaithful wife (1:2) as an example of Israel’s unfaithfulness

Paul (Eph. 5) – Husband & Wife – Christ & His Church

Gen. 1 – both naked and unashamed – Gen. 2 – hiding & ashamed – Gen. 3 – a broken relationship