

# Survey of the Old Testament

## Song of Solomon

1. Also called “Song of Songs” (from the first verse).
2. This short book (117 verses) is difficult for several reasons:
  - a. It contains an unusual vocabulary. It contains 470 different words, 47 of which only occur in the Song. Even among those words that occur elsewhere in the Old Testament, many of them occur infrequently outside of the Song.
  - b. Which method of interpretation should be employed?
    - i. Jewish Allegory – symbolic representation of God’s love for Israel.
    - ii. Christian Allegory – symbolic representation of Christ’s love for the church. In this connection, many of the phrases from this book are found in some of our songs. “The Lily of the Valley,” “Jesus, Rose of Sharon,” and “his banner over us is love” are all terms that come from the Song.
    - iii. Literal – this is a poem, or song, that celebrates human love. There is no compelling reason to assign a figurative meaning to it. It seems right for God to give instruction about the romantic aspect of marriage.
  - c. It does not appear to be a spiritual document. It does not contain the usual religious terminology. God is mentioned in 8:6, although whether it is apparent depends upon which English translation you read. Why is an apparently non-religious book in a spiritual canon?
3. All indications are that this is to be taken as a celebration of human love and sexuality. We must remember that sex is not a bad thing. It becomes evil and embarrassing only because of abuses. (It is private but not evil). See Heb. 13:4.
4. The book describes (sometimes in intimate detail) the love of a bride and bridegroom. They describe their desire for each other. They describe the beauty they see in each other. They describe how they long to be together when they are apart. They describe how they long to stay together when they are together. It is a beautiful expression of married love.
5. Consider a few passages:
  - a. 2:1-5 – she describes how much she desires him, and that she is love-sick, and he is the only cure.
  - b. 4:1-7 – he describes how beautiful she is in his eyes. While the terminology does not sound very romantic in our culture, this is high praise for her beauty.
  - c. 8:6-7 – this is a magnificent monument to the power of love.
    - i. Love is as strong as death – death is irresistible; so is love.
    - ii. Jealousy is “fierce” – perhaps better translated “inflexible.” Jealousy is as inflexible as the grave. This is not destructive jealousy; it involves the rightful claim of romantic possession (cf. 1 Cor. 7:1-5).
    - iii. The flame of love is like a flame from God – it cannot be extinguished. There is not enough water to extinguish it.
    - iv. This kind of love cannot be bought. Those who try are despised.