

- **\*READ II Timothy 2:16,17\*** These two verses are probably two of the most well known verses within our minds because they speak to the necessity and importance of the God breathed book that so many of us hold in our hands even right this moment. I wouldn't think for even a second that any of us would deny the benefit of God's Word in each of our lives. I feel confident that everyone person here would affirm with great vigor that all of God's Word is beneficial to us and can truly make us complete and able to accomplish every good work that God would have us to do.
- We could even look to the individuals parts of the Bible and see the benefit of each. The first five books of the Bible teach us the origin of man, sin, and God's desire to have a people all for Himself. The following books of the history of Israel show us the benefit of obedience and the consequences of unfaithfulness. Job shows us strength in adversity and the Psalms teach us about God, His holiness, and our need to worship Him. Proverbs and Ecclesiastes teach us how to live this life well, ad the prophets show us the severity of God's wrath and the limitless nature of His grace and mercy. As we move into the Gospels we learn about the Messiah and the mission He came to accomplish on the cross. The following letters teach us about the church and our Lord's exceptions of His called out people, and then the Revelation shows us that faith is the victory and we will win with Jesus! Surely we understand well that the entirety of the Bible is good and useful for us.
- But we missed something didn't we? We skipped over a particular book that is squeezed in there between Ecclesiastes and Isaiah, right? That oft neglected book is, of course, the Song of Solomon. Let's clear our minds for just a second...and now I want for you to think about the first thing that comes to your mind when the Song of Solomon is mentioned. If i had to venture a guess, I'd say that for some of use the first thing to come to our minds is, "I don't have a clue about anything about Song of Solomon." Then I'd guess there are at least a few of us that first thought, "Isn't that the book with the graphic language?" And then some others might be wondering why the writing was included in the canon of Scripture to begin with.
- I'm not going to hate on anyone for any of these thoughts that might have been yours. I can understand and sympathize. However, if we truly believe that **II Timothy 2:16,17** is true, then doesn't that demand that we come to know at least a little something about out every portion of the Bible? I certainly wouldn't say that we have to be able to write a 20 page dissertation on Song of Solomon, but a basic familiarity and appreciation for this beautiful writing would be good for us all, even if at first glance we wouldn't consider it our cup of tea. Starting this week and over the next few weeks, we will be consider Song of Solomon as a part of our daily Bible reading, so we will take a few moments tonight to prepare ourselves for the reading of this unfamiliar portion of God's Word.

## I. Song Of Solomon Background

### A. Most believe this writing was authored by Solomon, king of Israel.

1. We would probably give this a quick "duh", but we must remember that the titles of the books of the Bible are give by man, they are not a part of the inspired Text. So when we consider a book, we can't just assume something about it based upon the name. It is often referred to simply as the Song of Songs, meaning the most beautiful of all of the songs. With that said, the first verse does seem to indicate that Solomon authored or at the very least was highly involved in the writing of this song which would fit him as he was a known song writer. **(1,005 known songs—I Kings 4:32)**
2. Those who would speak up against Solomon as the author would point towards Solomon's history with women and would say that such a man wouldn't have the ability to author such a writing that focuses on pure love and relationship between man and woman. Be that as it may, there is no solid evidence beyond this that would persuade me away from Solomon as the author of this work bearing his name. But this isn't the only aspect of the book that is often disagreed upon and debated.

## B. There is some disagreement as to what the Song of Solomon actually is.

1. What I mean by this statement is that there is no consensus way in which people view this work. There are at least five different ways that I was able to find in which people approach this work.
  - (1) View 1: A simple love story between a man and a woman.
  - (2) View 2: A future depiction of Christ and His church.
  - (3) View 3: A depiction of God's relationship with Israel.
  - (4) View 4: A picture of man as the woman and our respond to God.
  - (5) View 5: An allegory with any number of deeper meanings.
2. One reason for there being such a wide range of ways to see this book is because there isn't much background to be had to help us understand Song of Solomon. The book itself doesn't have defined characters with names. The only name we find is Solomon's in **1:1 & 3:9,11**. Besides that, we see a woman character (**the Shulamite 6:13**), at least one male character, and then a side group of people that we might refer to as the chorus who occasionally interject.
3. Further disagreement that is had with the work comes when you try to determine the exact number of characters. There is a woman and a man for sure, but is it just one man or are there two men? One man seems to be of royalty of by the language he uses, but what about the other man? The language of the song seems to indicate that he is a shepherd or outdoorsman of some sort.
4. Further offering confusion to us is the fact that the storyline itself is up to debate. Some would say that there is one man trying to persuade the woman to give him her love, and he finally succeeds. Others would say that there is another man within the song that they refer to as the shepherd who is the true love of the woman character. A king passes by, is enamored by her beauty, tries to entice her, but she eventually falls back into the arms of her original love, the shepherd man.
5. When I said there was debate on what this work is all about, I was not stating that lightly. But in case you were wondering which one I subscribe to, at this point in time I tend to lean towards the story line of there being three individuals with the Shulamite and the shepherd being in love, and the king trying to entice her to love him.

## C. There is no religious overtone or undertone throughout the entirety of the song besides a reference to God in 8:6.

1. There is nothing obviously religious about this work. If it was taken out of the Bible, then we might not even know it was included in the Bible.
2. We see that one reference to the Lord in **8:6**, "*the very flame of the Lord*" is mentioned, but besides that there is nothing about the Law, sacrifice, sin, or spirituality.

## D. There is no mention of Song of Solomon anywhere in the New Testament.

1. No references or quotes of Jesus or the Apostles can be attributed to Song of Solomon.
2. Therefore, we have to put in some work in order to figure out exactly what to do with this work.

## II. Tips To Help Us Read Song Of Solomon

### A. Consult outside resources to guide your reading.

1. I've been looking at multiple resources this week in preparation because like so many, I was very unfamiliar with Song of Solomon. I had a vague idea of what was entailed in the work, but outside of the graphic language that often comes to our minds, I wasn't too familiar with it.
2. Therefore, it was very useful for me to consider some work from some much smarter people who could guide me in my reading and study. Feel free to ask if you'd like some of the material I found that helped me to understand this book a little better. There is no shame in seeking the help and guidance of others if their logic and approach is sound.

<https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/song-of-solomon.html>

<http://www.padfield.com/acrobat/harbison/song-of-solomon-rh.pdf>

<https://godsbreath.net/2009/08/18/song-of-songs/>

## B. Break the writing down into separate scenes.

1. Another aspect of this book that makes it strange to us is that it seems to be written like a play or musical in that the characters speaking seems to change all the sudden. In a normal screenplay, the script is often broken down into acts and scenes. So based upon who is speaking and the context of what is being said, it is possible break down this work and have the opportunity to digest it a piece at a time.
2. The resources I considered suggested some breaks and shifts in the story that can help us to see the picture of the work a little better. One of the resources I looked broke the song into six scenes while another one had four separate acts that were broken down further into separate scenes.

## C. Try to identify who is speaking.

1. Again, this is a bit difficult because this work isn't like others where names are given and people are clearly identified. Instead, we have to use pronouns and context to determine who is speaking.
2. One of the resources I consulted really aided in helping to identify who was speaking in each scene of the work. I went through the entirety of the song and made some color marks so that I could quickly identify who it was that I thought was speaking throughout the song. This was extremely helpful to me when trying to figure out the flow of the storyline.

## D. Keep in mind the eastern influence that is present in this song and how it differs from our western culture.

1. This is often the first thing that stands out to us when we think about Song of Solomon. Our mind goes straight to some of the strange language that is prevalent throughout the song, and just the weird way in which it is written being so different from every other book of the Bible.
2. The language of this work is so completely foreign to anyway in which we might express our love or affection for our significant others. For example...I tried to pull off **4:1-6** on Katie earlier this afternoon and I'm sure to your surprise...she gave me a really funny look. Although the language is extremely different from how we might communicate, we can still look beyond it and recognize that there are some great applications and benefits from our reading and understanding of the Song of Solomon.

## III. Applications & Benefits From Song Of Solomon

### A. The awesome example of faithfulness from the Shulamite woman to the shepherd man.

1. Remember that one of the views of this work is that the king is trying to entice the lovely lady to join him as his wife. How often have we seen this play out in different movies or such. The rich guy finds the poor young woman and tries to woo her, but her heart is with someone else who is without a lot of money or prestige. This seems to be one of the possible stories.
2. This thought can be supported in a couple of ways. Firstly, there are two similar verses that shows the lady telling the daughters of Jerusalem to not awaken her love until it is ready to be awakened. **(2:7 & 3:5)** I take this to mean that she is making sure that her love is not bought, but that it is reserved for the one who truly deserves it. Additionally, we seem to see this conclusion reached by the author by what is said in **8:7**, *"Many waters cannot quench love, nor will rivers overflow it; if a man were to give all the riches of his house for love, it would be utterly despised."* The Shulamite woman's love was not going to be bought. She is to be commended for such faithfulness, and we would do well to follow her example.

### B. The glorification of love between man and woman as God designed it to be.

1. The language, again, might be different...but the Song of Solomon should be good representation of the love that we share together with our spouses. As husbands and wives, we ought to be people who are putting great effort into keeping the fire of love for our spouses burning brightly. We ought to have great affection for our spouses, and the Song of Solomon praises and encourages this type of feeling between spouses.

2. The love between spouses is to be mutual. *"My beloved is mine, and I am his."* (2:16; 6:3; 7:10) Their love is to be burning hot for one another. *"Put me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm. For love is as strong as death, jealousy is as severe as Sheol; its flashes are flashes of fire, the very false of the Lord."* (8:6) These characteristics are good and right between a man and his wife.
- C. The godly example of pure love and marriage that is had between man and woman and Christ and His church.
1. This song puts forth the love that is had between these two individuals and how a third party tried to pull the woman away from her beloved. How often do we see this type of scenario play out in marriages today? How often does a spouse allow someone outside his or her marriage to drive a wedge in his or her marriage? Even worse...how often do Christians allow for the world to drive a wedge between them and their Savior Jesus?
  2. The faithfulness of the Shulamite that was mentioned earlier shows us an example of true and faithful love which is the same love that Jesus has for us, and that we ought to have for Him. The world will often try to entice us with all sorts of riches and wealth, but we must remember our first love and remain faithful and true.
- D. Our faith is strengthened by considering a part of God's Word that we might not naturally be drawn to.
1. Normally, true growth isn't obtained when we do things that come easily to us. However, we truly gain strength when we push ourselves to do things that might not be natural for us. Such I think can be the case when it comes to reading through Song of Solomon and gaining a little knowledge and understanding about it.
  2. I don't know if any of us would say that we would get all excited about reading through Song of Solomon as we might for the Gospels or another well known book or portion of the Bible. Therefore, I see the next few weeks as an opportunity for for personal growth to strengthen our faiths and become a little more well rounded in our Bible knowledge by putting forth some effort to get to know this often neglected book.

Is the Song of Solomon strange and extremely different from 99% of the rest of the Bible? It sure is, but we must be convinced that it is in there for a reason. Some book's reasons for inclusion in the Bible are quite evident, but we wouldn't say that is the case for Song of Solomon. Hopefully we will all take a few minutes a week over the next month to read and meditate upon this beautiful work to better know it and to gain an appreciation for its content. And hopefully after it all, we can look back and be proud of our efforts to better know God's Word. **\*PRAYER\***