**Song of Songs**

**(Song of Solomon)**

**11-5-2015**

“This book chronicles one woman’s journey to find fulfilling love with a man who, for reasons unknown to us, comes across as both enamored of her and forever elusive to her.” (NIB, 371)

“We watch the protagonist’s selfhood unfold before our eyes as we observe her {1} as the innocent romantic who is propelled by her passion and her dreams of being love and caressed by the man of her dreams (1:2-4); {2} as defiant and impatient (1:5-6, 6:13); {3} as a mature, intelligent, knowledgeable woman who passes on what she has learned in her experience of frustrated love to her impressionable female audience (2:7; 3:5; 8:4); and {4} as self-assured but pragmatic about the way the world operates and resolved to find happiness , despite the limitations imposed on her (8:10, 13-14).” (NIB, 367)

**Detailed Outline: (New Interpreters Bible Commentary)**

1. **1:1, Superscription**
2. **1:2-4, Let him Kiss Me**
3. **1:5-6, I am Black and Beautiful**
4. **1:7-2:7, I compare you, My Love**
   1. 1:7-8, A Simple Question
   2. 1:9-11, Precious Metaphors
   3. 1:12-17, Fragrant Metaphors
   4. 2:1-7, I adjure you
5. **2:8-17, My Beloved is Mine, and I am His**
6. **3:1-5, I looked for him but did not find him**
7. **4:1-5:1, How Beautiful you are, my love**
   1. 4:1-8, A woman’s beauty
   2. 4:9-15, A locked garden
   3. 4:16-5:1, The scent of a woman
8. **5:2-6:13, If you find my beloved**
   1. 5:2-8, I slept but my heart was awake
   2. 5:9, We don’t get it
   3. 5:10-16, Do you see what I see?
   4. 6:1-3, But where is he?
   5. 6:4-10, One of a kind beauty
   6. 6:11-12, The Garden of Love
   7. 6:13, The daughter’s request
9. **7:1-8:7 Who is this leaning on her beloved?**
   1. 7:1-9, The Shepherd’s Seduction
   2. 7:10-13, The Shulammite’s Surrender
   3. 8:1-5, In my mother’s house
   4. 8:6-7, The Power of Love
10. **8:8-14, Epilogue**

“How do we explain the radically different portraits of female sexuality in the Bible when we compare the sexually vivacious protagonist in Song of Songs with the sexually constrained women in so many other portions of scripture? The former speaks openly and immodestly about her erotic desires, while the latter are portrayed as the archetypal other whose sexuality must be regulated and guarded against.” (NIB 368)

“The female body poses no ethical problems in Song of Songs, although in other parts of Scripture it is problematic. It bleeds (Leviticus 12; 15-19-30); it breeds (Leviticus 12); it confounds male wisdom (Numbers 5); and it has enormous power over the male imagination (Leviticus 21:7, 2 Samuel 11), or so it seems. So mysteriously powerful is a woman’s body that it can compete with a man’s religious obligations (Exodus 19:15). Only in Song of Songs is the female body extolled and praised for its difference and its beauty.” (NIB, 370)

**Big Questions:**

What would you say Song of Songs is about?

What do you wish we would talk about more in the church?

What is one thing you have learned?

**Review of Wisdom Literature**:

What have you learned (what wisdom have you gained) through reading this?

What are some of the challenges of Wisdom Literature?

What do you appreciate about Wisdom Literature?

**Wisdom Literature in the Bible**:

1. Few of the books say anything about the history of Israel, its major institutions of covenant and kingship, and its great personalities such as Abraham and Sarah, Moses, and David.
2. The books all share a strong didactic (instructive) tone. The word “wisdom” pervades the books (42 times in Proverbs, 18 times in Job, 28 times in Qohelet (Ecclesiastes), 60 times in the book of Sirach, and 30 times in the book of Wisdom.
3. Themes or teachings of Wisdom Literature in the Bible Include: God, the cosmic order, creation, wisdom, consequences of human choices, Doctrine of the Two Ways (moral life is one of two ways – example Woman Wisdom or Woman Folly in Proverbs 1-9), Personification of Wisdom.