**Song of Songs**

**Introduction:**

Time Period: Late Composition 2nd – 4th Century BCE

* Uses language borrowed from Persian and Aramaic language.

Authorship: Unknown (attributed to Solomon) though potentially written by a woman

* Attributed to Solomon because of the Superscription in 1:1 and since it was believed that he had married hundreds of wives many traditions presumed that he held a vast knowledge of romance and matters of the heart.
* However:
	+ There is a strong female voice (uncommon in Scripture)
	+ Women traditionally sang the songs.

Song of Songs is traditionally read during the Jewish Festival of Passover. It is read because Jews believe that in the Wilderness God was wooing God’s people.

**How should we read this book?**

1. The delights of love have always and everywhere found their highest expression in poetry, which is how the Song of Songs must be read. It uses language that is vivid, imaginative, unguarded, and ecstatic in its depiction of the most personal and intimate of human relationships. The book is best read as a euphoric expression of human experience, which in itself reflects the generous gifts of the Creator.
2. Phillis Trible – Reversal of the Garden of Eden
	* Ellen Davis – 3 ruptures healed
		+ Man & Woman (Genesis 3:16)
		+ Humanity & Creation (Genesis 3:17-19)
		+ God & Humanity (Genesis 3:22-24)

Healing between Humanity and Creation

* Setting is a Garden (2:10-12)

Healing between Man & Woman

* 6:3 – I am my beloved’s and my beloved is mine
* Relationship of mutuality and fidelity (2:16, 6:3, 8:12)
* Genesis 3:16 (“your desire shall be for your husband”) Song 7:10 (“His Desire is for me”)

Healing between Humanity and God

* Many places in scripture use the metaphor of “marriage” to describe the relationship between God and people. The love demonstrated in Song of Songs is that of a intimate marriage relationship.
	+ Examples: Hosea, John 3, Revelation 18

**Outline:**

**I. The Song of Songs (Song of Solomon 1:1)**
In its title, the book identifies itself as a "song of songs" (that is, a superlative song) and points to a relationship between the book and Solomon.

**II. The Two Lovers Appear (Song of Solomon 1:2-2:7)**
The young woman and young man introduce themselves with descriptions of their longing for one another.
 **III. Seeking the Beloved (Song of Solomon 2:8-3:5)**
The woman is beckoned by the voice of her beloved (2:8-15), and she declares her love and allegiance to him, rising from her bed to seek the one "whom my soul loves" (2:16-3:5).

**IV. A Royal Wedding (Song of Solomon 3:6-11)**
The woman envisions a royal wedding procession, perhaps fantasizing about her own wedding to come.
 **V. The Man in Praise of His Lover (Song of Solomon 4:1-5:1)**
The man sings the praises of his beloved, describing her in vivid poetic imagery.

**VI. Love's Challenges (Song of Solomon 5:2-6:3)**
Again, the woman hears the voice of her beloved and goes to seek him, enduring an attack of the city sentinels. She describes her lover to her friends, who wonder where he has gone.

**VII. Mutual Longings (Song of Solomon 6:4-13)**
The man returns to a loving description of his beloved, his "only one." She, in turn, seeks him in her fantasy.

**VIII. Love That Lasts Forever (Song of Solomon 7:1-8:7)**
In this dialogue, the man sings of his praise and his longing for the woman (7:1-9), and she declares her love and commitment to him, singing of the fierce and enduring passion of their mutual love.
 **IX. Concluding Dialogue (Song of Solomon 8:8-14)**
The closing verses report the reconciliation of the woman with her brothers and one more announcement of the longing and commitment of the two lovers.

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