

# **THE SONG OF SOLOMON - A STUDY GUIDE**

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## **THE CENTRAL QUESTION:**

### **What does this book/story say to us about God?**

This question may be broken down further as follows:

- a. Why did God do it/allow it?
  - b. Why did He record it for our study?
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1. Do you think Solomon wrote this book? Which one of his many wives does this “song” refer to (1 Kings 11:1-3)? What evidence do we have that Solomon wrote it? At what time in Solomon’s life was the book written? There are more variations in the interpretation of Song of Solomon than of any other book in the Bible. Why do you suppose that is? Would you have voted to include Song of Solomon in the Bible? Why? Or why not?
2. Why does Song of Solomon, which is apparently a story of youthful human love, come after Ecclesiastes? Isn’t that the same kind of contrast we see in Judges/Ruth? Does it not provide a nice balance after reading Psalms, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes?
3. Can we truly learn anything about God from a book that never mentions God even by name (compare Esther)?
4. There are allusions in the Bible to 20 or more other books that are not preserved in our current Bibles. (See examples in Study Guide for 2 Chronicles) Why did the Jewish fathers who first put together the Hebrew Canon include the Song of Solomon? Why do we keep it today? Does it say something about life in God’s universe, and of the feelings He wishes people to have for each other?
5. If Solomon wrote 1005 songs (1 Kings 4:32) and this is the best of them all (this is suggested by the Hebrew name of the book), why don’t we sing it or at least use it more often? Is this the only “song” from Solomon that we have preserved? (compare Psalms 72 and 127) Why are we even embarrassed to read it out loud? Why did the Jews refuse to let anyone under 30 read it (according to the early church fathers)? Why did ancient Jews read it on the 8th day of Passover? To whom?
6. Is it true that God’s love for His people is well illustrated by marriage?
7. After reading this Song through, are you encouraged to use portions of the Song of Solomon as key texts? Is there a special meaning in many of the details? If you allegorize or interpret every detail, what would you do with Song of Solomon 6:8? Who are the “sixty queens and eighty concubines”? Is God asking us to speculate on any number of potential meanings that could be derived from this book? Compare Song of Solomon 3:6-10. What is implied by Song of Solomon 3:10, TLB, “...With love from the girls of Jerusalem!”
8. Do you think it is right that a book about human love should have a place almost in the center of the Bible? How could it be so exalted in the Scriptures? Is it all right to love the beautiful? Did the Holy Spirit inspire Solomon to describe his feelings for this girl that he loved? Is God a highly personal individual Himself? Does He want our relationship to be of this quality?
9. What would happen if you read this book to your family for worship and then asked your teenage son to pray? What do you think he would say? What would God want him to say?
10. Even if we manage to discover something of significance about marriage, human love and sexuality in this book, what does it say about God’s role in the cosmic conflict? Is Satan involved in this book in any way?

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