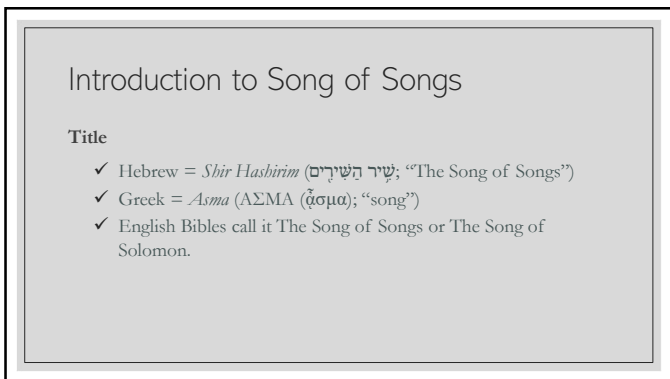


1



2



3

Introduction to Song of Songs

WHO—Authorship

- ✓ Debated, but Solomon (1:1)

WHO—Audience

- ✓ Difficult to determine from the book itself, but arguably, written for Israel.

4

Introduction to Song of Songs

WHEN

- ✓ Approximately 940–931 BC
- ✓ During the glory of Solomon’s reign at the height of Israel’s united kingdom
- ✓ The events of the book seem to reflect several years of marriage spanning from their youth to middle (or old) age.
- ✓ At least reaches the time when Solomon had accumulated for himself 60 queens and 80 concubines (6:8–9). Not the end of Solomon’s life, but certainly some way through.

5

Introduction to Song of Songs

WHERE

- ✓ Jerusalem, but other places are viable (e.g., Lebanon, Sharon, etc.).
- ✓ Solomon wrote 1,005 songs (1 Kings 4:32)
- ✓ **Very important**—Solomon reigns as the *potential long-awaited Messiah* to usher in the Kingdom of God and invite all the world to the God of Israel.
- ✓ Solomon paints for us a Garden of Eden scene in which this “perfect” marriage could dwell.
- ✓ Song of Songs is pointing us back to the Garden of Eden as Solomon potentially brings Messianic blessing through the Kingdom.

6

Introduction to Song of Songs

WHY

To portray the beauty and perfection that marriage was supposed to evoke before the Fall of sin in the Garden of Eden, to encourage Israel to live to this standard of exclusive marital union with one spouse, and to hint at Solomon's effort, but failure to accomplish it and usher in the Kingdom of God.

7

Introduction to Song of Songs

HOW—Terminology and Themes

- ✓ Love (1:3, 4, 7; 2:4, 5, 7; 3:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 10; 5:8; 7:6; 8:4, 6, 7 (2x))
- ✓ Beloved (Shulamith's name for Solomon; 1:2, 4, 13, 14, 16; 2:3, 8, 9, 10, 16, 17; 4:10 (2x), 16; 5:1, 4, 5, 6 (2x), 8, 9 (4x), 10, 16; 6:1 (2x), 2, 3 (2x); 7:8, 9, 10, 11, 12; 8:5, 14)
- ✓ Dearest Friend (or Girlfriend; Solomon's name for Shulamith; only occurs in Song of Songs; 1:9, 15; 2:2, 10, 13; 4:1, 7; 5:2; 6:4).
- ✓ Garden (4:12, 15, 16; 5:1; 6:2; 8:13)
- ✓ Sexual Desire (key word!; 7:10; cf. Gen 3:16; 4:7)

8

Introduction to Song of Songs


HOW—Literary Structure

- ✓ Declarations of Mutual Love and Desire before the Wedding (1:1 – 2:7)
- ✓ Invitation to the Countryside before the Wedding (2:8–17)
- ✓ Nighttime Dream-Search before the Wedding (3:1–5)
- ✓ Wedding and Wedding Night (3:6 – 5:1)
- ✓ Nighttime Dream-Search after the Wedding (5:2 – 7:10)
- ✓ Invitation to the Countryside after the Wedding (7:11 – 8:4)
- ✓ Declarations of Mutual Love and Desire after the Wedding (8:5–14)

The book is not only chiasmatic; it contains chiasms within the book's larger chiasm. It is arguably the greatest literary piece in the Bible.

9

Introduction to Song of Songs



“The whole world is not worth the day on which the Song of Songs was given to Israel. All the writings are holy, and the Song of Songs is the holy of holies.”

Rabbi Akiva (from the Mishnah)

10

Introduction to Song of Songs

HOW—Themes

- ✓ Should be treated seriously (not trivial or lighthearted)
- ✓ Orthodox Jewish tradition of not reading until age 30
- ✓ Should be used to train children in the home about godly marriage and sexuality
- ✓ The sexual love and enjoyment of each other’s beauty begins with their care and love for one another (not just vivid descriptions of lust)
- ✓ Solomon has many wives and concubines. What qualifies him to write Song of Songs?
 - ❖ Allows for praise of an exclusive love in the context of competition.

11

Introduction to Song of Songs

HOW—Themes

- ✓ One purpose of marriage is producing children (1:28), yet, children are not mentioned in the book
- ✓ 2-Character story versus 3-Character story (opposing young shepherd)
- ✓ Play-act. There is drama and tension.
- ✓ Chorus of the daughters of Jerusalem
- ✓ Probably a poetic rendition of a true story.

12

Introduction to Song of Songs

HOW—Themes

- ✓ Solomon & Shulamith (same name meaning; *shalom*).
- ✓ Mostly from the woman's perspective
- ✓ Incredibly poetic terminology. There's rhyming, parallelism, symbolism, metaphor, simile, puns, etc.
- ✓ Rustic, nature-driven book (22 different plants and 15 animals mentioned)

13

Introduction to Song of Songs

HOW—Themes

- ✓ Some sections of the book are difficult to interpret, but the book should not be regarded to mean Christ and the Church (or Yahweh and Israel)
- ✓ Still, the marriage relationship modeled in Song of Songs teaches us about our love for Christ.
- ✓ Useful for teaching on marriage, reading between husband and wife, and teaching the unmarried about what marriage should look like.

14



15