

# The Song of Solomon (1)

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*Titled the Song of Songs, this book can rightly be seen as enigmatic. However, it is possible to view it as prophetic of the Lord Jesus in his role as the bridegroom. This study takes that approach to develop helpful lessons for the believer.*

**T**HE AIM of this study is to look at the Song to see how it can exhort, encourage and warn the believer today. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16). Although the song was written during the lifetime of King Solomon, it is difficult to say with any certainty how, or indeed if, it had a literal outworking at that time. Much of the detail is symbolic and cannot be taken literally. The content is ultimately prophetic, for it speaks of the love between the Lord Jesus Christ and his betrothed bride. Our Lord was born long after the song was written, and his corporate bride is still being formed. This precludes any sequential outworking of the prophecy (that is, chapter 1 happens, followed by chapter 2 and then chapter 3, etc.)

However, it is possible to see a sequence when the prophecy is taken to apply to an individual member of the bride; this will be the basis for this

short series and hopefully will give a framework which will help to show the overall purpose of the Song. Each member first learns of the Lord Jesus, is then drawn to him, becomes associated with him at baptism and longs to be united with him during a period of

probation. During this period the Lord is absent but in communication with the believer. Finally the marriage takes place when the believer has been prepared by the trials and experiences of life.

This sequence can be clearly seen in the Song. The table below gives a brief outline showing how the events in the song relate to the life of the believer. It is acknowledged that this is not the only way to view the Song; it is, however, a view that enables the believer to draw exhortation and encouragement from the Song.

## The Shulamite

There are two principal characters in the Song: Solomon and the Shulamite; they equate to Christ and his bride. The Shulamite is mentioned by name in 6:13: "Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon thee. What will ye see in the Shulamite? As it were the company of two armies". It becomes obvious that the description is not literal but symbolic. The bride of Christ

Chapters	Events in the Song	Events in the believer's life
1	Solomon and the Shulamite become acquainted	Members of the bride learn of Christ
2	Fruit of the relationship begins to develop	Members of the bride begin to follow Christ in action
3	The betrothal	Baptism
4	Solomon's description of the Shulamite in symbol	Christ describes his betrothed in symbol
5-6	The Shulamite's symbolic description of Solomon	The ecclesia comes to a fuller knowledge of Christ
6-7	Solomon further describes the Shulamite	A reminder from Christ of the qualities he expects to find in his bride at his return
8	United in marriage	The marriage of the Lamb

is a company of two armies taken from Jew and Gentile; they are described as armies because they battle to conquer the flesh and so be united with their Saviour. The Hebrew word for 'Shulamite' is the feminine of 'Solomon', which means 'peaceful'. Following the period of warfare when the spirit and flesh are at enmity, eternal peace will follow once the flesh has been destroyed.

### The watchmen

The watchmen appear twice in the song. The Shulamite encounters them on both occasions, once before her betrothal and once afterwards. On both occasions she is looking for Solomon, but the behaviour of the watchmen is markedly different in the two encounters. They represent those who guide and warn the bride as she wanders through her night of probation. This means that both the Shulamite and the watchmen represent different aspects of the members of the ecclesia. This principle is seen elsewhere in Scripture—in the Law, for example, where the priest and the sacrifice represent different aspects of the work of Christ; in the book of Revelation the papacy is symbolised as both a harlot and a false prophet.

### The daughters of Jerusalem

These show great interest in the Shulamite's love for Solomon, and as the song unfolds they begin to show the same affections. A suggestion here is that they represent those who are companions of members of the bride and are 'learning the truth', but they are not yet committed to following Christ. Some of the daughters will eventually become members of the Shulamite.

### The betrothal

'Betrothal' or 'espousal' in Scriptural terms was very different to an 'engagement' in Western terms. A couple who were betrothed were united in every sense, with the exception of physical union; they were regarded as man and wife. The angel said to Joseph when Mary was betrothed to him, "fear not to take unto thee Mary *thy wife*: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy [Spirit]" (Mt. 1:20). Likewise a believer must be at one with the Lord Jesus Christ although he is absent. He will be in daily and constant communication with members of his espoused bride if they daily and constantly seek him through the Word of life.

This study will follow the line that the betrothal in the Song, which occurs in 3:11, relates to the

believer's baptism: "Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart". The wedding vows are seen in 8:6: "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm".

The two main reasons for placing 3:11 as the betrothal and not the wedding are as follows:

- 1 The trials and difficulties experienced by the Shulamite (that is, the believer) described in chapters 2 to 7 will not occur after being united with the Lord Jesus Christ, but relate to the period of probation beforehand.
- 2 During this same period in the Song, Solomon (Christ) is absent:
  - 2:9: she hears his voice but he is "behind our wall"
  - 3:1: she seeks him but does not find him
  - 4:6: he goes to the "mountain of myrrh"
  - 5:6: she hears his voice but he has "withdrawn himself"
  - 6:1: he has "gone"
  - 7, 8: they are together.

### Solomon and the Shulamite

It has been mentioned already that the word 'Shulamite' is the feminine equivalent of the masculine 'Solomon'. The meaning of the names speaks of peace. Scripture teaches that peace is only possible by following after righteousness: "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever" (Isa. 32:17); "And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace" (Jas. 3:18).

Furthermore, Scripture teaches that peace is not possible when fleshly thinking and Scripture teaching exist together: "O that thou hadst hearkened to My commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea" (Isa. 48:18); "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you" (Phil. 4:8,9).

These principles are seen in the Song. The Shulamite is not at peace on certain occasions (for instance, 1:6; 3:1,2; 5:7). These are occasions

when either the Shulamite or others are not acting according to righteousness. It is during these times that she is being refined and ultimately is seen “com[ing] up from the wilderness, leaning

upon her beloved” (8:5) to be united with him in the glorious marriage of the Lamb.

[\(To be continued\)](#)