

SONG OF SOLOMON
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Excerpt from Apples of Gold

“A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.” Proverbs 25:11

No book in the Bible has caused more difference of opinion than "Song". Many say it is an allegory, some believe it a true historical account, while others see it as a manual for sensual lovemaking. The rabbis wouldn't let anyone study the book until they were over thirty.

Jewish tradition views the book as an allegorical picture of the love of God for Israel. Early Church "fathers" and many today consider it an allegory of Christ's love for His bride, the Church. Still others see it as merely a collection of seven Syrian idylls (little pictures).

Yet the true interpretation is not left to the whims and fancies of mere men. The Lord Himself has given us the correct frame of reference whereby we may fathom its meaning. Twice in the Gospel of Luke (24:27, 44), Christ Jesus told us the key to the understanding of the Old Testament. In these verses, He reveals that all these scriptures are speaking of the Messiah – that they are all about Him! Although passages within the "Song" may continue to elude our complete comprehension, thus armed with this God-given key we may now proceed to discover both the setting and overview of the story.

First of all, it does relate in prose an actual historical event. Solomon is the hero of the story. The Shulamite is its Cinderella. The setting takes place in the mountain district of Issachar. There, King Solomon had a vineyard; he let it out to a family in Shunem as keepers. The Shulamite's father had apparently passed away, but her mother and at least two brothers remained. Having thus replaced their father at the head of the household, the responsibility for the maintenance of the family fell to the brothers. They, in turn, placed on her the grueling task of tending Solomon's vineyard. "My mother's sons were angry with me" reveals that the boys were her half-brothers. "Mine own vineyard have I not kept": she had no opportunity to look after herself.

One day she met a handsome stranger, a shepherd, who viewed her as beautiful and without blemish. The friendship ripened to affection and finally love. He promised to return and make her his bride. After his extended absence, the brothers became skeptical and thought she had been deceived by this stranger. She dreamed of him at night; told others of his comeliness, and placed her trust in him as she steadfastly awaited his return.

Surrounded by sixty valiant armed warriors, one day Solomon at last came back for her quite unexpectedly with pomp and in regal state. The girl was brought before the royal carriage and as she beheld, out stepped the king – it was her shepherd! She declared, "I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me". Suddenly, the imperial marriage raised this obscure nameless girl to the throne and the vineyard which she had once tended, and much more, became hers.

Thus declared, the above synopsis honors our Lord and is a picture of His love for His bride, faithful Israel along with the faithful of all ages – God's true Church.

2003

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