

# Bible Snapshots



**Song of Solomon** – Divine Love Defined **Author** – *Solomon (1:1; 1 Kings 4:32, 33, 11:1, 2)*

- Character – A dramatic poem. It has 8 chapters and 117 verses
- Perhaps one of the most hotly debated books of the Bible, as far as meaning and theme are concerned.

**Interpretations of SOS** – There are four basic schools of thought about how we should interpret this wonderful book and piece of Hebrew literature.

- **Allegorical** – This view sees the whole book as figurative and allegorical, expressing the love that is and should exist between, first, God and Israel, and then, in light of the New Testament, between Christ and His church.”
- **Literal view** – Views the book as actual history and nothing more.
- **Dramatic view** – Views the book as the story of a country maiden who is taken from her home and shepherd lover to be one of the many wives of King Solomon. The Shulamite maiden resists every effort of Solomon and despite the glamor and glitz of the court and palace, she remains faithful to her shepherd lover in the hills. When her love has withstood every test, she is allowed to return to her simple home.”
- **Literary view** – Views the book as a collection of love songs of Solomon.
- **Didactic-moral view** – Says the song represents the purity of true love – the sacredness of the love and marriage relationship ordained by God between husband and wife.
- There are a plethora of arguments for each position, but some can be dismissed readily based on a few assertions. For instance, to say it is simple history would be to ignore the obvious figures of speech and the fact that it is a poem. Without a doubt it is based on some history, but that is not the whole of it. The allegorical view is very attractive, however, one may have difficulty with some of the overtly sexual references in an attempt to make this the story of Christ and His church. Talk of breasts and obvious intimate sexual situations seems to be out of harmony with the rest of scripture and what it teaches about Christ and His church, though the church is referred to as his bride. The allegorical view just pushes the idea too far.
- This author sees the book as a dramatic presentation (dramatic view) designed to describe and detail the proper sexual relationship between a husband and wife (didactic-moral view). This view best fits the sexually charged language and dramatic nature of the book. Given Solomon’s history and mistakes in this regard, he would be the perfect candidate to write such a book. To depart from many who take the dramatic view, we believe the bridegroom is Solomon, rather than some unnamed character from whom the bride is stolen. The latter has merits and would seem to reflect Solomon’s known history. However, it is not clearly stated in the text, but rather the author, who seems to be Solomon, is the lover.

**Key chapter / verse**

- 1 – communion of the bride and bridegroom / 7:10

**Key phrases / word**

- Beloved – found 23 times

- My beloved is mine, and I am his 2:16

### Cast of Characters

1. The bride, a hard-working shepherd girl with a rough home life (So 1:6).
2. The bridegroom, a handsome and stately shepherd. The text doesn't explicitly say whether or not Solomon is the bridegroom, but the bride does reference Solomon's wedding parade (So 3:6–11).
3. The chorus, the community of people celebrating the bride and bridegroom's love and union.

**Outline of the book** – this is merely on possible outline. This book does not lend itself easily to being outlined in a very specific way.

1. Preparation for the wedding (So 1–3)
  - The bride prepares (1–3:5)
  - The groom prepares (3:6–11)
2. The couple profess their love and desire
  - The groom professes his love (4)
  - The bride professes her love and longing (5)
3. Both are united in love (6–8)

### Book summary

- When God made Adam and Eve, He brought them together as husband and wife. Adam recognized Eve as bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. (Gn 2:23–24)
- The Song of Solomon celebrates this kind of union: a man and a woman becoming one.
- It's a ballad of love and longing. It's an exchange of love notes. It's a story of adoration, satisfaction, delight, and yes: sex.
- It's the tale of a young woman preparing to marry her love: a handsome king who adores her. They describe their emotions, their passions, their appearances, their fears. They vulnerably display their love and desire for one another—sometimes rather graphically (*summary by Jeffrey Kranz*).