Song of Solomon

(Song of Songs)

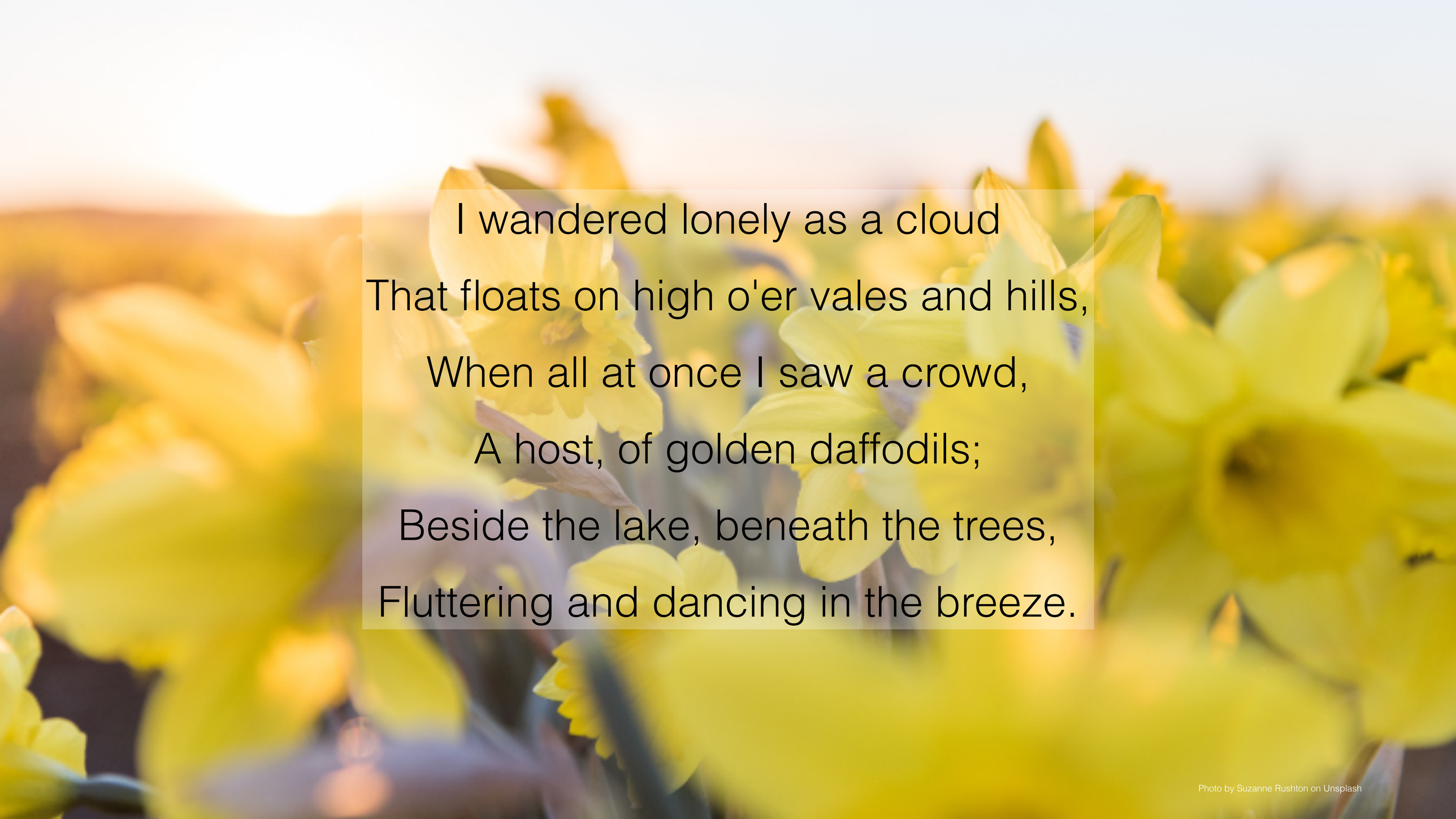

Photo by Suzanne Rushton on Unsplash

- 8 Chapters of love poetry
- Introduction (1:2-7) and Conclusion (8:6-14) — No literary design. A collection of poems
- The Song of Songs (Hebrew idiom e.g. Holy of Holies, King of Kings i.e. a way of saying the greatest thing, the greatest song!)
- Which is Solomon's - concerning Solomon

What is it?

1. Anthology of unrelated love poems
2. A drama involving 2 or 3 main characters
3. An allegory
4. An extended type
5. An unified dramatic lyric dialogue of love

Difficult

Obscure

- Author? Solomon? Traditionally recognized as Solomon (named after him after all) but…

✓ Main voice is a woman

✓ Man's voice isn't Solomon

✓ Solomon is mentioned, but never speaks

✓ Solomon had 700+ wives (1 Kings 11:1-4)… maybe written early in his youth?

Uniqueness

- No direct application or quotation of this book in the New Testament.
- No direct (unambiguous) reference to God, religion, or spiritual things (similar to Esther).
- 10% of the Hebrew words in Song of Solomon are found only in this book.
- Jews referred to it as the Holy of Holies of Scripture. According to Origen and Jerome, young men couldn't read it until 30 years old.

Interpretation - Application

- "Song of Solomon is probably the book of the bible whose purpose is most disputed"
- The context must decide the purpose of the book. Does Solomon anywhere in the book tell us that his meaning is in a spiritual allegory? If not, the interpreter may not impose his spiritual allegory as the purpose of the book and then proceed to interpret it in that light
- Application Yes, Interpretation No.

ROBERTSON MCQUILKIN, "UNDERSTANDING AND APPLYING THE BIBLE: AN INTRODUCTION TO HERMENEUTICS"

Hebrew metaphors are not primarily visual…
instead reflect on the meaning of these images as
they relate to the man and woman

The Song of Solomon illustrated
(For our literalist friends.)

"How beautiful you are, my darling,
how beautiful you are!

...Your eyes are like doves behind your veil...

...Your hair is like a flock of goats...

...Your teeth are like a flock of newly shorn ewes...

...Your lips are like a scarlet thread...

...Your temples are like a slice of pomegranate...

...Your neck is like the tower of David... built with rows of stones on which are hung a thousand shields...

...Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle Which feed among the lilies...

...Your lips, my bride, drip honey... honey and milk are under your tongue, And the fragrance of your garments is like the fragrance of Lebanon...

...Your navel is a round goblet... your belly is like a heap of wheat...

...your nose is like the tower of Lebanon, which faces toward Damascus..."

...from Song of Solomon Chapters four and seven.



4 Interpretations

- ~~Love of Christ for the Church~~ / Jehovah for Israel
- Protest against marital infidelity
- Type of the remnant of the nation of Israel in a coming day
- Encouragement to true love and purity within marriage

What doesn't belong?

PRIMARY INTERPRETATIONS?

- Glory of wedded love
- Love of Jehovah for Israel
- Picture of Christ and the church
- Communion of Christ and the individual believer
- Glory of Christ and the church

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Why should we care?

- It's in the Bible
- Inspires to a deeper understanding of love
- "Love is as strong as death" (SoS 8:6)
- "Many waters cannot quench love, Nor will rivers overflow it; If a man were to give all the riches of his house for love, It would be utterly despised." (SoS 8:7)

40%

CHRISTIANS



46%

ATHEISTS/AGNOSTICS



Review

- Author: Solomon? (internal evidence, he is mentioned 7x)
- Only one song among 1005 Solomon wrote, but called "The Song of Songs" – best / most important.
- Solomon had 700 wives / princesses, 300 concubines, women who took his heart away from the Lord (1 Kings 11:1-4)
- Consideration that this was Solomon's first, or perhaps only true love.

Major Sections

1. Courtship (1:2-3:5)
2. Wedding (3:6-5:1)
3. Maturation in marriage (5:2-8:4)
4. Nature of Love (8:5-7)
5. Epilogue (8:8-14)

Storyline

2 characters

1. Solomon, the bridegroom
2. Shulammite maiden

3 characters

1. Solomon
2. Unnamed shepherd lover (the bridegroom that frustrates Solomon's plans)
3. Shulammite maiden

Key Verses

Son 7:10 "I am my beloved's, And his desire is for me. “

Son 6:3 "I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine, He who pastures his flock among the lilies."

Structural Indicators

Son 2:7, 3:5, 8:4

"I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, By the gazelles or by the hinds of the field, That you do not arouse or awaken my love Until she pleases."

It remains first and foremost a book about love, marriage, and its physical expression. Its place in the scriptures must be understood in light of its message as it is and not as we would hope or expect it to be

DONALD CURTIS, "THE SONG OF SONGS" WWW.BIBLE.ORG