

## **Easy-to-Read Version**

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## Song of Songs

Song of Songs is a love poem. Most of it is in the form of songs sung by a man and a woman to and about each other. It is the Bible's love song. And God still uses it to teach people about physical love. Through the centuries, most people have thought that Solomon wrote it, so sometimes it is called, "Song of Solomon".

Song of Songs reveals the feelings of love a man and a woman have for each other. Its poetry describes the physical appearance of the two lovers. Because of this, some people have said that Song of Songs should not even be in the Bible. In fact, in many Jewish and Christian communities, children are not allowed to read it.

Others have interpreted Song of Songs in symbolic or non-physical ways. For example, many Jews have seen it as describing God's relationship with his people. And many Christians have viewed it as an illustration of the relationship of Jesus and the church. Some have tried to force Song of Songs to fit into their own culture's understanding of love and marriage. But no matter how it is used, Song of Songs is part of Scripture. And it clearly celebrates the physical attraction between a man and a woman. And the young lovers in the Song want to express their love for each other in marriage.

Song of Songs is about what love between a man and woman should be. In true love, the woman sings about her man. She expresses how much she loves him. In true love, the man sings about his woman. He tells everyone what she means to him. This man and woman are in love and full of passion for each other.

Song of Songs teaches us to be excited about the special person we have chosen as a husband or wife. A sign of true love is that we want to express our feelings about the one we love. Another sure sign is that we miss each other when we are apart. The Song of Songs speaks of love...

From the woman about the man she loves (1:1-6)

Between the man and the woman (1:7 – 2:7)

During a springtime visit (2:8-17)

From the woman about her lover (3:1-11)

From the man about his lover and her response (4:1 – 5:1)

From the woman with her responses to questions (5:2 – 6:3)

In the feelings of the man and the woman for each other (6:4 – 8:14)

**1** Solomon's Most Wonderful Song.\*

### The Woman to the Man She Loves

<sup>2</sup>Cover me with kisses,  
for your love is better than wine.

<sup>3</sup>I love the sweet-smelling oil you put on,

but just the thought of you<sup>†</sup> is like the best perfume.

That's why all the young women love you.

\***1:1 Solomon's Most Wonderful Song** Or "The Most Wonderful Song Dedicated to Solomon."

<sup>†</sup>**1:3 just the thought of you** Literally, "your name". The name often meant everything about a person. Here, "name" may be used because it sounds like the word translated "sweet-smelling oil".

<sup>4</sup>Take me with you, my king.  
Let's run away!  
Take me to your bedroom.  
There I will rejoice and be happy with  
you.  
Your love is better than wine.  
The young women have good reason to  
love you.

### She Speaks to the Women

<sup>5</sup>Women of Jerusalem,  
I am dark and beautiful,  
as dark as the black tents of Kedar  
and as beautiful as the tent curtains of  
Salmah.<sup>‡</sup>  
<sup>6</sup>Don't look at how dark I am,  
at how dark the sun has made me.  
My brothers were angry with me.  
They forced me to take care of their  
vineyards,  
so I could not take care of myself.<sup>¶</sup>

### She Speaks to Him

<sup>7</sup>I love you with all my heart!  
Tell me, where do you feed your sheep?  
Where do you take them to rest at noon?  
I want to be able to find you  
without losing my way  
among the flocks of your friends.

### He Speaks to Her

<sup>8</sup>You are such a beautiful woman.  
Surely you know what to do.  
Follow the tracks left by my sheep.  
Feed your young goats near the shep-  
herds' tents.  
<sup>9</sup>My love, you are more exciting to me  
than any mare among the stallions<sup>§</sup>  
pulling Pharaoh's chariots.<sup>\*\*</sup>  
<sup>10</sup>Your cheeks are so beautiful

with those ornaments hanging beside  
them.  
Your neck is so lovely  
under that beautiful string of jewels.  
<sup>11</sup>Let's make you some more gold  
jewellery  
and decorate it with silver.

### She Speaks

<sup>12</sup>The smell of my perfume reaches out  
to the king lying on his couch.  
<sup>13</sup>My love is like the small bag of myrrh,  
lying all night between my breasts.  
<sup>14</sup>My love is like a bunch of henna  
flowers  
near the vineyards of En Gedi.

### He Speaks

<sup>15</sup>Oh, my love, you are beautiful!  
You are so beautiful!  
Your eyes are as pretty as doves.

### She Speaks

<sup>16</sup>And you, my love, are so handsome!  
You are a delight to my heart!  
Our bed here on the grass is so pleasant.  
<sup>17</sup>Cedar and fir trees surround us  
and make a house over our heads.  
**2** I feel like a small flower in the fields  
of Sharon  
or like a lily in the valley.

### He Speaks

<sup>2</sup>My love, when I compare you to other  
women,  
you are like a lily among thorns!

### She Speaks

<sup>3</sup>My love, compared to other men,

<sup>‡</sup>1:5 *Kedar ... Salmah* Arabian tribes. For "Salmah" the traditional Hebrew text has "Solomon". Both names use the same Hebrew consonants.

<sup>¶</sup>1:6 *myself* Literally, "my own vineyard".

<sup>§</sup>1:9 *mare ... stallions* Female and male horses. Only male horses were used to pull chariots.

<sup>\*\*</sup>1:9 Literally, "To a mare among Pharaoh's chariots I compare you, my love."

you are an apple tree in the middle of  
the woods!

I love sitting here in its shade  
and enjoying the delicious fruit.

<sup>4</sup>I am like a guest at your banquet,  
and you have shown me your love.

<sup>5</sup>My desire for you makes me feel weak.  
So give me raisins for strength.  
Refresh me with apples.

<sup>6</sup>Let my head rest in your left hand,  
while you hold me close with your right  
arm.

<sup>7</sup>Promise me, women of Jerusalem,  
by the gazelles and wild deer,<sup>††</sup>  
that you will not interfere with our love.  
Let it continue until it is finished.

### A Springtime Visit

<sup>8</sup>Listen! I hear my love coming.  
He is jumping across the mountains,  
skipping over the hills.

<sup>9</sup>My love is like a gazelle  
or a young deer.

Look, there he is behind our wall.  
He is trying to see in through the  
window,

looking through the screen.

<sup>10</sup>My love says to me,  
“Come, my love, my beautiful one!  
Come away with me.

<sup>11</sup>Look, winter is past,  
the rains have come and gone.

<sup>12</sup>The flowers are blooming in the fields.  
It’s time to sing!<sup>‡‡</sup>

Listen, the doves have returned.

<sup>13</sup>Young figs are growing on the fig  
trees.

Smell the vines in bloom.

Get up, my love, my beautiful one.

Let’s go away!”

### He Speaks to Her

<sup>14</sup>My dove, hiding in the caves high on  
the cliff,

hidden here on the mountain,  
let me see you;

let me hear your voice.

Your voice is so pleasant,  
and you are so beautiful!

### She Speaks to the Women

<sup>15</sup>Catch the foxes for us—  
the little foxes that spoil the vineyard.  
Our vineyard is now in bloom.

<sup>16</sup>My love is mine,  
and I am his!

My love feeds among the lilies,  
<sup>17</sup>until the day dawns

and the darkness disappears.

Go now, my love!

Run like a gazelle

or a young deer over the rugged moun-  
tains!<sup>¶¶</sup>

### She Speaks

**3** At night on my bed,  
I looked for the man I love.

I looked for him,  
but I could not find him.

<sup>2</sup>I will get up now!

I will go around the city.

In the streets and squares,

I will look for the man I love.

I looked for him,

but I could not find him.

<sup>3</sup>The guards patrolling the city found  
me.

I asked them, “Have you seen the man I  
love?”

<sup>4</sup>As soon as I passed them,

I found the man I love!

<sup>††</sup>2:7 *gazelles and wild deer* Gazelles and deer often appear in the art of other ancient Near Eastern religions as companions of the goddess of love. Also in 3:5.

<sup>‡‡</sup>2:12 *sing* Or “prune”.

<sup>¶¶</sup>2:17 *rugged mountains* Literally, “mountains of Bether”. This could also mean “twin peaks” or “mountains of spice”.

I held him and would not let him go,  
until I took him to my mother's house,  
to the bedroom where my life began.

### She Speaks to the Women

<sup>5</sup> Promise me, women of Jerusalem,  
by the gazelles and wild deer,  
that you will not interfere with our love.  
Let it continue until it is finished.

<sup>6</sup> What is this coming out of the desert?  
It looks like a big cloud of smoke.  
And it smells like myrrh and  
frankincense  
and the other spices traders sell.

<sup>7</sup> Look, Solomon's travelling chair.<sup>§§</sup>  
There are 60 soldiers guarding it,  
strong soldiers of Israel.

<sup>8</sup> All of them are trained fighting men  
with their swords at their side,  
ready for any danger of the night.

<sup>9</sup> King Solomon had a travelling chair  
made for himself.

The wood came from Lebanon.

<sup>10</sup> The corner posts were made from  
silver,

and the supports were made from gold.  
The seat was covered with purple cloth.  
The inside was lined with leather  
by the women of Jerusalem.

<sup>11</sup> Women of Zion, come out  
and see King Solomon.

See the crown<sup>\*</sup> his mother put on him  
the day he was married,  
the day he was so happy!

### He Speaks to Her

**4** My love, you are so beautiful!  
Oh, you are beautiful!  
Your eyes under your veil  
are as lovely as doves.  
Your hair is long and flowing,

like little goats dancing down the slopes  
of Mount Gilead.

<sup>2</sup> Your teeth are as white as sheep  
that are freshly sheared and washed.  
Not one is out of line;  
they are all perfectly matched.

<sup>3</sup> Your lips are like a red silk thread.  
Your mouth is beautiful.

Your cheeks under your veil  
are like slices of pomegranate.

<sup>4</sup> Your neck is as beautiful as the tower  
of David,  
decorated with its rows of stones.<sup>†</sup>

It has a thousand shields on its walls,  
the shields of powerful soldiers.

<sup>5</sup> Your breasts are as lovely as twin  
fawns,

like twins of a gazelle  
feeding among the lilies.

<sup>6</sup> I cannot wait to be on those lovely hills  
that smell of myrrh and frankincense.

I will go now, before the day dawns,  
before the darkness goes away.

<sup>7</sup> My love, you are beautiful all over.  
Every part of you is perfect.

<sup>8</sup> Come away with me from Lebanon, my  
bride.

Let us leave Lebanon behind.

Come down from its high mountains,  
from the peaks of Mount Amana,  
from the peaks of Senir and Hermon.

Come away from the lions' caves,  
from the mountains where leopards live.

<sup>9</sup> My bride, my dearest, you have stolen  
my heart

with just one look from your eyes.

A single sparkle from your necklace  
has put me under your control.

<sup>10</sup> Your love is a delight, my bride, my  
dearest!

Your love is better than wine.

<sup>§§</sup>**3:7 travelling chair** A kind of chair that the rich travelled in. It was covered and had poles that slaves used to carry it. Also in verse 9.

<sup>\*</sup>**3:11 crown** This might be a wreath of flowers he wore on his head at his wedding.

<sup>†</sup>**4:4 Your neck ... stones** This would mean she wore many necklaces, one above the other, which looked like rows of stones in a tower.

And the smell of your perfume  
is more pleasing than any spice!

<sup>11</sup> My bride, your lips are as sweet as  
honey,  
your kisses a delight, like honey and  
milk.

Your clothes smell wonderful,  
like the cedars of Lebanon.

<sup>12</sup> My bride, my dearest, you are so  
lovely,

like a private garden or a hidden spring,  
like a fountain protected from strangers.

<sup>13</sup> You are a royal garden  
filled with pomegranates and other  
choice fruits,

with all kinds of spices  
like henna<sup>‡</sup> and nard.

<sup>14</sup> Besides nard there is saffron,<sup>¶</sup> cala-  
mus<sup>§</sup> and cinnamon,<sup>\*\*</sup>

and trees that produce the best spices,  
like frankincense, myrrh and aloes.

<sup>15</sup> You are a garden fountain,  
a spring of fresh water  
that flows down from the mountains of  
Lebanon.

### She Speaks

<sup>16</sup> Wake up, north wind.  
Come, south wind.  
Blow on my garden.  
Spread its sweet smell.  
Let my love enter his garden  
and eat its pleasant fruit.

### He Speaks

**5** My bride, my dearest, I have entered  
my garden.  
I have gathered my myrrh and spice.  
I have eaten my honey and honeycomb.  
I have drunk my wine and milk.

### The Women Speak to the Lovers

Dearest friends, eat, drink!  
Be drunk with love!

### She Speaks

<sup>2</sup> I was asleep,  
but my mind was awake.  
I thought I heard my love knocking and  
saying,

“Open up for me, my dearest, my love,  
my dove, my perfect one!

My head is all wet with dew.  
My hair is soaked from the evening  
mist.”

<sup>3</sup> But I said, “I have taken off my robe.  
I don’t want to put it on again.

I have washed my feet.  
I don’t want to get them dirty again.”

<sup>4</sup> My love put his hand through the latch  
opening,

and I began to feel excited.

<sup>5</sup> I got up to let my love come in,  
myrrh dripping from my hands.  
Myrrh-scented lotion dripped from my  
fingers

onto the handles of the door.

<sup>6</sup> I opened the door for my love,  
but he was already gone!

I was so sad,  
I thought I would die.  
I looked for him,  
but I could not find him.

I called out for him,  
but he did not answer.

<sup>7</sup> The guards patrolling the city found  
me.

They hit me and hurt me.  
The guards on the wall  
took away my robe.

<sup>‡</sup>4:13 *henna* A plant with sweet-smelling, blue-yellow flowers that grows in clusters (groups) like grapes.

<sup>¶</sup>4:14 *saffron* A kind of yellow flower used in making perfume.

<sup>§</sup>4:14 *calamus* A kind of reed plant used in making perfume.

<sup>\*\*</sup>4:14 *cinnamon* A kind of plant used as a spice and in making perfume.

<sup>8</sup> Women of Jerusalem, promise me this:  
if you find my lover,  
tell him I am weak with love.

### The Women of Jerusalem Answer Her

<sup>9</sup> Most beautiful woman,  
how is the one you love different from  
other men?  
Is he better than all others?  
Is that why you ask us to make this  
promise?

### She Answers

<sup>10</sup> My love is tanned and radiant.  
He would stand out among 10,000 men.  
<sup>11</sup> His head is like the purest gold.  
His hair is curly and as black as a raven.  
<sup>12</sup> His eyes are like doves by a stream,  
like doves in a pool of milk,  
like a jewel in its setting.  
<sup>13</sup> His cheeks are like a garden of spices,  
like flowers used for perfume.  
His lips are like lilies,<sup>††</sup>  
dripping with liquid myrrh.  
<sup>14</sup> His arms are like gold rods  
covered with jewels.  
His body is like smooth ivory  
decorated with blue gems.  
<sup>15</sup> His legs are like marble pillars  
on bases of fine gold.  
He stands tall,  
like the finest cedar tree in Lebanon!  
<sup>16</sup> His kisses are so sweet;  
he is everything I desire.  
Yes, women of Jerusalem,  
this is my love, my friend.

### The Women of Jerusalem Speak to Her

**6** Most beautiful woman,  
where is the one you love?

Which way did he go?  
Tell us so that we can help you look for  
him.

### She Answers the Women

<sup>2</sup> My love has gone down to his garden,  
where sweet-smelling spices grow.  
There, like a sheep, he will eat the grass,  
and he will enjoy the lilies.  
<sup>3</sup> I belong to my love, and he belongs to  
me.  
He is the one feeding among the lilies.

### He Speaks to Her

<sup>4</sup> My love, you are as beautiful as  
Jerusalem,  
as lovely as the city of Tirzah,<sup>‡‡</sup>  
as breathtaking as the stars in the sky.<sup>¶¶</sup>  
<sup>5</sup> Don't look at me!  
Your eyes excite me too much!  
And your hair bounces playfully,  
like goats dancing down the slopes of  
Mount Gilead.  
<sup>6</sup> Your teeth are white as sheep  
that are freshly sheared and washed.  
Not one is out of line;  
they are all perfectly matched.  
<sup>7</sup> Your cheeks under your veil  
are like slices of pomegranate.  
<sup>8</sup> Some kings might have 60 queens,  
80 slave women  
and even more young women.  
<sup>9</sup> But only one, my lovely dove,  
is perfect for me.  
She is her mother's favourite,  
the child she loved most.  
The young women see her and praise  
her.  
Even the queens and slave women praise  
her:  
<sup>10</sup> "Who is this young woman

<sup>††</sup>5:13 *lilies* A kind of flower. Here, they are probably red.

<sup>‡‡</sup>6:4 *Tirzah* One of the capital cities of northern Israel.

<sup>¶¶</sup>6:4 *the stars in the sky* Or "an army with flags flying". The meaning of the Hebrew word here and in verse 10 is uncertain.

who shines like the dawn?  
 She is as pretty as the moon,  
 as bright as the sun,  
 as breathtaking as the stars in the sky.”

<sup>11</sup> I went down to the grove of walnut trees.

I wanted to see the new spring growth in the valley,  
 to see if the vines were budding  
 or the pomegranate trees blooming.

<sup>12</sup> Before I knew it,  
 she had put me in a wonderful royal chariot.

<sup>13</sup> Come back, come back, O perfect one!  
 Come back so I<sup>§§</sup> can look at you.

### The Woman Speaks

Why do you want to look at me  
 as I dance between the rows of dancers?\*

### He Praises Her Beauty

**7** Princess,<sup>†</sup> your feet are beautiful in those sandals.

The curves of your thighs are like jewelry made by an artist.

<sup>2</sup> Your navel is like a round cup,<sup>‡</sup> may it never be without wine.

Your belly is like a pile of wheat surrounded by lilies.

<sup>3</sup> Your breasts are like twin fawns of a young gazelle.

<sup>4</sup> Your neck is as graceful as an ivory tower.

Your eyes sparkle like the pools in Heshbon  
 near the gate of Bath Rabbim.

Your nose has such a beautiful shape,  
 like Mount Lebanon seen from Damascus.

<sup>5</sup> Your head is held high, like Mount Carmel.

Your hair is like silk.

Its waves look so attractive,  
 it could capture even a king.

<sup>6</sup> You are so beautiful and so pleasant,  
 a lovely, delightful young woman!

<sup>7</sup> You are tall—  
 as tall as a palm tree.

And your breasts are like the clusters of fruit on that tree.

<sup>8</sup> I would love to climb that tree  
 and take hold of its branches.

May your breasts be like clusters of grapes,  
 your breath like the sweet smell of apples,

<sup>9</sup> and your lips like the best wine.

### She Speaks to Him

So let this wine flow straight to my love,  
 flowing gently over lips and teeth.<sup>¶</sup>

<sup>10</sup> I belong to the one I love,  
 and he desires only me.

<sup>11</sup> Come, my love,  
 let's go out to the fields  
 and spend the night in the countryside.

<sup>12</sup> Let's get up early and go to the vineyards.

Let's see if the vines are budding yet.

Let's see if the blossoms have opened  
 and the pomegranate trees are in bloom.  
 There I will give you my love.

§§6:13 I Literally, “we”.

\*6:13 as ... *dancers* The meaning of this line in Hebrew is uncertain.

†7:1 *Princess* Literally, “Daughter of a prince”.

‡7:2 *round cup* Or “turned bowl”, a stone bowl made on a lathe and used for mixing wine before it is poured into cups. This might also mean a bowl shaped like a crescent or half-moon.

¶7:9 *over lips and teeth* This follows the Greek, Syriac and Latin versions. The Hebrew text has “over lips of sleepers”.

<sup>13</sup>You can smell the mandrakes,<sup>§</sup>  
and all kinds of delicious fruits  
that are stored over our door.  
I have saved many pleasant things for  
you, my love,  
pleasant things, old and new.

**8** If only you were my brother  
who nursed at my mother's breasts.  
Then, if I met you outside, I could kiss  
you,

and no one would say I did wrong.

<sup>2</sup>I would lead you to the house of my  
mother,

where you could teach me about love.

I would give you spiced wine  
squeezed from my pomegranates.

### She Speaks to the Women

<sup>3</sup>His left arm is under my head,  
and his right hand holds me.

<sup>4</sup>Promise me, women of Jerusalem,  
that you will not interfere with our love.  
Let it continue until it is finished.

### The Women of Jerusalem Speak

<sup>5</sup>Who is this woman coming out of the  
desert,  
leaning on the arm of the one she loves?

### She Speaks to Him

There under the apple tree, I woke you  
up.

That was where your life began,  
where your mother gave birth to you.

<sup>6</sup>Keep me near you like a seal over your  
heart,

like a signet ring you wear on your hand.  
Love is as strong as death.

It produces feelings as strong as the  
grave.

Its sparks become a flame

that grows into a raging fire!

<sup>7</sup>Even a flood cannot put it out;  
rivers cannot drown it.

No one can buy love,  
no matter how much they offer.

They would get nothing but hate.

<sup>8</sup>My brothers once said, "We have a little  
sister

whose breasts are not yet formed.

What should we do  
when someone asks to marry her?

<sup>9</sup>If she looks like a wall,  
we will decorate it with silver.

If she looks like a door,  
we will use cedar to make it more  
attractive."

<sup>10</sup>Yes, compare me to a wall,  
and my breasts are its towers.

So when my love sees me,  
he is very pleased.

<sup>11</sup>Solomon had a vineyard at Baal  
Hamon.

He rented it for others to take care of,  
and each of them paid 1000 pieces\*\* of  
silver

for the harvest of grapes.

<sup>12</sup>Solomon can keep his silver,  
and those who cared for the grapes can  
have 200 pieces,

but my vineyard is my own to keep or  
give.

### He Speaks to Her

<sup>13</sup>There you are, sitting in the garden.  
My friends are listening for your voice.  
Let me hear it!

### She Speaks to Him

<sup>14</sup>Hurry, my love! Run like a gazelle  
or a young deer on the mountains cov-  
ered with spices.

§7:13 *mandrakes* A plant that was used to strengthen sexual desire. The Hebrew word is similar to the word meaning "to make love". The roots had a human form, and people thought they could help women get pregnant. Also called "love apple". See Gen. 30:14-16.

\*\*8:11 *pieces* Literally, "*shekels*". Also in verse 12.