

Ecclesiastes-Song of Solomon

1. Authorship:

Jewish tradition from the earliest times attributed Ecclesiastes to Solomon, although there is some suggestion in the tradition that King Hezekiah's scribes may have edited the text. Evidence in the text supports the conclusion of Jewish tradition – "the son of David, king in Jerusalem." He was wise, rich, had many wives, and engaged in numerous public works. The Song of Solomon, is titled in Hebrew "The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's."

2. Background:

The word "Ecclesiastes" is the Latin translation of the Hebrew word which means "preacher." It literally means "one who assembles." Based on the experience of Solomon, it gives observations concerning the futility of all that people count worthy in this present life, and concludes, "¹³That's the whole story. Here now is my final conclusion: Fear God and obey his commands, for this is everyone's duty." (Ecclesiastes 12:13) The book reminds us of the ultimate power of God, and the fragility of all things which do not have their foundation in Him. The Song of Solomon appears to have been used in celebration of the marriage of Solomon with his favorite wife – the Shulamite. It is a series of long songs, alternating parts sung by the groom to his bride, by the bride to her husband, and by an attendant chorus of maidens. This is the Bible's tenderest romantic literature.

3. Special Features:

- Ecclesiastes is the most philosophical book of the Bible.
- Song of Solomon has been used by the Jewish nation to sing of God's tenderness toward His chosen people, Israel, and it is used by Christians to speak of Christ's love for His bride, the Church.
- In the time of Christ the Song of Solomon was read at the Passover season, to remind them of God's tenderness to Israel, and Ecclesiastes was read at the Feast of Tabernacles, its somber reminders giving balance to the otherwise merry observances of this most joyful of Jewish festival seasons.
- Solomon's youthful love for his bride is reflected in the Song, the practical wisdom of his mature years in the book of Proverbs, and the somber conclusions of his old age in Ecclesiastes.
- Like the book of Esther, the Song of Solomon does not mention God.
- Of the 1,005 songs that Solomon wrote, this is the only one that has survived.
- In love songs from the ancient world the lovers refer to one another as brother and sister.
- This love song refers to 21 species of plants and 15 species of animals.

4. September Reading Guide

Week of Aug 28-Sep 3	Ecclesiastes 1-4
Week of Sep 4-10	Ecclesiastes 5-8
Week of Sep 11-17	Ecclesiastes 9-12
Week of Sep 18-24	Song of Solomon 1-8