

Review: Song of Solomon: Act II, SOS 3:6-11; Act III: Solomon's Palace; the Genius & Degeneracy of Solomon; the Problem with Commentaries

Review: Song of Solomon: Act II (3:6 – 3:11)

Scene: A gate of entry into Jerusalem.

Jerusalem Guard [JG]; Bystanders (BS1, BS2, BS3, BS4)

Solomon's chariot and retinue including the Shulammitte and the Daughters of Jerusalem arrive at a gate entering into the capital city of Jerusalem. Their approach, arrival, and entry into the city are described by a sentry and four observers.

Song of Solomon 3:6 –

JG "What is this coming up from the wilderness like columns of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all scented powders of the merchant?"

3:7 –

BS1 "Behold, it is the traveling couch of Solomon; sixty mighty men around it, of the mighty men of Israel."

3:8 –

BS2 "All of them are wielders of the sword, expert in war; each man has his sword at his side, guarding against the terrors of the night."

3:9 –

BS3 "King Solomon has made for himself a sedan chair from the timber of Lebanon.

3:10 –

BS3 "He made its posts of silver, its back of gold, and its seat of purple fabric, with its interior lovingly fitted out by the daughters of Jerusalem."

3:11 -

BS4 "Go forth, O daughters of Zion, and gaze on King Solomon with the crown with which his mother has crowned him on the day of his wedding, and on the day of his gladness of heart."

Song of Solomon: Act III (4:1 – 7:9)

Scene: Solomon's palace in Jerusalem.

Shulammitte Woman [SW]; King Solomon [KS]; Daughters of Jerusalem [DJ]; Jealous Queen [JQ]; Shepherd Lover [SL]

Solomon intensifies his efforts to woo the Shulammitte with pick-up lines. She remains occupied with her Shepherd Lover. The Shepherd executes his plan to extract the Shulammitte from the palace.

1. In this act we will observe Solomon in Stud Muffin Overdrive. There will be some biblical principles that we can extract from what he has to say to the Shulammitte but they will be of a negative nature instead of positive.

NOTE: Drama in the form of novels, movies, plays, and operas are media that can present the sinful behaviors common to mankind but do it through the fictitious characters portrayed by the actors. The characters can therefore be analyzed, criticized, and discussed without anyone being guilty of mental-attitude or verbal sins.

Two excellent movies that provide excellent character studies of men driven by greed and power are *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre* and *Devil's Advocate*:

THE TREASURE OF THE SIERRA MADRE. Ranked at No. 30 on the American Film Institute's list of the 100 all-time greatest American films, *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre* is a genuine masterpiece that was, ironically, a box-office failure when released in 1948. At that time audiences didn't accept Humphrey Bogart in a role that was intentionally unappealing, but time has proven this to be one of Bogart's very best performances. It's a grand adventure and a superior character study built around the timeless themes of greed and moral corruption. As adapted by writer-director John Huston (from a novel by enigmatic author B. Traven) it became a definitive treatment of fate and futility in the obsessive pursuit of wealth. Bogart plays Fred C. Dobbs, a down-and-out wage-worker in Mexico who stakes his meager earnings on a gold-prospecting expedition to the Sierra mountains.

He's joined by a grizzled old prospector (Walter Huston, the director's father) and a young, non-sense partner (Tim Holt), and when they strike a rich vein of gold, the movie becomes an observant study of wretched human behavior. Bogart is fiercely intense as his character grows increasingly paranoid and violent; Huston offers a compelling contrast as a weathered miner who's seen how gold can turn men into monsters.

From its lively opening scenes (featuring young Robert Blake as a boy selling lottery tickets) to its final, devastating image of fateful irony, *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre* tells an unforgettable story of tragedy and truth. With dialogue that has been etched into the cultural consciousness (who can forget the Mexican bandit who snarls "I don't have to show you any stinking badges!") and well-earned Oscars for John and Walter Huston, this is an American classic that still packs a punch. --Jeff Shannon

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DEVIL'S ADVOCATE. In *The Devil's Advocate* Al Pacino takes his turn as the great Satan, and clearly relishes his chance to raise hell. He's a New York lawyer, of course, by the name of John Milton, who recruits a hotshot young Florida attorney (Keanu Reeves) to his firm and seduces him with tempting offers of power, sex, and money. Think of the story as a twist on John Grisham's *The Firm*, with the corporate evil made even more explicit. Reeves is wooden, and therefore doesn't seem to have much of a soul to lose, but he's really just our excuse to meet the devil. Pacino's the main attraction, gleefully showing off his--and the Antichrist's--chops at perpetrating menace and mayhem. --Jim Emerson

http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/6305065551/qid=1140392032/sr=1-1/ref=sr_1_1/103-6943741-4292649?s=dvd&v=glance&n=130

2. Solomon is a terrible lover although he assumes himself to be quite the ladies' man. He has accumulated over a thousand women into his harem. But no truly great lover can manage an entire division of women, just one—the right one.
3. The only way Solomon could keep them under control was by a system of soft tyranny: do what you are told, respond when I aggress, and otherwise stay out of the way.
4. Solomon is a very famous man. He is among the greatest kings of Israel and the worst kings of Israel. He was cursed by the prophecy that his kingdom would be divided which was fulfilled during the reign of his son Rehoboam.
5. He is a great believer who failed prosperity testing and as a result lost personal glory at the expense of material glory.

6. Nevertheless, he recovered from his mistakes and regained a relationship with the Lord so that under the enduement of the Holy Spirit he was able to write three books: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon, and two psalms: Psalm 72 and 127.
7. But as we encounter him in Act III we find him at his smarmy best—the antagonist with his pick-up lines versus the Shulammitte with her problem-solving devices.
8. I've counted them up: I have twelve commentaries on Song of Solomon. Not one considers the Shepherd to be the Shulammitte's right man. Some have Solomon and the Shepherd as the same person. This would mean that the Shulammitte is schizophrenic. On the one hand she rejects Solomon's advances while on the other she expresses her love for the Shepherd.
9. In addition to my twelve pretty-much-useless Song of Solomon commentaries (my reason for having them is for isagogics, not for exegesis or interpretation) there is the *Scofield Study Bible* that I highly recommend for its footnotes.
10. There is a major exception. Scofield is as confused on Song of Solomon as are the other twelve I've consulted. He also places Solomon in the role of the Shulammitte's right man.
11. Instead, Solomon is the antagonist. Once he recovered from reversionism he wrote his most famous song as a mea culpa for his period of sewing wild oats and his attempt to involve the innocent Shulammitte in his antics.
12. Solomon was a genius in so many ways and in his wisdom chose the medium of music to relate his experiences with the Shulammitte. I have used opera as a teaching aid but this is of course an anachronism. Opera was not introduced until the late sixteenth century when it was begun as a form of entertainment in the courts of Italian aristocracy.