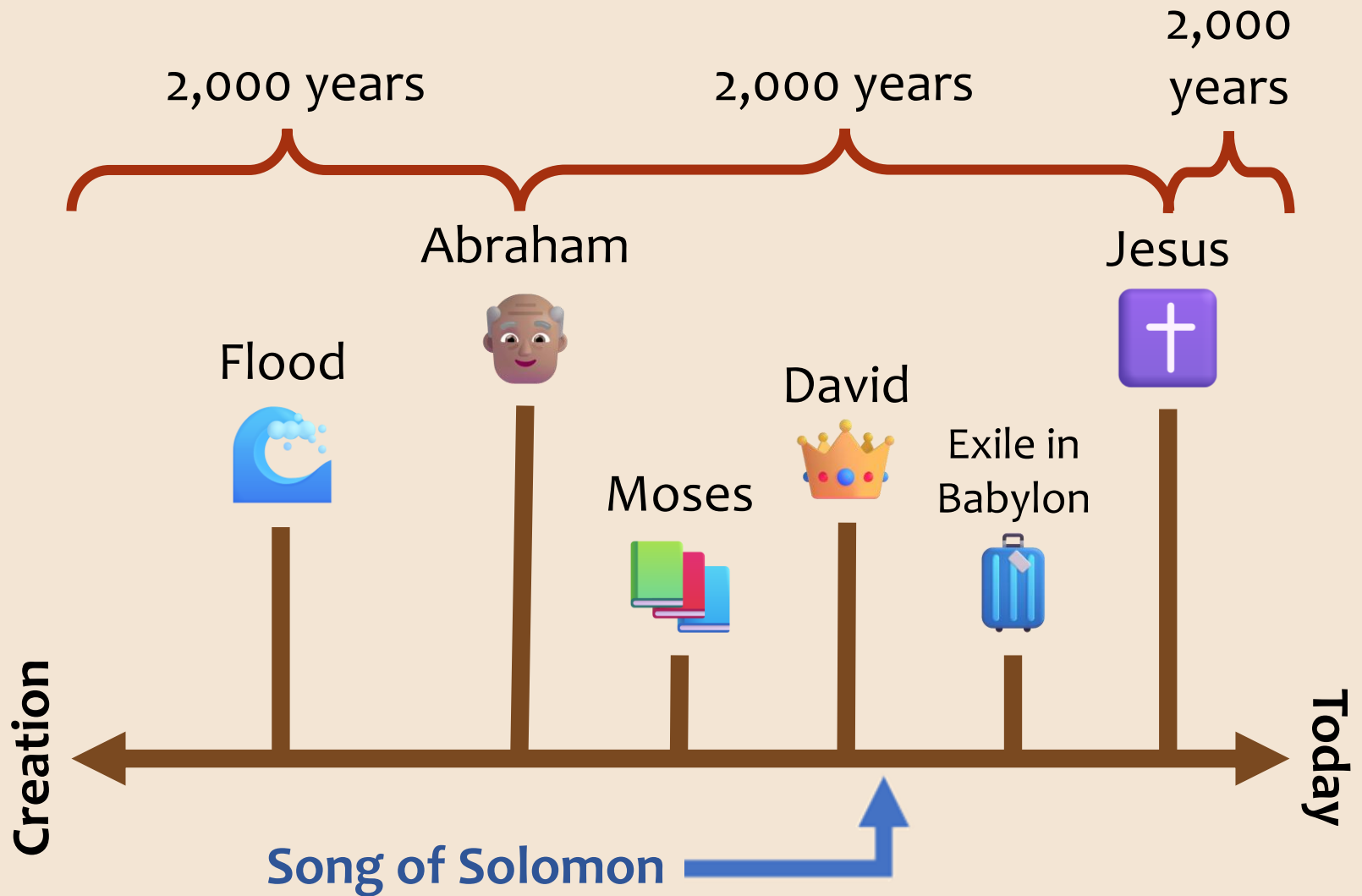




The Book of  
**Song of Songs**  
aka Song of Solomon

# Bible timeline



# Summary

## Song of Songs

- **A love story**  
of two herders
  - **Song of Songs 1:7-8**  
explains – indirectly –  
that they are herders
- It's poetry
- The man and woman  
each make many  
speeches
- Occasionally a group  
also speaks





*HE*

<sup>8</sup> If you do not know,

    O “most beautiful among women,  
follow in the tracks of the flock,  
    and pasture your young goats  
beside the shepherds’ tents.

<sup>9</sup> I compare you, “my love,

    to “a mare among Pharaoh’s chariots.

<sup>10</sup> “Your cheeks are lovely with ornaments,

    your neck with strings of jewels.

*OTHERS*

<sup>11</sup> We will make for you <sup>2</sup> ornaments of gold,

    studded with silver.

*SHE*

<sup>12</sup> While <sup>3</sup> the king was on his couch,

    my <sup>4</sup> nard gave forth its fragrance.

<sup>13</sup> My beloved is to me a sachet of <sup>5</sup> myrrh

    that lies between my breasts.

<sup>14</sup> My beloved is to me a cluster of <sup>6</sup> henna blossoms

    in the vineyards of <sup>7</sup> Engedi.

# Detour

## Who is speaking?




- If you had no headings in your Bible, you would have no way to know *in English* who was speaking
  - This seems to have tripped up songwriters in the past
- But in the original Hebrew, scholars can know when it is “he” speaking, or “she,” or an unnamed group (“others”)
- Thankfully, modern Bibles usually put headings to mark those changes in the speaker(s)

# Why Song of Songs is special

- It's a true love story: passion, but waiting for marriage
- This is generally a conservative view of the story, but it is the cleanest (least messy)



# Main characters

-  **Shepherd boy**
  - Handsome
-  **Goat-herder girl**
  - Beautiful
-  **Others**
  - Not really spelled out, but like a chorus

# Outline of Song of Songs

- **Introduction: 1:1**

- The song of songs  
(the best of all songs)

- **Longing: 1:2 – 3:5**

- Do not awaken love  
too early (2:7, 3:5)

- **The wedding: 3:6-14**

- A royal entourage arrives

- **Married love: 4:1 – 7:13**

- “Bride” is now used

- **Reflections: chapter 8**

- 8:4 echoes 3:5 (do not awaken love)
- 8:5 echoes 3:6 (wedding procession; “who is this”)

- The book is poetry and could be non-chronological
- This outline assumes chronological – with chapter 8 as a review
- Others see chapters 3-5 as a dream of the woman, with marriage in chapter 8

# Theology and doctrine

- Is Solomon the male lover in the book?
  - I would say that, no, he is not
  - ESV commentary put it well: “*When he is mentioned (1:5; 3:7, 9, 11; 8:11–12), it is generally as a distant, even idealized figure.*”
    - Funny thing is that the ESV’s *headings* for the book put Solomon as the groom, so there is not agreement even among their people
    - The book praises waiting for marriage, but Solomon had hundreds of wives...
    - Also, was Solomon a shepherd?
- Instead, I’d just take it exactly as it is set up: two random people in love

# Theology and doctrine

- Why is this in the Bible?
  - Christians often try to force the story as about Christ and the church – His bride (think **Ephesians 5:25-27**)
    - Some connections might be reasonable
    - But this must have meant *something* to the Jewish readers all on its own
  - Is it an allegory of God and Israel (think of **Ezekiel 16**)?
    - Again, this seems forced; no real hint in the text
    - What lessons would you even conclude?  
(Not the same ones as Ezekiel 16!)
  - Why not... because it's beautiful?
    - Marriage is pure and lovely – that's worthy of a book

# Recap of *Song of Songs*

- **Summary**

- A love story of two herders

- **Why it is special**

- It's a true love story: passion, but waiting for marriage

- **Main characters**

- Shepherd boy
- Goat-herder girl
- Chorus of “others”

- **Outline**

1. Introduction: 1:1
2. Longing: 1:2 – 3:5
3. The wedding: 3:6-14
4. Married love: 4:1 – 7:13
5. Reflections: chapter 8

- **Theology and doctrine**

- Is Solomon the male lover in the book?
  - (Probably not)
- Why is this in the Bible?
  - (Why not?)



# Isaac and Rebekah

## Genesis 24

# Summary

Isaac and Rebekah – Genesis 24

- Abraham sends his servant to find a wife for Isaac (Abraham's son).







# Why this story is special



- It is a love story based on *character*, not appearance
  - Isaac is rich (v. 10); Rebekah is beautiful (v. 16). But...
  - Rebekah is chosen because she is kind
  - Isaac is seen meditating (v. 63)

# Main characters

-  **Abraham's servant**
  - Is really dedicated
-  **Rebekah**
  - Hospitable young woman
-  **Laban**
  - Rebekah's brother
  - Does a lot of the talking for Rebekah
-  **Isaac**
  - Shows up at the end

# Outline of *Genesis 24*

1. Vs. 1-9 Abraham sends the servant on the mission
2. Vs. 10-14 The servant asks the LORD for a sign
3. Vs. 15-21 Rebekah is that sign
4. Vs. 22-27 The servant asks to meet her family
5. Vs. 28-33 Laban welcomes the servant
6. Vs. 34-49 The servant retells the story
7. Vs. 50-51 Rebekah's family is convinced
8. Vs. 52-61 Rebekah agrees to go
9. Vs. 62-67 Isaac meets Rebekah

# In case you missed it

- Isaac is 40 when he marries (see **Genesis 25:20**)
- Isaac meditates! (**v. 63**)
- Rebekah helps Isaac get over the loss of his mother (**v. 67**)
  - Isaac's mother died when Isaac was 37 (127 minus 90)

# Theology and doctrine

- This story is very different from Jacob's
  - Jacob pursues Rachel for her beauty
  - Rachel may be idolatrous (**Genesis 31:19**)
  - Jacob ends up with children from 4 women

# Recap of Genesis 24

- **Summary**

- Abraham sends his servant to find a wife for Isaac

- **Why it is special**

- It is a love story based on *character*, not appearance

- **Main characters**

- Abraham's servant
- Rebekah
- Laban
- Isaac

- **In case you missed it**

- Isaac is 40 when he marries (**Genesis 25:20**)
- Isaac meditates! (**v. 63**)
- Rebekah helps Isaac get over the loss of his mother (**v. 67**)

- **Outline**

1. **Vs. 1-9:** Abraham sends the servant on the mission
2. **Vs. 10-14:** The servant asks for a sign
3. **Vs. 15-21:** Rebekah is that sign
4. **Vs. 22-27:** The servant asks to meet her family
5. **Vs. 28-33:** Laban welcomes the servant
6. **Vs. 34-49:** The servant retells the story
7. **Vs. 50-51:** Rebekah's family is convinced
8. **Vs. 52-61:** Rebekah agrees to go
9. **Vs. 62-67:** Isaac meets Rebekah

- **Theology and doctrine**

- This story is very different from Jacob's (physical attraction)

# Poem: His banner over me was love

## Song of Solomon 2:3-7

[3] As an apple tree among the trees of the forest,  
so is my beloved among the young men.

With great delight I sat in his shadow,  
and his fruit was sweet to my taste.

[4] He brought me to the banqueting house,  
and his banner over me was love.

[5] Sustain me with raisins;  
refresh me with apples,  
for I am sick with love.

[6] His left hand is under my head,  
and his right hand embraces me!

[7] I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,  
by the gazelles or the does of the field,  
that you not stir up or awaken love  
until it pleases.

(ESV)

The woman is  
speaking in  
this section