

In light of archaeology we seek to treat a problem in the Song, namely the identification of the name "Shulamite" in 6:13. This name is unknown from any other source. Its meaning is "a descendant of Shulam," or "an inhabitant of Shulam" but neither of these is known. This has caused some to conjecture that it is a mistake for "Shunamite." Shunem was a town in northern Israel near Jezreel. This being the home town of Abishag, the beautiful concubine of David in his old age, these same scholars have identified the female protagonist of the Song with Abishag and sought to understand the book in terms of the events surrounding Solomon's accession to the throne of Israel. This conclusion is extremely tenuous, however, and it is better to conclude the Shulamite's identification as uncertain for the present.

Key passages for the Song develop along the lines of the expression of 6:3 "I am my beloved's and he is mine". The mutual delight of the parties in this familiar relationship is the clue to much of what is stated in the text.

Study tips: You will certainly want to read the book at a single sitting and then to meditate and see if you can determine who is speaking where and what they are saying. Look behind the words to hear the heart of the matter. Note how the feminizing party praises the masculine party and vice versa. Observe a certain sanctity in the relationship. If you have had any background in mythological study and can contrast the biblical presentation you will see how much more edifying and instructive this work is.

Further reading: A SONG FOR LOVERS, (IVP) by S. Craig Glickman is recommended...it is an interpretation of the Song of Songs as a study in human love. SOLOMON ON SEX (Nelson) by Joseph C. Dillow, is a marriage manual based on a verse-by-verse exposition of the Song of Songs. The tradition allegorical view may be seen in Hudson Taylor, UNION AND COMMUNION and the breadth of other interpretations may be seen in C.D. Ginsburgh: THE SONG OF SONGS.

b. Further studies:

- Study the imagery and speech figures of the Song
- Look for practical applications of the song to our lives.
- Compare the teachings of love with those in Proverbs.

The name of God occurs only in a cryptogram in 8:6 (it is not translated that way in most English translations but the Hebrew is fairly clear.) If time allows I will take a few moments and sketch for you the following interpretative ideals in the Song:

- the Shepherd Song
- the rival lovers
- the allegorical method.

It is in some ways a mysterious book yet I think it is one of great practicality and the church is the loser by not using it to that extent.

4. A Survey Study of Lamentations ("God's woe")

a. An overview:

Lamentations is regularly associated with Jeremiah and has many parallels to that prophetic book both in style and content (compare