

Commentary on the Song of Solomon, Songs, Canticles

God's Marriage preparation manual



"Lovesick"

*Will she marry the king
or the poor shepherd
she loves?*

[Overview](#) to Song of Solomon

[Introduction](#) to Song of Solomon

[Commentary](#) on Song of Solomon

[Meet](#) the cast

[Read](#) the novel

Date of events: 967 BC
(same year Temple started)

Date written by Solomon: 931 BC
(same year he died)



Overview:

The year is 971 BC and they search all of Israel for the most beautiful young virgin to be King David's nurse on his death bed. (1 Ki 1:1-3) Abishag, a Shunammite from the town of Shunem, 90 km north of Jerusalem, has been chosen. After David dies, his son, 29 year old King Solomon begins to reign. One year later, in 970 BC, Solomon's older brother Adonijah, asks Solomon through Bathsheba to have Abishag as his wife and Adonijah is executed for insurrection. Abishag moves back home to Shunem begins working as a peasant farmer and falls in love with a poor shepherd boy. Three years later, Solomon, the wisest, richest and most powerful man on earth, begins to build the temple in Jerusalem in the 4th year of his reign in 967 BC. (1 Ki 6:1) That same year (967 BC), Solomon travels north to view one of his royal vineyards at Baal-hamon and sees the beautiful Abishag working in the vineyard. Although the shepherd had recently proposed to her, she accepts Solomon's to return with him to Jerusalem and consider becoming his 141st wife. Canticles is the story of how Abishag (1 Ki 1:1-3), the most beautiful girl in Israel, has snagged the biggest prize in Israel, King Solomon, but then must decide if she will marry him for money or a shepherd boy for love. Abishag is like a woman who is suddenly swept off her feet by a rich, handsome, sophisticated doctor and for a while, dumps her "average working class" boyfriend. What woman would not jump at the chance to snag such a man?

At first, she swoons for Solomon and is stunned in her good fortune of marrying dreamy "Mr. Perfect" but is unsettled when her heart keeps thinking about



dilemma of having to choose between Solomon and the shepherd is why she is "love sick", torn between two men for two different reasons. Will she marry for love or money? the shepherd back home.

"I am lovesick"



She is drawn to the 33 year old Solomon for money, fame, power and ego but she is drawn to the shepherd for love, inner happiness and joy. Her ego leaps with pride when others see her with Solomon but her heart leaps with love when she is alone with the shepherd. For a short time, she mindlessly falls for Solomon's charms like all the other women around her but, in the end, she chooses to be the shepherd's queen of hearts rather than Solomon's queen of diamonds and marries the poor shepherd boy from her home town of Shunem.



To fulfill 2 Sam 7:14-15, the Holy Spirit had Solomon write Song of Songs as a form of redemptive self-rebuke after falling from grace by marrying rich and famous foreign wives who turned his heart from God to idols. Given his many foreign pagan wives, Solomon eventually built temples to each of the four idol gods of the land: Ashtoreth of Sidon, Milcom and Molech of Ammon, Chemosh of Moab (1 Kings 11:1-13). For all Solomon's high flying pagan foreign royalty wives which he married for political purposes, being spurned by a pure virtuous native YHWH worshipping woman "in whom is no guile" must have been an instructive meditation in hindsight. Only at the end of Solomon's life when it was too late, does he realize that his 1000 aristocratic, elitist high society foreign wives, were worthless but the peasant girl who said "no" was better than them all since she was a YHWH worshipping Hebrew who had kept her virginity. It must have been painful and humiliating for Solomon to write this book where he gets dumped by a common peasant labourer. Solomon learned by writing the SONG OF SOLOMON that although he was the wisest man on earth, the Shulammite was even wiser than he, because she dumped him for his empty ephemeral seductions and married for true eternal love between one man and one woman, something he never experienced. The clear repentance of Solomon seen in Ecclesiastes and the SONG OF SOLOMON that he wrote at the end of his life saved his soul from eternal destruction.

While the act of writing the Song of Songs gave wisdom and instruction to foolish Solomon, those who read it learn from the wisdom of a peasant girl who chose to marry for the right reasons. The book is spoken in the voice of a woman to help other women in mate selection. The SONG OF SOLOMON is also a deeply romantic celebration of a woman's heart to help a good man discern if he is being objectified for some material benefit such as security, escape from unpleasant life situation, early retirement, money, fame and fortune, or genuinely loved. A man of faith is warned that although there is a perfect Shulammite out there *just for him*, there are 1000 beautiful women he must avoid for lack of inner beauty. These will turn his heart away from God to the destruction of his soul.

When the Bible says, "House and wealth are an inheritance from fathers, **But a prudent wife is from the Lord.**" (Proverbs 19:14) it does not mean that God picks out your wife and she is direct gift from God. "From the Lord" does not mean that God has one "prudent" wife he made as your perfect mate, set aside for you when the time is right. Rather it means that she is a woman of faith who obeys the laws revealed in the Bible. Every woman who is an obedient, faithful Christian is "prudent". The proverb does not mean God has chosen one prudent woman "just for you", rather it instructs a man to limit his search for a God-fearing sister in the church who attend all church services of her own free will, is active when she needs to be and holds herself to the high moral standards of Jesus Christ. God does not choose your wife, you do, but be warned, the only prudent wives are the ones who attend church every week. The foolishness of marrying a non-Christian is seen in the book of Hosea: "the Lord said to Hosea, "Go, take to yourself **a wife of harlotry** and have children of harlotry; for the land commits flagrant harlotry, forsaking the Lord."" (Hosea 1:2) Marrying a non-Christian is like marrying a harlot. This is exactly what Solomon did over 1000 times when he took non-Hebrew wives. Solomon's only "prudent wife" therefore, would have been Abishag but she wisely married a "prudent" shepherd boy instead and lived happily ever after.

The difference she sees in the two men is stark, dramatic and about as opposite as they can be. Although the economic and social status differential is obvious, the way each man talks to Abishag is equally opposite. Without exception, Solomon always describes how much he loves her body parts as he methodically moves down her body. The shepherd on the other hand, describes romantic vacation destinations he wants to take her. The way each man wants to spend time with her is also very different. Solomon wants to spend time in the bedroom but the shepherd wants to spend time outside the bedroom. Solomon wanted to take her to bed but the shepherd wants to take her for a romantic walk.

Abishag was the most beautiful girl in all of Israel and like any such woman today, garnered a lot of attention from men. The Shulammite knew men loved her body, but as a woman, she also knew that was not enough to hold a marriage together. *A man be great as a date, but not as a mate!* All of Solomon's talk about her "hot body" reminded her that he already had 140 "hot bodies" in the harem room that he had grown tired of and did not satisfy him. Solomon wanted to do something to her but the shepherd wants to something with her. She noticed the shepherd wanted to do those silly things in the country with her. Silly things like looking at flowers in a field or going for a mountain hike or scorpion hunting. It didn't matter as long as they were together. Solomon focuses on her body but the shepherd on her mind. Without exception, Solomon only talks about her body and never talks about places he would like to take her. She knows the shepherd appreciates her body as much as Solomon does, but is always seen spending time doing things together throughout the day. Solomon wants to spend 3.5 minutes in the bedroom while the shepherd wants to spend the rest of his life with her. When she first enters the palace, she expected the great king Solomon would be more romantic than a peasant shepherd. Soon after entering the palace, she learns that king Solomon treats her like a peasant sexual slave while her shepherd had already been treating her like a queen!

In Solomon's third and last attempt to seduce her, she first runs away from him with her eyes, then literally with her feet! The queens step in and try to convince her how great Solomon is but it's too late. She finds Solomon's objectification of all women repulsive, shallow and entirely self-serving. While many women had successfully used their "hot bodies" to hook vain Solomon for his money, Abishag's priority was a relationship with a man, not his credit cards. Abishag had a lot of experience with men swooning for her beauty and trying to pick her up. She ditched the shepherd hoping Solomon was the man of her dreams. Solomon described her as his "mare" but he turned out to be her "night mare", while the shepherd was her "day stallion". The shepherd understood that a woman needs a companion and a friend not a financier. She needs a co-parent not a daycare and that she is more interested in his face than his physique. She evaluated her life with Solomon and realized she would be dressed in rich clothes in the harem, eating caviar, dividing Solomon's attention with 140 other women while raising her kids as a single mom in a state daycare. She runs home to Shunem as fast as she can and marries the Shepherd, while Solomon goes on to marry another 860 more women. Abishag chooses wisely.

The Song of Songs is God's marriage preparation manual. While spoken entirely from a woman's perspective it is invaluable for both men and women in mate selection. For women, the message is that they will be happier with a poor man who is their best friend than a rich man who ignores them. For men, the message is to choose a woman who loves them, not their wealth. Central to the book is the warning against marrying shallow and objectifying men like Solomon. However, the book serves to alert men to the dangers of shallow-minded, predatory women who target good, innocent and unsuspecting men for their own selfish pleasure. The 1000 wives of Solomon certainly did not marry him with any expectation of taking regular romantic walks together in the moonlight, but for money, power and fame. Just as women are warned to avoid marrying men like Solomon, so too men are warned about marrying women like Solomon's wives. The message is simple: avoid beauty diggers like Solomon and gold diggers like his wives. I invite all unmarried men and women to closely meditate on the thoughts and dreams of Abishag as she walks herself through life's most beautiful institution: MARRIAGE. This book is intended to be a marriage preparation manual. It is also a reminder to those already married about what is important and what is not. See [Ten commandments for husbands and wives](#). It is never too late for you to make the changes you need to make to repair your marriage.

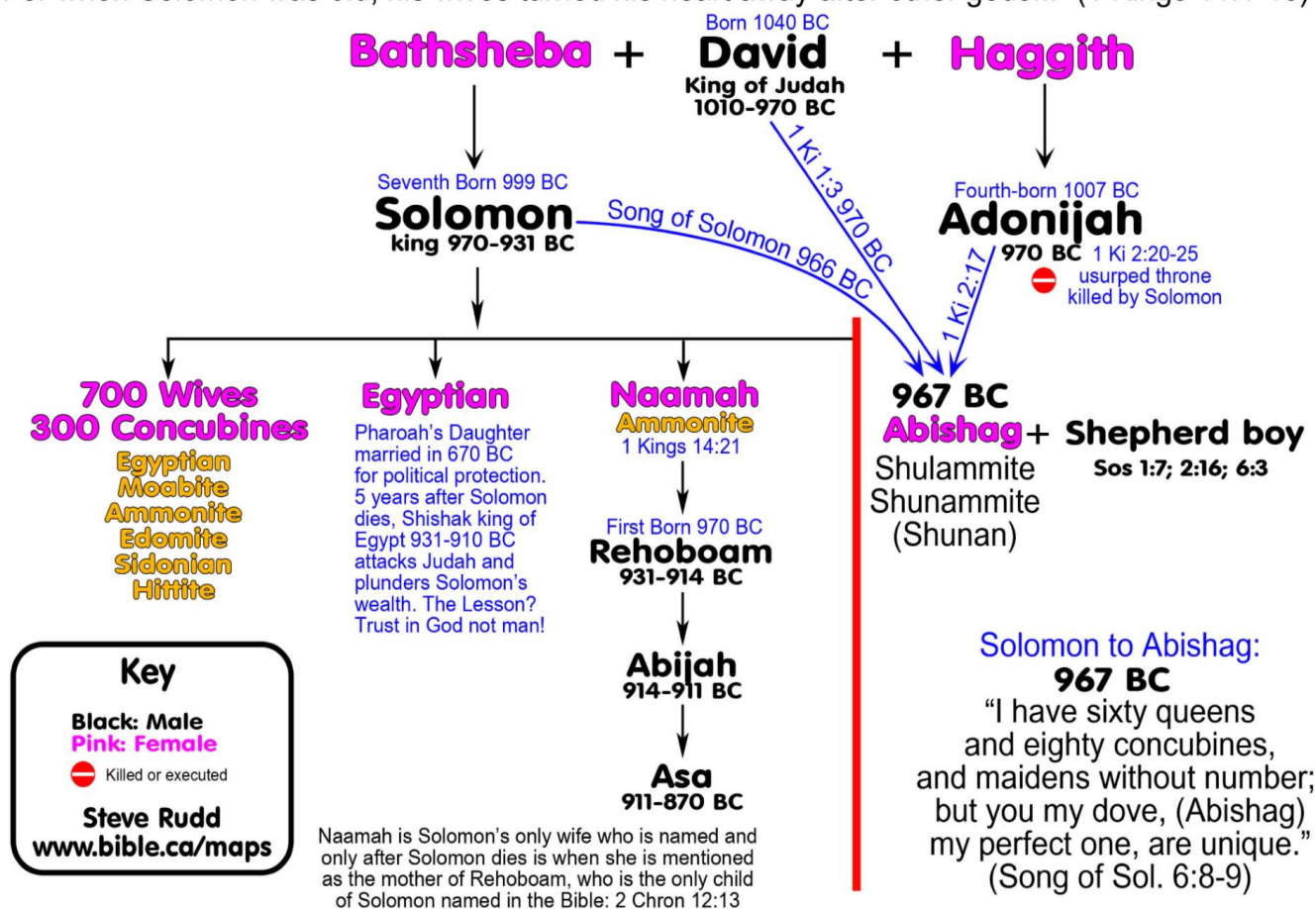
Introduction:

Commentary on the Song of Solomon, Songs, Canticles
Solomon's 1000 Wives and the girl who said no!

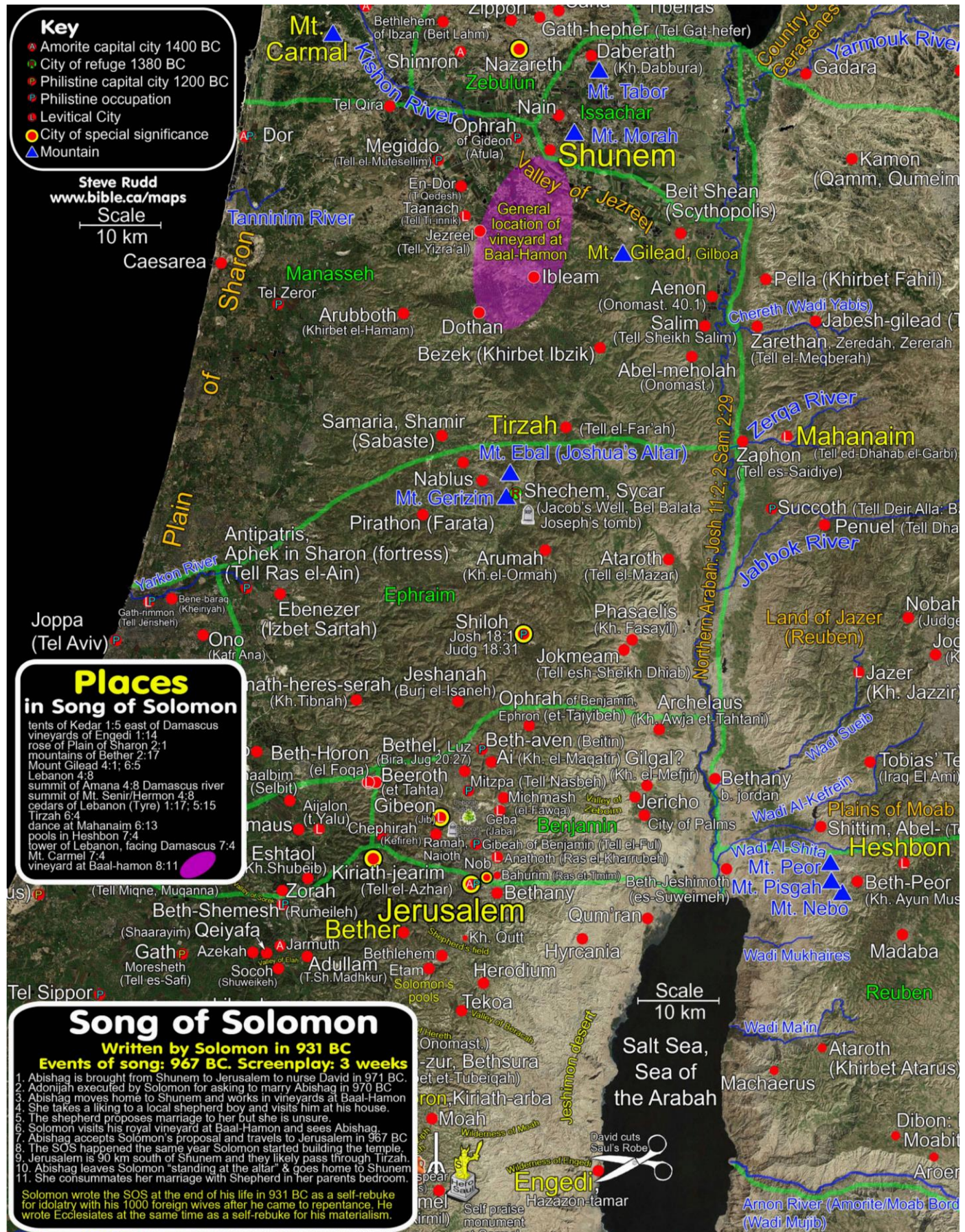
	<p>Events of song: 967 BC. Screenplay: 2-3 weeks.</p>
	<p>Written: 931 BC. By Steve Rudd</p>

The 1000 Wives of Solomon (And almost wife #1001 who said no!)

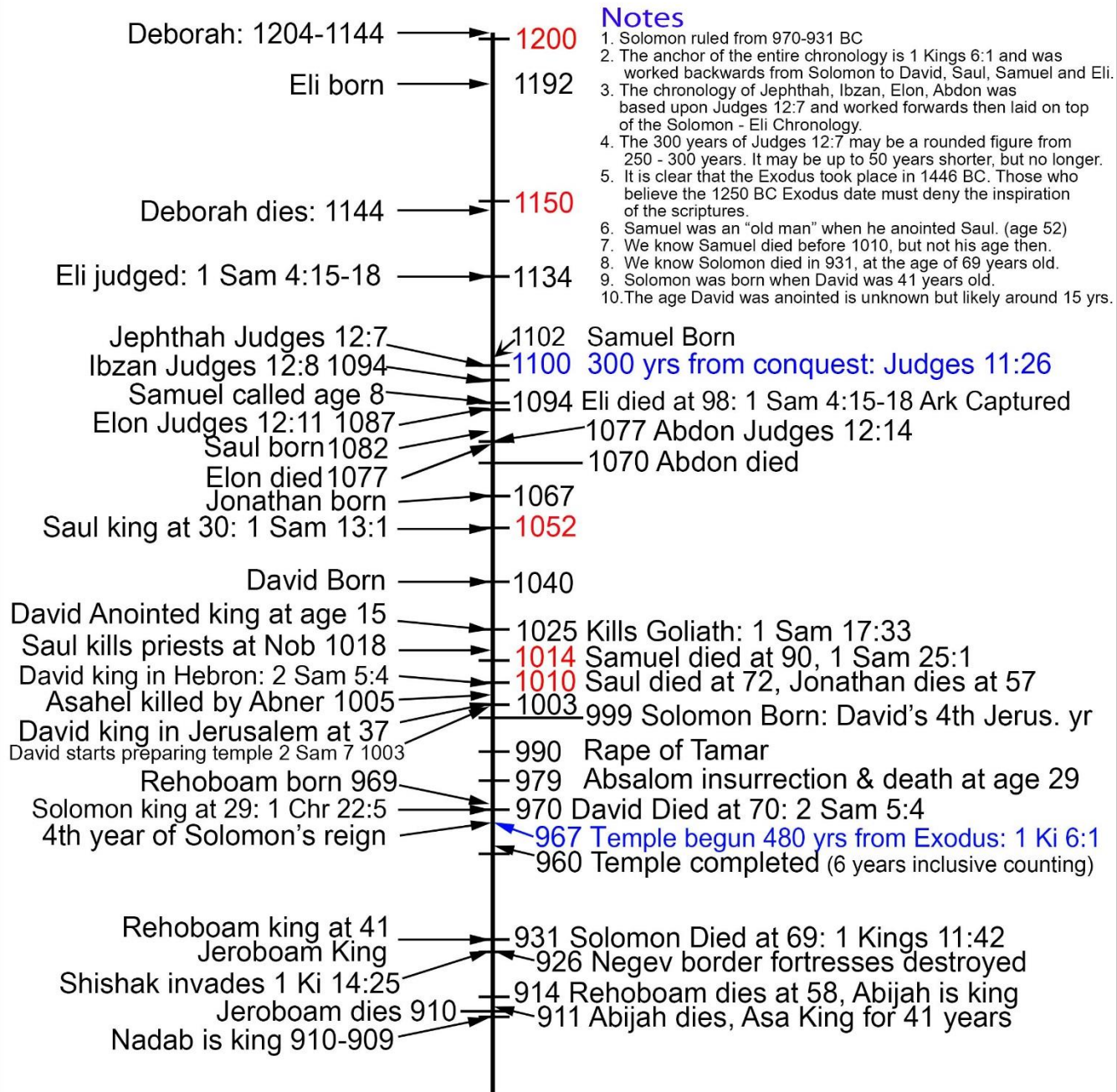
"Solomon had 700 wives, princesses, and 300 concubines, and his wives turned his heart away. For when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods..." (1 Kings 11:1-13)

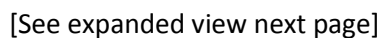


Naamah is Solomon's only wife who is named and only after Solomon dies is when she is mentioned as the mother of Rehoboam, who is the only child of Solomon named in the Bible: 2 Chron 12:13



Eli | Saul | David | Solomon Chronology





Key

Black: Male
Pink: Female
Killed or executed

Steve Rudd
www.bible.ca/maps

The House of David
Tribe of Judah
2 Samuel 3:1

"Now there was a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David; and David grew steadily stronger, but the house of Saul grew weaker continually."

Salmon + Rahab the harlot: Caananite

Married in 1390 BC

Boaz + Ruth the Moabite

Married in 1284 BC

Obed

Jesse + Unknown wife + Nahash, Ammonite king

2 Sam 17:25

David's Sisters

Abigail + Ithra

2 Sam 17:25 Ishmaelite

Amasa

Absalom's army general murdered by Joab

Asahel

Killed by Abner 2 Sam 2:23

Zebadiah

David's commander of 24,000 in 4th month 1 Chron 27:7

Joab

David's army General executed by Solomon 1 Ki 2:29

Tamar

raped by Amnon 984 BC

Absalom

4 year coup Executed by Joab 2 Sam 18:14 970 BC

Rehoboam

931-912 BC

Jesus

Mt 1:6

Nathan

1 Chro 3:5

Elishama

1 Chron 3:6 Jer 41:1

Shephatiah

Barren

Amnon

firstborn Killed by Absalom for raping Tamar 2 Sam 13:28

Adonijah

970 BC fourth-born 1 Ki 2:20-25 usurped throne executed by Solomon

Haggith

Abigail

Eliab

Abinadab

Shimea

Soldeirs in Saul's Army (Goliath)

Nethanel

Raddai

Ozem

David's 8 wives (plus 10 concubines)

Elihu

David's tribal representative for Judah 1 Chron 27:18

David

King of Judah 1010-970 BC Hebron 7.5 years Jerusalem: 33 years Born 1040 BC

Solomon

970-931 BC seventh-born Born 999 BC

Bathsheba

Maacah

Absalom

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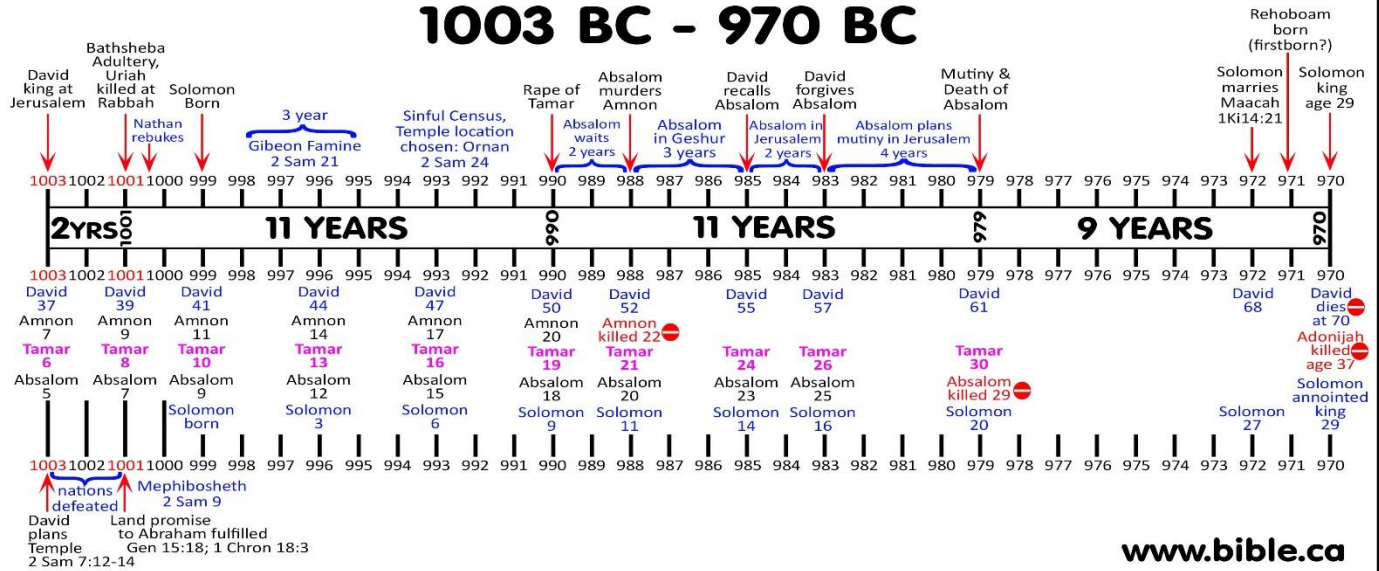
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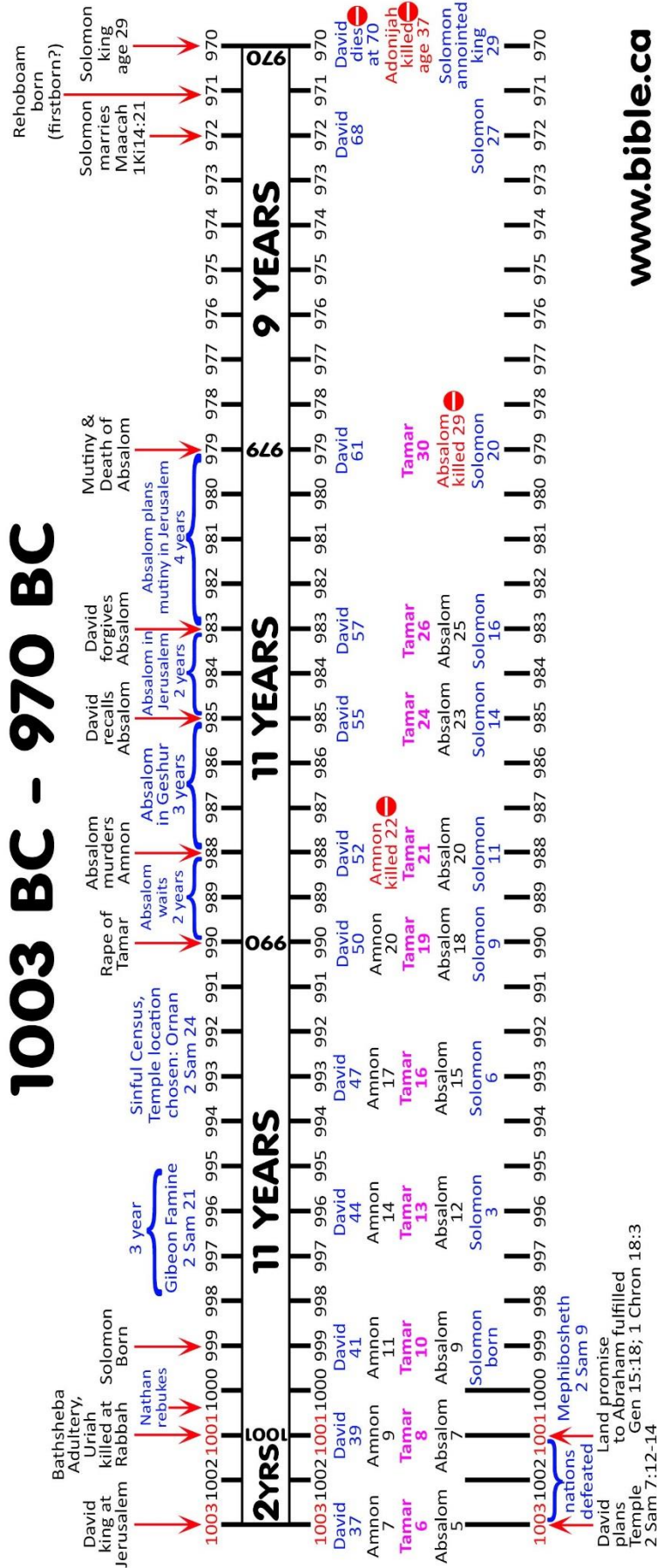
1 Chron 3:6 Jer 41:1

David's 33 Jerusalem Years 1003 BC - 970 BC



[See expanded view next page]

David's 33 Jerusalem Years 1003 BC - 970 BC



Introduction to commentary on the Song of Solomon

Introduction:

1. The Song of Solomon (SONG OF SOLOMON) is a romantic and beautiful open hearted look at the actual thoughts and feelings a young woman experiences as they consider who they will marry. While the book has sexual language, the overall key to marriage is not a sexy body, but a gentle and pure inner heart.
 - a. The Bible is the all sufficient guide book on all things relating to life and godliness:
 - i. "All Scripture is inspired by God and **profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness**; so that the man of God may be adequate, **equipped for every good work**." (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
 - ii. "Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that His divine power has granted to us [in the Bible] **everything pertaining to life and godliness**, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust." (2 Peter 1:2-4)
 - b. The Song of Solomon is set in our canon as the premier guide book on dating, mate selection and marriage.
 - i. While the Muslim's openly criticize the SONG OF SOLOMON as unfit for public consumption, the exact opposite is true. It is the Koran that fails to provide any guidance in matters of love and family with the exception that if your wife isn't obedient, you should beat her into submission:
 - ii. **Koran**: "Men are the managers of the affairs of women for that God has preferred in bounty one of them over another, and for that they have expended of their property. Righteous women are therefore obedient, guarding the secret for God's guarding. And those you fear may be rebellious admonish; banish them to their couches, and **beat them**. If they then obey you, look not for any way against them; God is All high, All great." (Arberry's version of the Koran, Quran, 4:34)
 - iii. Under sharia law, where Muslims have gained a majority by either out-populating the native people they invade, or forcing them to convert under the threat of death, women are a subspecies of men with no rights. Muslim men, who lack self-control over their own sexual urges, find their solution in putting women into bondage by depriving them of sexual enjoyment through female circumcision at 3 months old, then forcing them to wear a black bedsheet with eye slits, as soon as they can walk.
 - iv. Contrast this Islamic psychosis of the female body in public with the beautiful girl in the Song of Solomon: "I was a wall [not promiscuous], and my breasts were like towers [she highlighted them as a centerpiece of her sexuality]; Then I became in his eyes as one who finds peace [because her boyfriend trusted she was a virgin]." (Song of Solomon 8:10)
 - v. Islam has no trust that women can keep themselves virgins so puts them into bondage and will not tolerate the female form in public. Christianity trusts women and puts the full responsibility of a woman's own virginity upon her own choices and lets her display her female form in public.
 - vi. A woman wearing burkas in public is like a spring meadow where each flower is covered with a black bag so no one can enjoy the natural. A woman's body is a natural beauty and God never intended it to be 100% suppressed in public, save the eyes. Most of the warnings in the Bible about how a woman clothes herself focus on over-dressing with fancy jewelry

and clothing, not under dressing. To be sure, the Bible instructs women to dress modestly, but the Shulammitte clearly dressed to accentuate her body, not hide it under a bed sheet.

vii. The Bible instructs women to adorn or add to their beauty. Sharia law stones women unless they hide their beauty.

- c. Unlike the Koran whose best and only marriage advice is to beat the wife, the Bible shows women as:
 - i. Equals in marriage with warnings against the husband from mistreating his wife: "show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered." (1 Pe 3:7)
 - ii. Independent, self-employed, buying and selling property, CEO of her own manufacturing company: "The heart of her husband trusts in her, And he will have no lack of gain.... She considers a field and buys it; From her earnings she plants a vineyard. ... She makes linen garments and sells *them*, And supplies belts to the tradesmen." (Prov 31)
 - iii. Women may choose their own husband. This is the central theme of the SONG OF SOLOMON where Abishag had to choose between Solomon and the Shepherd. (More on this below regarding Jewish marriage customs)

2. The "Song of Solomon" means, *Shir-HaShirim* means "Song of Songs" or "The Ultimate Song", "best song" of those written by Solomon.

- a. "He also spoke 3,000 proverbs, and his songs were 1,005." (1 Kings 4:32)
- b. From whose point of view it is considered "best" is in question. This is a song about carnal love, not spiritual worship. God (YHWH) is only mentioned once in the entire song in 8:6.

3. Geographical references of cities, towns, mountains (See map above)

- a. tents of Kedar (1:5) east of Damascus
- b. vineyards of Engedi (1:14)
- c. rose of Plain of Sharon (2:1)
- d. mountains of Bether (2:17) Near Bethlehem
- e. Mount Gilead (4:1; 6:5)
- f. Lebanon (4:8)
- g. summit of Amana (4:8) Damascus river
- h. summit of Mt. Senir/Hermon (4:8)
- i. cedars of Lebanon (Tyre) (1:17; 5:15)
- j. Tirzah (6:4)
- k. dance at Mahanaim (6:13)
- l. pools in Heshbon (7:4)
- m. tower of Lebanon, facing Damascus (7:4)
- n. Mt. Carmel (7:4)
- o. vineyard at Baal-hamon (8:11)

3. Ps 45 is a wedding song for Solomon which gives us much insight in the social dynamics of being a harem girl.

- a. This Psalm is clearly written to the hundreds of women Solomon married: "In place of your fathers (Plural fathers = plural women) will be your sons; You shall make them princes in all the earth." (Psalm 45:16)
- b. Psalms 45: "For the choir director; according to the Shoshannim. A Maskil of the sons of Korah. A Song of Love. My heart overflows with a good theme; I address my verses to the King; My tongue is the pen of a ready writer. You are fairer than the sons of men; Grace is poured upon Your lips; Therefore God has blessed You forever. Gird Your sword on Your thigh, O Mighty One, In Your splendor and Your majesty! And in Your majesty ride on victoriously, For the cause of truth and meekness and righteousness; Let Your right hand teach You awesome things. Your arrows are sharp; The peoples fall under You; Your arrows are in the heart of the King's enemies. **Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of joy above Your fellows.** All Your garments are fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia; Out of ivory palaces stringed instruments have

made You glad. **Kings' daughters are among Your noble ladies**; At Your right hand stands the queen in gold from Ophir. Listen, O daughter, give attention and incline your ear: **Forget your people and your father's house**; Then the King will desire your beauty. Because He is your Lord, bow down to Him. **The daughter of Tyre will come with a gift; The rich among the people will seek your favor**. The King's daughter is all glorious within; Her clothing is interwoven with gold. She will be led to the King in embroidered work; The virgins, her companions who follow her, Will be brought to You. They will be led forth with gladness and rejoicing; They will enter into the King's palace. **In place of your fathers will be your sons; You shall make them princes in all the earth. I will cause Your name to be remembered in all generations**; Therefore the peoples will give You thanks forever and ever." (Psalm 45)

- c. Ps 45 is about Solomon because the messianic application of "Your throne O God" is applied directly to Christ in Heb 1:8-9 and is a major text for the deity of Christ where he is called God.
- d. Abishag, (Shunammite) had to make the cost/benefit calculation highlighted in Ps 45. She must weigh the loss of her family with the gain of fame, money, power, influence, luxury and fine clothing. However, she had an additional cost and that was giving up her true love, the shepherd boy.
 - i. The psalm coaches the young girls to cut all emotional ties with their families: "Forget your people and your father's house ... In place of your fathers will be your sons; You shall make them princes in all the earth."
 - ii. The Psalm promises the young girls power, fame, influence and money: "The daughter of Tyre will come with a gift; The rich among the people will seek your favor"
 - iii. Every girl's dream is: "Her clothing is interwoven with gold."
 - iv. The Psalm promises the young girls a lasting memory: "**I will cause Your name to be remembered in all generations**"
- e. Solomon clearly uses this money/fame/power appeal to entice the Shulammitte throughout the SONG OF SOLOMON, but she is torn by the fact she is in love with another.

A. The Shulammitte of SONG OF SOLOMON is Abishag of 1 Kings 1:2-3

1. Both girls were of stunning beauty and the most beautiful girls in Israel:
 - a. "So his servants said to him, "Let them seek a young virgin for my lord the king, and let her attend the king and become his nurse; and let her lie in your bosom, that my lord the king may keep warm." So **they searched for a beautiful girl throughout all the territory of Israel**, and found Abishag the Shunammite, and brought her to the king." (1 Kings 1:2-3)
 - b. "There are sixty queens and eighty concubines, And maidens without number; But my dove, my perfect one, is unique: She is her mother's only daughter; She is the pure child of the one who bore her. The maidens saw her and called her blessed, The queens and the concubines also, and they praised her" (Song of Solomon 6:8-9)
 - c. In the Song of Solomon, both Solomon and his 140 wives said she was the most beautiful girl they had seen!
2. Both girls are from the same town: Shunan
 - a. "It is altogether possible that the forms Shunem and Shulem are equivalent variants, since interchanges of *l*, *n*, and *r* take place in various Semitic dialects, early and late, as in other languages." (AYB, SONG OF SOLOMON 7:1, 2008 AD)
 - b. The Biblical town of Shunem is identified with the modern village of Sulam. Notice the interchange in spelling between the L and N.
 - c. Shunem is 90 km, as the crow flies to Jerusalem. The actual trip is likely 110 km with twists and turns. This means that it would take about 4 days from the time the Shulammitte left Shunem with Solomon, to get to Jerusalem.
 - d. Tirzah was the most beautiful city, next to Jerusalem and is only 37 km due south of Shunem and in direct line of travel between Shunem and Jerusalem. When Solomon travelled up to Shunem to get Abishag, he would have stopped in Tirzah while on route back to Jerusalem with her. "You are as beautiful as Tirzah, my darling, As lovely as Jerusalem, As awesome as an army with banners." (Song of

Solomon 6:4) Forty years later, Tizra was still a beautiful city since it was chosen by Jeroboam under the divided kingdom as his the royal residence.

2. Both girls lived at exactly the same time and were of marrying age:
 - a. In 1 Kings 1, they found a young virgin named Abishag. We know that Abishag lived in Jerusalem at least one year after David died because Adonijah (Solomon's brother) asked for Abishag to be his wife. Two to four years later she had moved home to Shunem where she became a common labourer in the vineyard and developed a relationship with the shepherd.
 - b. In SONG OF SOLOMON, they found a young virgin old enough for marriage and at the time Solomon had 60 wives and 80 concubines. This would be about 3-4 years after he became king.
 - c. The timing for the two girls is very close to the exact same year!
3. Abishag is so obviously the Shulammitte of Song of Solomon that you must possess a serious bias against such a connection to miss it. Those who dismiss the connection "to err on the side of caution", are blind to the overall theme of the book as being a self-rebuke of Solomon when he came to repentance at the end of his life.
4. The vineyard she worked in is located at Baal-hamon: "Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon" (8:11)
 - a. This was a royal vineyard owned by Solomon and he would rent it out to the locals. Apparently Abishag's brothers were the tenants and they put her to work there after the 1-2 years of high society living as David's nurse in Jerusalem (1 Ki 1). She is intimately aware of the financial arrangements between Solomon and the tenants, which strengthens the view that her family was in fact the ones with whom Solomon had made the contract. It was when Solomon went to collect the rent or visit the vineyard that he saw Abishag and was struck by her natural beauty.
 - b. No one knows where Baal-hamon is but Dothan and Ibleam (Tell Bel'ame), have been suggested by Anchor Bible Dictionary (ABD).
 - c. Judith 8:3 is believed to be a reference which locates it near Dothan. "He took to his bed and died in his hometown of Bethulia, and was buried with his ancestors **in the field between Dothan and Balamon.**" (Judith 8:2-3)
 - d. Dothan is 23 km south of Shunem and Ibleam is only 18 km south. So this is a very realistic place for where Abishag was working.
5. Shulammitte has been interpreted in four ways: "In verse 6:13, the woman is called a Shulammitte. This is the only place in the Song where she is referred to in this way. Three basic interpretations have been offered as an explanation. First, it has been equated with the town of Shunem (Josh 19:18; 1 Sam 28:4). As such, the woman is sometimes associated with the beautiful Abishag, the Shunammite (1 Kgs 1:3, 15; 2:17-22). Second, it is the name of the goddess Ishtar, who was the goddess of love and war in Mesopotamian culture. And third, it is a feminine form of the name Solomon "Solomoness", whose root means "peace." Of these three, the third seems the most plausible because of other references to Solomon in the book. Just as the man is a Solomontype in the eyes of the women, so the woman may be a Solomoness-type in the eyes of the man." (College Press NIV Commentary, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes & Song of Songs, SONG OF SOLOMON 6:13, 2002 AD)
 - a. Shulammitte is a variant of Shunammite and means a woman from a town Shunan, 5 km south of Mt. Morah in the territory of Issachar. (correct interpretation)
 - b. Shulammitte means a woman from a town that is unknown.
 - c. Shulammitte is the feminine of "Solomon", meaning, one of Solomon's girls or "the Solomoness".
 - d. Shulammitte is one of many suggested pagan goddesses like Ishtar etc.
6. It may very well be the case that Abishag the Shunammite was nicknamed "the Shulammitte" when Solomon brought her to his palace to marry her. Shulammitte is the feminine of "Solomon", meaning, one of Solomon's girls or "the Solomoness". This likely explains why she refers to herself in the third person in 6:13 "Why do you want to look at the Shulammitte" rather than saying, "Why do you want to look at me". It was a clever play on words, but just another example of how she had become a depersonalized object in that they didn't even call her by her real name. She was the "Shulammitte".
 - a. While it is clear that Shulammitte is identical to Shunammite (a resident of the city of Shunem) it is also possible that she was referred to as a "Solomoness" (Shulammitte).

7. It is our conclusion that Shulammite was a clever play on words which basically meant, "Solomon's girl from Shunem".
 - a. This is just another example of how she had become a depersonalized sex object in that they she was never called her by her real name Abishag.
 - b. Shulammite therefore, is a pet name like "Fifi", "Sugar", "Buttercup". This reinforced, in her mind, that she was a sex object not a person. She was "the Shulammite" from Shunem.

B. Author of SONG OF SOLOMON: Solomon in the last year of his life

1. Solomon wrote the book in the last year of his life as a self-rebuke of his own sinful stupidity in marrying 1000 foreign women who led him into idolatry.
2. It was a kind of self-punishment from God after he came to repentance.
3. Solomon wrote SONG OF SOLOMON as a self-critique that echoes the song "*The House of the Rising Sun*": "Oh mother, tell your children Not to do what I have done.
Spend your lives in sin and misery. In the House of the Rising Sun.
I'm goin' back to New Orleans, To wear that ball and chain
It's been the ruin of many a poor boy And God I know I'm one"
12. The "love triangle" interpretation makes Solomon look so bad, that some believe it must have been written later by another prophet after Solomon died. This completely misses the power of the book. Only when Solomon is seen as the author warning others not to make his mistakes, does the book have the greatest power to teach our youth about what is and is not important in a spouse.

C. Dating the Song of Solomon: Events: 967 BC. Screenplay: 2 weeks. Written: 931 BC.

1. The events of the book take place about 967 BC, four years after Solomon became king and the same year he started to build the temple.
 - a. The events of the book happened when Solomon had 60 wives and 80 concubines: "There are sixty queens and eighty concubines, And maidens without number". (Song of Solomon 6:8)
 - i. Solomon married 1000 women so the 140 mark would be shortly after Solomon became king, likely at year 4. (967 BC) It is not likely that he continued to marry after age 60, so this compresses the time to about 30 years to marry 1000 women. So $1000/30 \text{ years} = 33$ marriages a year. At this rate, he would reach the 140 mark at about year four (140/33) of his ascent to the throne, which is the same year he began the temple! 1 Ki 6:1
 - ii. It appears that Naamah was his first wife and the daughter of Pharaoh became his wife the same year he became king. So the beginning point of acquiring wives at a rapid rate would coincide with his ascent to the throne.
 - b. The Shulammite makes reference to Solomon's cedar houses: "The beams of our houses are cedars, Our rafters, cypresses." (Song of Solomon 1:17)
 - i. Solomon took 13 years to build his palace of cedar: "Now Solomon was building his own house thirteen years, and he finished all his house. He built the house of the forest of Lebanon; its length was 100 cubits and its width 50 cubits and its height 30 cubits, on four rows of cedar pillars with cedar beams on the pillars. It was paneled with cedar above the side chambers which were on the 45 pillars, 15 in each row." (1 Kings 7:1-3)
 - ii. It appears that her reference is to an unfinished house. Generally women are more concerned with the decorations of the walls than what is "under the hood". On the other hand, it may just be a way of saying, "we have a house built upon the rock".
 - iii. It is also interesting that she says, "OUR", indicating joint ownership, which is strange unless she was of the mind, at this point, of marrying Solomon. The fact she even came to Jerusalem at all, indicates she was somewhat interested in the idea of being the king's wife. iv. If SONG OF SOLOMON 1:17 is speaking of an unfinished house under construction, this would

fit nicely with the period of 4 years after (967 BC) Solomon became king (970 BC). 967 BC is the same year Solomon started to build the temple.

- c. At age 27, Solomon married Naamah (972 BC) and a year later Rehoboam was born in 971 BC when David was 69 years old.
 - i. Of all of Solomon's 1000 wives, the only one that is named is Naamah.
 - ii. She gave birth to Rehoboam, Solomon's successor as King. Rehoboam is the only child that is named of Solomon.
 - iii. Solomon reigned for 40 years and Rehoboam was 41 when Solomon died.
 - iv. Rehoboam was born in 971 BC, one year before David died and Solomon became king. "Now Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah.
 - v. "Rehoboam was forty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the Lord had chosen from all the tribes of Israel to put His name there. And his mother's name was Naamah the Ammonitess." (1 Kings 14:21)
 - vi. Because Rehoboam was the crown prince, it is likely that he was the firstborn. David held the newborn in his arms in last year of his life and possibly prophesied he was the heir to Solomon. All of this is speculation because Solomon was the 7th born son of David, not firstborn. However, there is a general succession through the book of kings where the firstborn replaces the father as king.
 - d. Abishag was in Jerusalem from before the death of David to after Adonijah (Solomon's brother) usurped the throne in 970 BC. However a 6-12 month cooling off period must have taken place so that Adonijah would have the confidence to ask for Abishag as his wife through Bathsheba. Adonijah was likely executed in 969 BC.
 - e. It would take would take at least a year for Abishag to develop a relationship with the shepherd.
 - i. Abishag was likely still in Jerusalem in 969 BC (since Adonijah asked for her as his wife), but probably left for her home in Shunem shortly thereafter.
 - ii. The story has Solomon plucking the Shulammite out of her native home environment as she worked as a common labourer in the vineyards. (1 Ki 1:1-3)
 - f. Bathsheba was alive when Solomon brought the Shulammite home to Jerusalem: "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 3:11)
 - g. So when all is taken into consideration, it is reasonable to assume that the events took place in 967 BC, about 4 years after Solomon became king.
1. The screenplay of the storyline of the book is about two weeks long:
 - a. The chronological events of the book took at least a few weeks from the time Solomon visits the Shulammite in Shunan, to the time she finally said no and chose the shepherd at the conclusion of the book.
 - b. Shunem is 90 km, as the crow flies to Jerusalem. The actual trip is likely 110 km when you follow the lay of the very hilly landscape. This means that it would take about 4 days from the time the Shulammite left Shunem with Solomon, to get to Jerusalem.
 - c. Considering the beautification process she would go through to transform her from the sunburn peasant worker into a queen, the story probably takes place over a week or two at least.
 - d. She then made the trip back home to Shunem.
 2. The book was written by Solomon, likely in the last year of his life at age 69 in 931 AD as a self-rebuke:
 - a. In the search for the perfect example of true love, the Holy Spirit looked over the 1000 marriages of Solomon and the best example was the true love Solomon tried to destroy between the Shulammite and her lowly shepherd boy.
 - b. 2 Sam 7: "When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. "He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. "I will be a father to him and

he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men, but My lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you.” (2 Samuel 7:12-15)

- i. Notice that this double prophecy says that Solomon and Christ will build a temple for God.
 - ii. It also says that Jesus would be scourged for our sins and Solomon would be scourged for his own sins.
 - iii. Solomon had turned away from God, because of his pagan foreign wives and worshipped idols.
 - iv. Here is the full narrative: *“Now King Solomon loved many foreign women along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women, from the nations concerning which the Lord had said to the sons of Israel, “You shall not associate with them, nor shall they associate with you, for they will surely turn your heart away after their gods.” Solomon held fast to these in love. He had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines, and his wives turned his heart away. For when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods; and his heart was not wholly devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father had been. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians and after Milcom the detestable idol of the Ammonites. Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, and did not follow the Lord fully, as David his father had done. **Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable idol of Moab, on the mountain which is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the detestable idol of the sons of Ammon. Thus also he did for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods. (1 Kings 11:7) Now the Lord was angry with Solomon because his heart was turned away from the Lord, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not observe what the Lord had commanded. So the Lord said to Solomon, “Because you have done this, and you have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you, and will give it to your servant. “Nevertheless I will not do it in your days for the sake of your father David, but I will tear it out of the hand of your son. “However, I will not tear away all the kingdom, but I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of My servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen.”” (1 Kings 11:1-13)***
 - v. Had God not intervened with punishment, Solomon would have lost his soul for his sin.
 - vi. The Song of Solomon was a humiliating thing for Solomon to write about how a peasant girl chose a shepherd over him. In fact, she exposes him for the superficial person that he was.
 - vii. Writing the Song of Solomon therefore, was like when a teacher asks a disobedient student to write lines out 100 times, "I will not marry idol worshipping foreign women that lead me to hell". "I will not marry a non-Hebrew". "I will not marry a non-Christian".
- c. **Solomon's Egyptian Wife:** From all this we can conclude that the Song of Solomon records at the end of Solomon's life, a story that dates to the darkest period of his reign when he began to marry all the foreign women for political advantage. For example, almost immediately after executing Joab for his part in the coup of Adonijah, Solomon marries the daughter of Pharaoh. This event stands out boldly in the narrative on Solomon. It is mentioned sequentially before the story of where he displays his wisdom by ordering the child cut in two. What is interesting is that Solomon built his Egyptian princess wife a house, that was not within the city of David. Directly across from the city of David is the "tomb of Pharaoh's daughter located in the modern town of Silwan. It is hewn out of solid rock and featured a pyramid constructed on top of the existing flat roof. Originally, there was an inscription above the small door to the tomb, but a Byzantine (350-500 AD) hermit heightened the door, destroying all but two letters of this ancient Hebrew inscription. From the two remaining letters of the inscription, archeologists have dated the construction to the "first temple period" (967-587 BC). While archeologists generally date the letters to the late temple period (Hezekiah etc.) there is no reason why

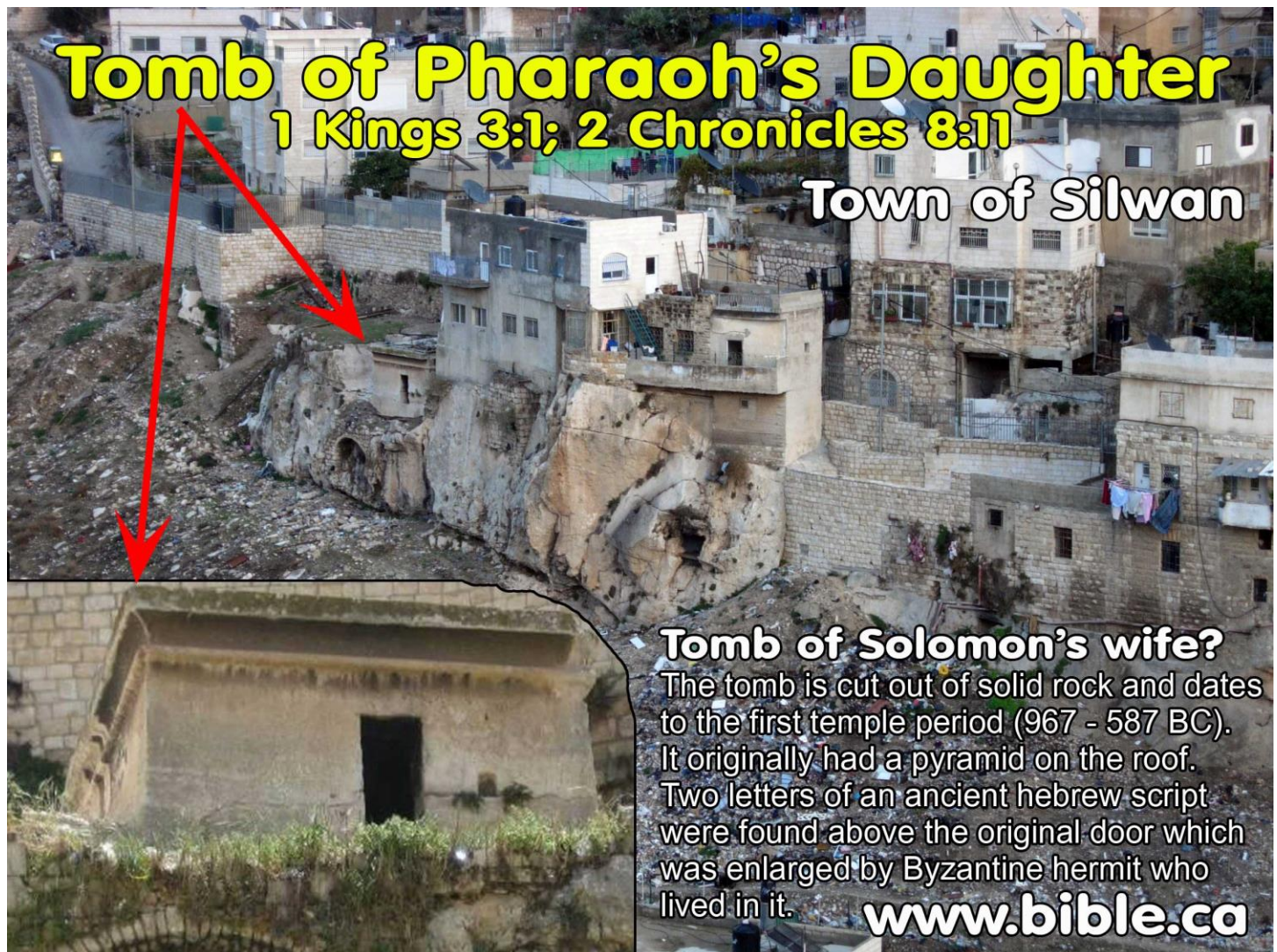
this cannot be the original tomb Solomon may have prepared for her, in addition to her house, which was a partial replica of his own. Perhaps the inscription was etched into the tomb hundreds of years after it was built by a later king. It is very likely that this is the site of where Solomon built the tomb of Pharaoh's daughter.

- i. "Then Solomon formed a marriage alliance with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's

daughter and brought her to the city of David until he had finished building his own house and the house of the Lord and the wall around Jerusalem. The people were still sacrificing on the high places, because there was no house built for the name of the Lord until those days." (1 Kings 3:1-2) ii. "He made the hall of the throne where he was to judge, the hall of judgment, and it was

paneled with cedar from floor to floor. His house where he was to live, the other court inward from the hall, was of the same workmanship. He also **made a house like this hall for Pharaoh's daughter**, whom Solomon had married." (1 Kings 7:7-8)

iii. "Then Solomon brought Pharaoh's daughter up from the city of David to the house which he had built for her, for he said, "My wife shall not dwell in the house of David king of Israel, because the places are holy where the ark of the Lord has entered."" (2 Chronicles 8:11)



- iv. While he is marrying all these pagans, he is spurned by a native virgin Hebrew worshipper of YHWH!
- v. The SONG OF SOLOMON is a self-rebuke, a humiliating story to be brought front and center as an example of how not to live.

- d. Solomon actually built pagan sanctuaries for each of his pagan wives, so they could worship their idols in the modern town of Silwan. It wasn't until the time of Josiah 623 BC when he discovered the lost book of the Law, that he destroyed all the pagan temples Solomon had built. This means that for an incredible 300 years, Solomon's idolatry polluted the land. *If Solomon came to repentance, it is a puzzle why he did not tear down the pagan temples before he died.*
 - i. "Then **Solomon built a high place for Chemosh** the detestable idol of Moab, on the mountain which is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the detestable idol of the sons of Ammon. Thus also he did for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods." (1 Kings 11:7)
 - ii. **Josiah destroys Solomon's pagan shrines about 623 BC:** "The high places which were before Jerusalem, which were on the right of the mount of destruction **which Solomon the king of Israel had built** for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Sidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and for Milcom the abomination of the sons of Ammon, the king defiled. He broke in pieces the sacred pillars and cut down the Asherim and filled their places with human bones." (2 Kings 23:13–14)
- e. The book was written after Jeroboam fled to Pharaoh Sheshonk I, (946-925 BC)
 - i. Since Sheshonk I became pharaoh in 946 BC and Solomon died in 931 BC, the Song of Solomon would not have been written before than the year after Jeroboam fled for Egypt.
 - ii. "Solomon sought therefore to put Jeroboam to death; but Jeroboam arose and fled to Egypt to Shishak king of Egypt, and he was in Egypt until the death of Solomon." (1 Kings 11:40) iii. Jeroboam was told by the prophet that he would take the ten northern tribes and be king of Israel from Solomon and give them to him. Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam but he fled to Egypt under the refuge of Sheshonk I, (?-931 BC) until Solomon died. (1 Ki 11:40) iv. Solomon was the wisest man who lived, but because he disobeyed God by marrying nonJewish women, it cost him the kingdom and possibly his soul. Surely the wisest man on earth would have connected the dots that the kingdom was going to be divided because he married idol worshipping women. He must have comprehended that his kingdom was "torn from him" just like it was torn from wicked Saul; and for the same reason: disobeying God's explicit commands.
 - v. Given human nature, it would have taken up to three or four years after Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam, the time he fully repented and came to his senses about how sinful he had been.
 - vi. Considering the flight of Jeroboam to Egypt, the realistic window of when the Song of Solomon could have been written by Solomon, is the last 3 years of his life: 934-931 BC

D. Love Triangle theatrical interpretation: Solomon, Shulammite & Shepherd

1. The SONG OF SOLOMON rivals the book of Revelation as having the most diverse ways of approaching and interpreting the book.
 - a. Revelation:
 - i. The events happen shortly after the book was written and include past, present and future. (correct interpretation)
 - ii. The events are a series of 7 periods of successive time.
 - iii. The events of the book happen in the distant future from when it was written
 - b. The Song of Solomon:
 - i. Theatrical play about a love triangle where the Shulammite must choose between

Solomon and the shepherd boy she loves from her home town.

(correct interpretation)

- ii. Theatrical play about the marriage of Solomon to the Shulammite.
- iii. Literal book about the marriage of Solomon to the Shulammite.
- iv. Allegorical messianic of Christ and his bride, the church.
- v. There are 16 different ways of viewing the SONG OF SOLOMON, most of which are absurd: "The Targum and Subsequent Jewish Interpretations; Christian Interpretations; Dream Theories, Melodrama; The Wedding Week Theory; Cultic Interpretation; Jewish Mysticism; The Shekinah; Shekinah-Matronit in Qabbalah; Historical Allegory; Mystical Marriage; Mariology and the Lady of the Canticle; Humanizing the Sublime Song; Catholic Views of Canticles as Songs of Human Love; A French Protestant View: Sacred and Sexual; The Song of Songs and Women's Liberation; Love and Death" (AYB, SONG OF SOLOMON, index, 2008 AD)

2. The Two/Three Person drama view (love triangle, Solomon, Shulammite, Shepherd) dates back to 200 AD:

- a. **200 AD** "From early times the Song was regarded as dramatic. **Origen (200 AD)**, in the third century, considered it a nuptial poem in dramatic form. Two of the Greek translations, **Codex Sinaiticus (325 AD)** of the fourth century, and **Codex Alexandrinus of the fifth century**, supplied marginal notes to the text indicating the speakers and the persons addressed. The Ethiopic translation divided the book into five parts, perhaps on the assumption that it is a drama in five acts." (AYB, SONG OF SOLOMON, p34, 2008 AD)
- b. **325AD**: "There are **marginal glosses in the Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus LXX MSS**, indicating speaker and addressee. While this need not indicate that the book was understood as a drama, but merely that the identities of the speaker and addressee are sometimes unclear, there have been dramatic interpretations, which have taken two basic forms. One sees in the book two characters (Solomon and the Shulammite [6:13; LXX Shunammite]), plus a chorus, the "daughters of Jerusalem." The other view sees an additional character, the girl's lover, a shepherd. In the two-character interpretation, the loving couple, after being separated, are finally reunited. The drama praises marital love. According to the three-character view, the girl rejects Solomon's attempts to win her and remains true to her pastoral swain. Here the lesson is loyalty: love triumphs over wealth and luxury." (ISBE, Canticles, p v1, p607, 1979 AD)
- c. **1100 AD**: "The two-character hypothesis had extremely limited potential for dramatic movement or development and was eclipsed by the **three-character scheme which had been suggested by Ibn Ezra in the twelfth century**, revived by Jacobi and Löwisohn in the **eighteenth century**, and developed by **H. Ewald in the nineteenth century**. The three-character plot presents a pair of rustic lovers and a royal lecher who tries to get the girl from her shepherd swain. Ginsburg made this plot into a veritable Victorian melodrama celebrating the triumph of true love and virtue over every temptation. Ernest Renan developed a cast of ten characters plus a double chorus, male and female. In the present century, A. Hazan prepared a rendition of the Song in dramatic verse for stage presentation, featuring the Beauty and the Shepherd (La Belle et le Pâtre) with a supporting cast of the king and his favorite harem lady and assorted minor characters (1936)." (AYB, SONG OF SOLOMON, p36, 2008 AD)
- d. **1772 AD**: "Toward the end of the eighteenth century, Friedrich Jacobi (1772) offered a dramatic interpretation of the Song that inaugurated the search for uncovering an overall plot to the love poems. He argued that the basic plot of the poems centered on Solomon's quest to win the love of a Shulammite woman. **Solomon must, however, compete with a poor shepherd boy for her love**. In the end, the woman rejects the advances of Solomon and expresses her exclusive devotion to the shepherd boy. The Song as a type of morality play affirms that true love cannot be bought, even by the wealth of a great king. Some scholars continue to hold this view." (College Press NIV Commentary, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes & Song of Songs, p 404, 2002 AD)
- e. **1772 AD**: "But the prevailing view which Jacobi (1771) established, and which has predominated since Umbreit (1820) and Ewald (1826), is different from ours. **According to them**, the Song celebrates the

victory of the chaste passion of conjugal love. **The beloved of Shulamith is a shepherd, and Solomon acts toward her a part like that of Don Juan with Anna, or of Faust with Gretchen.** Therefore, of course, his authorship is excluded, although Anton (1773), the second oldest representative of this so-called **shepherd hypothesis, supposes that Solomon at a later period of his life recognised his folly, and now here magnanimously praises the fidelity of Shulamith, who had spurned his enticements away from her;** and a Jewish interpreter, B. Hollnder (1871), following Hezel (1780), supposes that Solomon represents himself as an enticer, only to exhibit the idea of female virtue as triumphing over the greatest seduction. Similarly also Godet (1867)" (Keil & Delitzsch, SONG OF SOLOMON, introduction)

- f. **1826 AD:** "In the view made popular by Heinrich Ewald [1826 AD], however, there are three main characters who interact in something like an ancient soap-opera: King Solomon and a humble shepherd vie for the hand of the simple Shulamite girl; though initially beguiled by the royal blandishments, she eventually rejects Solomon in favor of her true love." (Hermeneia, SONG OF SOLOMON, p58, 1990)
- g. **1875-1902 AD:** "[Robert] Browning [died 1889 AD] supplied indications of the changes of speakers with formulae such as He/She sings/speaks/muses, but even without these the attentive reader would usually be able to identify the speaker. It was, however, in response to complaints about obscurity that Browning furnished notations to some of his poems. [Andrew] Harper (Appendix I, pp. 63-73) placed notations in the margin of his own translation (1902/1907 AD) to identify the speakers, e.g. for 1:2-3 "The daughters of Jerusalem addressing or speaking of Solomon"; for 1:4a, b "The Shulamite muses, mentally addressing her absent lover"; the second half of the verse is ascribed to "Daughters of Jerusalem addressing Solomon." Efforts to present the Song as drama generally require a supply of directions and explanations almost equal to the brief text, and still more by way of commentary to try to make the conversation sensible." (AYB, SONG OF SOLOMON, p36, 2008 AD)
- h. **Conservative and Reform Jewish scholars:** "The traditional Jewish allegorical interpretation is still maintained in orthodox circles, **but the general trend among conservative and reform [wanting to restore ancient traditions] Jewish scholars is toward the literal understanding as human love songs.** S. M. Lehrmann, e.g. (1946, p. xii), **adopted Ewald's three-character theory.** The story describes the trials of a beautiful maiden from Shunem or Shulem who was a shepherdess. She was in love with a shepherd of the village, but her brothers did not approve and they transferred her to work in the vineyards in the hope of keeping her away from her lover. One day she was seen by Solomon's servants as the king was en route to his summer resort in Lebanon. She was taken against her will to Solomon who falls in love with her at first sight, sings of her beauty, and tries to induce her to abandon her shepherd and accept the love and luxury he offers. The court ladies also try to persuade her, but her heart belongs to her shepherd. She yearns for her true love and is taunted by the court ladies that he has rejected her. She speaks with her love as if he were present and dreams that he has come to rescue her. She awakes and rushes into the street to seek him, but she is maltreated by the watchmen who take her as a woman of the street. The king, finally convinced of the constancy of her love for the shepherd, allows her to return home. She is joined by her true lover and leaning on his arm, returns to her village. They pass the scenes so dear to them while she recounts her recent misfortunes. The story ends on a note of triumph. Her love could not be overcome by the lures of luxury. She assures her brothers that their concerns for her virtue were unwarranted. She has proved that love can endure." (AYB, SONG OF SOLOMON, p197, 2008 AD)
- i. **1972 AD Homer Hailey:** "I believe that Solomon was infatuated with the girl's charm and beauty, but that she was in love with a shepherd lad. In the struggle within her own heart, true love triumphs. When Solomon unwittingly revealed the sensual nature of his infatuation (7:7-9a), the die was cast: her mind was completely determined to return to the shepherd. The poem is God's commendation of true mating love and His condemnation of Solomon's polygamy. ... The poem is God's commendation of true mating love and his condemnation of Solomon's polygamy... Three principles lead me to accept this view: 1) The Bible is a complete book, and as such it must deal with all aspects of human experience. Mating love is a strong factor in life and unless this poem deals with it, it is omitted from God's book. 2) The very

structure and evidence of the poem. 3) If such a virtuous girl's marriage to Solomon was the theme, then Solomon's polygamy would be tacitly endorsed." (Homer Hailey, Bible Class Notes: Wisdom Literature, Song of Solomon, Temple Terrace: Florida College Bookstore, 1972 AD, p24)

- j. **1977 AD: Patsy Rae Dawson:** "If the Shulammite were a good catch for Solomon, she no doubt would have had a boyfriend just as attractive, bright, pleasant girls her age today do. This is simply the true story of such a girl who was caught up by Solomon's prestige and wealth and had to make a choice. This scenario happens all the time. We should simply let the Shulammite tell who her beloved is: "He who pastures his flock among the lilies" (Song of Sol. 1:7, 6:2-3) and enjoy the drama and her maturity while we pray that our own daughters will have the same good common sense." (The Song of Solomon, Patsy Rae Dawson, p 11, 1995 AD, also P. R. Dawson, Marriage: A Taste of Heaven, Vol. I: Appreciating Marriage, 1977)
3. If the SONG OF SOLOMON is the story of Solomon marrying the Shulammite, what real value does it have since Solomon went on to marry 860 more women after telling the Shulammite she was the best girl that met all his needs?
 - a. The idea that Solomon, the most polygamist man in world history, was the ultimate example of marriage bliss is absurd.
 - b. How can young girls today find any value in the book, if all the poetry and promises were blurred within a harem of 999 other women competing for one man's love and attention?
 - c. Only the love triangle view (discussed in detail below), where the girl rightly rejects Solomon for the true love of a simple shepherd boy, provides the necessary undergirding for the ultimate moral lesson of what is and what is not important in selecting a mate.
 - d. God's original marriage arrangement was one man, one woman. The love triangle view humiliates Solomon, the greatest offender of God's original marriage plan by having the girl choose that very plan by marrying the shepherd!

E. The text proves there are two very different men: Solomon and a Shepherd

1. He is described as pasturing his flocks on the hills with his companions. While David was a Shepherd of humble beginnings, Solomon was a spoiled rich city kid who never shepherded sheep. The references to shepherding are too specific to be taken metaphorically where all kings shepherd their sheep.
 - a. "Tell me, O you whom my soul loves, Where do you pasture your flock, Where do you make it lie down at noon? For why should I be like one who veils herself Beside the flocks of your companions?" (Song of Solomon 1:7)
 - b. "My beloved is mine, and I am his; He pastures his flock among the lilies." (Song of Solomon 2:16)
 - c. "I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine, He who pastures his flock among the lilies." (Song of Solomon 6:3)
2. The "I adjure you till love pleases" shows that the Shulammite was under a lot of stress to make an important choice. Four times in the song she uses the phrase. But in 5:8-9 the queens in the harem ask, "what kind of man are you talking about, tell us about him?" Now this makes no sense if it is Solomon because they have already been through this romantic trickery themselves. They knew she was in love with another man, so they naturally asked her to describe the man who was favoured in her eyes over Solomon! She goes on to describe the shepherd. Such a description would be unnecessary if it was Solomon.
 - a. "'I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, If you find my beloved, As to what you will tell him: For I am lovesick.' ", What kind of beloved is your beloved, O most beautiful among women? **What kind of beloved is your beloved**, That thus you adjure us?" (Song of Solomon 5:8-9)
2. There is a clear differential between the light skinned palace staff and the suntanned Shulammite, her shepherd (5:10) and David. Notice that Goliath "distained him" because he was "ruddy" (literally "red" from sun) or suntanned. 5:10 cannot refer to Solomon because he was not suntanned, like his Father was from tending sheep outside all day. Solomon was a preppy prince who lived with servants in a palace when he grew up. And as king, he would be always shaded from the sun. The Shepherd was also good looking for he is described in the same terms as David.

- a. "So he sent and brought him in. Now he was **ruddy**, with beautiful eyes and a handsome appearance. And the Lord said, "Arise, anoint him; for this is he."" (1 Samuel 16:12)
 - b. "When the Philistine looked and saw David, **he disdained him**; for he was but a youth, and **ruddy**, with a handsome appearance." (1 Samuel 17:42)
 - c. "My beloved is dazzling and **ruddy**, Outstanding among ten thousand." (Song of Solomon 5:10)
3. The girl sees the shepherd working with her back home in her vineyards as a fellow peasant catching foxes. This is simply not Solomon.
 - a. ""Catch the foxes for us, The little foxes that are ruining the vineyards, While our vineyards are in blossom." "My beloved is mine, and I am his; He pastures his flock among the lilies. "Until the cool of the day when the shadows flee away, Turn, my beloved, and be like a gazelle Or a young stag on the mountains of Bethel."" (Song of Solomon 2:15-17)
4. Three times the girl describes her love as pasturing his sheep and picking her lilies, which he had done many times in the past:
 - a. ""My beloved has gone down to his garden, To the beds of balsam, To pasture his flock in the gardens **And gather lilies**. "I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine, He who pastures his flock among the lilies."" (Song of Solomon 6:2-3)
5. She awoke the love of the one she married by talking to him under the apple tree in his own back yard. This simply does not describe Solomon in any possible way and proves beyond doubt she married her home town shepherd boy. Solomon did not woo the girl by having nice quiet chats together under the apple tree in his own back yard. Solomon told her she was hot but had no idea what was inside the girl. The shepherd had taken the time to get to know her.
 - a. ""Who is this coming up from the wilderness Leaning on her beloved?" "Beneath the apple tree I (Abishag) awakened you (shepherd); There your mother was in labor with you, There she was in labor and gave you (shepherd) birth." (Song of Solomon 8:5)
 - b. What is even more amazing is that Abishag actually tells us in the story, that she was the one who first took notice of the shepherd and came knocking at his door unannounced. She is the one who initiated the relationship in the first place. She reminds him at the end of the book of that day when she awoke his love in his own back yard. The poor shepherd had been targeted by the most beautiful girl in Israel and she came to his house to hunt him down. Poor abused guy.
6. In a passage we are certain that Solomon is talking, he tells the girl to look away because he can tell she is not falling for his lines. Obviously she was not really in love with him and he read her body language:
 - a. ""Turn your eyes away from me, For they have confused me; Your hair is like a flock of goats That have descended from Gilead." (Song of Solomon 6:5)
7. The girl flees from Solomon and the queens when he reminds her of the time they met in Shunem when she was working in the vineyard. This fleeing combined with her eyes confusing Solomon says it all!
 - a. ""Come back, come back, O Shulammitte; Come back, come back, that we may gaze at you!" "Why should you gaze at the Shulammitte, As at the dance of the two companies?" (Song of Solomon 6:13)
8. The second dream proves she was in love with someone other than Solomon. She dreams she has married Solomon but then runs through the city looking for her true love only to be beaten as an adulterer by the watchmen of the city. There is no possible explanation for why she would get beaten if she was looking for Solomon, her husband.
 - a. ""I opened to my beloved, But my beloved had turned away and had gone! My heart went out to him as he spoke. I searched for him but I did not find him; I called him but he did not answer me. "The watchmen who make the rounds in the city found me, They struck me and wounded me; The guardsmen of the walls took away my shawl from me." (Song of Solomon 5:6-7)
9. The Shulammitte envisioned one on one time with the shepherd sneaking away, just the two of them in a little village, then getting up early and going into the vineyards. This simply cannot describe Solomon who would have with him at all times, large numbers of servants and guards. This kind of fun time together with the shepherd as opposed to sitting alone as a harem girl was one of the reasons she dumped Solomon. She didn't

want to live alone in a Harem as one of Solomon's wives, she was a girl who liked to get out and "hit the town".

- a. Abishag to Shepherd: ""I am my beloved's, And his desire is for me. "Come, my beloved, let us go out into the country, Let us spend the night in the villages. "Let us rise early and go to the vineyards; Let us see whether the vine has budded And its blossoms have opened, And whether the pomegranates have bloomed. There I will give you my love." (Song of Solomon 7:10-12)
10. The girl would never be despised for kissing a king, but a lowly peasant shepherd boy, yes!
 - a. "If I found you outdoors, I would kiss you; No one would despise me, either." (Song of Solomon 8:1)
11. She speaks of bringing her love into her own home to have food and drink. In fact, Ps 45, the wedding Psalm of Solomon, instructs potential wives to FORGET ABOUT HER HOME LIFE and her family. Solomon would never go to the girl's home.
 - a. "Listen, O daughter, give attention and incline your ear: Forget your people and your father's house; Then the King will desire your beauty." (Psalm 45:10-11)
 - b. "In place of your fathers (notice this is written to plural women) will be your sons; You shall make them princes in all the earth." (Psalm 45:16)
12. Abishag promises the shepherd not to make him jealous (again) after her two weeks in Jerusalem. There is no reason for this odd statement at the end of the book unless there is a love triangle and one person got jealous.
 - a. ""Put me like a seal over your heart, Like a seal on your arm. For love is as strong as death, Jealousy is as severe as Sheol; Its flashes are flashes of fire, The very flame of the Lord." (Song of Solomon 8:6)
13. The conclusion of the book proves she rejected Solomon for her true love the shepherd. She discusses how Solomon was a powerful and rich man who owns many literal vineyards. She says he gets the money but not her body. It doesn't get any clearer than that!
 - a. ""Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon; He entrusted the vineyard to caretakers. Each one was to bring a thousand shekels of silver for its fruit. "My very own vineyard is at my disposal; The thousand shekels are for you, Solomon, And two hundred are for those who take care of its fruit."" (Song of Solomon 8:11-12)
14. This is not a story of the girl cementing a permanent relationship with Solomon where they both live happily ever after. His verbal charms for her were as ephemeral (short lived) as the time he physically loved her. The Solomon gets the girl theme is utterly worthless as a piece of literature for it is at its core a deceit. Only when you view the Song of Solomon as a love triangle, does the timeless and powerful message that true love between one man and one woman is always superior to superficial love founded on appearances, wealth, fame and power.
15. Embedded in the footnotes of many Bibles like the NASB, are specific indicators that tell you who is speaking like, "Groom", "Bride" "Chorus" etc.

E. Solomon's path of repentance from Idol worship and Polygamy: 2 Sam 7:14

"In those days I also saw that the Jews had married women from Ashdod, Ammon and Moab. As for their children, half spoke in the language of Ashdod, and none of them was able to speak the language of Judah, but the language of his own people. So I contended with them and cursed them and struck some of them and pulled out their hair, and made them swear by God, "You shall not give your daughters to their sons, nor take of their daughters for your sons or for yourselves. "**Did not Solomon king of Israel sin regarding these things?** Yet among the many nations there was no king like him, and he was loved by his God, and God made him king over all Israel; nevertheless the foreign women caused even him to sin. "Do we then hear about you that you have committed all this great evil by acting unfaithfully against our God by marrying foreign women?" (Nehemiah 13:23-27)

1. As we saw above, 2 Sam 7:14 promises that God would chasten Solomon if he sinned.
2. Solomon violated every element of this warning in no less than **three double sins**: Deut 17:14-20
 - a. **God's warning to the Solomon**: "When you enter the land which the Lord your God gives you, and you possess it and live in it, and you say, 'I will set a king over me like all the nations who are around

me,' you shall surely set a king over you whom the Lord your God chooses, one from among your countrymen you shall set as king over yourselves; you may not put a foreigner over yourselves who is not your countryman. "Moreover, **he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor shall he cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses**, since the Lord has said to you, 'You shall never again return that way.' "**He shall not multiply wives for himself, or else his heart will turn away; nor shall he greatly increase silver and gold for himself.** "Now it shall come about when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, **he shall write for himself a copy of this law on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priests.** "It shall be with him and **he shall read it all the days of his life**, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, by carefully observing all the words of this law and these statutes, that his heart may not be lifted up above his countrymen and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, to the right or the left, **so that he and his sons may continue long in his kingdom in the midst of Israel.**" (Deuteronomy 17:14–20)

- b. **Double sin #1:** He multiplied horses for himself and sent people back to Egypt to get horses and married the daughter of pharaoh the first year of his reign.
 - c. **Double sin #2:** He was forbidden to marry many Hebrew wives, but instead married 1000 non-Jewish wives.
 - d. **Double sin #3:** It appears that Solomon not only never wrote out a copy of the law himself, neither did he read it throughout his life.
3. Although the law forbids marrying foreign wives, there was a provision if she was beautiful. "**Pagan Think It Over**"
- a. "When you go out to battle against your enemies, and the Lord your God delivers them into your hands and you take them away captive, and see among the captives a beautiful woman, and have a desire for her and would take her as a wife for yourself, then you shall bring her home to your house, and **she shall shave her head and trim her nails. "She shall also remove the clothes of her captivity and shall remain in your house, and mourn her father and mother a full month;** and after that you may go in to her and be her husband and she shall be your wife. "It shall be, if you are not pleased with her, then you shall let her go wherever she wishes; but you shall certainly not sell her for money, you shall not mistreat her, because you have humbled her." (Deuteronomy 21:10–14)
 - b. The idea was to strip her of everything artificial that attracts a man so that what you are left with is the personality of the woman.
 - c. You were to live with her for 30 days and see if you can tolerate how annoying she might be. It would also give the Jewish man an idea about her religious orientation. It was forcing these stupid superficial men to ignore her body parts and focus on her inner beauty, or lack thereof.
 - d. You have "Baby Think It Over", "Puppy Think It Over", well this is God's version of "Pagan Think It Over" for men like Solomon.
 - e. It is not likely that Solomon stripped the Egyptian princess of her hair, fingernails, makeup and fancy clothing for 30 days. If he had, perhaps more of them would have not married him and he would have seen how evil they all were and cancelled the wedding.
4. The central focus of Solomon's life, apart from his construction projects, was his 1000 wives who are viewed in a negative way throughout the narrative because they led him from God into idolatry.
- a. Solomon built temples, not only for YHWH, but also for the 4 major idols of the nations around him.
 - b. "For Solomon went after **Ashtoreth** the goddess of the Sidonians and after **Milcom** the detestable idol of the Ammonites. Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, and did not follow the Lord fully, as David his father had done. Then Solomon built a high place for **Chemosh** the detestable idol of Moab, on the mountain which is east of Jerusalem, and for **Molech** the detestable idol of the sons of Ammon. Thus also he did for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods. **Now the Lord was angry with Solomon** because his heart was turned away from the Lord, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice," (1 Kings 11:5-9)
5. In the last five years of Solomon's life, God chastened him by raising adversaries:
- a. Hadad the Edomite; he was of the royal line in Edom

- b. Rezon the son of Eliada, who had fled from his lord Hadadezer, king of Zobah
 - c. "Then Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephraimite of Zeredah, Solomon's servant ... Now the man Jeroboam was a valiant warrior, and when Solomon saw that the young man was industrious, he appointed him over all the forced labor of the house of Joseph." (1 Kings 11:26-31)
 - d. These punished Solomon and brought him to repentance.
6. In the last few years before Solomon died, he realized how sinful he was and wrote three key books:
- a. Song of Solomon: The man famous for having 1000 wives gets dumped by a peasant girl.
 - i. Egyptian kings are well known to NEVER write about their failures. Hebrew kings, under the inspiration of God, did write about their greatest failures.
 - ii. The SONG OF SOLOMON exposes Solomon for being carnal/fleshly minded, physically oriented, viewing woman as nothing more than someone to satisfy him physically.
 - iii. The Shulammite had to choose between Solomon who loved her body, versus the shepherd boy who loved her body and her mind.
 - iv. Even Solomon's queens are pictured as mindless and superficial by enticing the Shulammite to follow in their shallow money grubbing footsteps and marry Solomon. (7:1-5)
 - v. The SONG OF SOLOMON is Solomon's diary account at the end of his life, seen through his own eyes as a wise 69 year old man who has come to see he has been a fool in what he valued. Writing SONG OF SOLOMON was a most humiliating and shameful experience for Solomon.
 - b. Ecclesiastes: A self-reflective book that labels all that Solomon did his entire life was VAIN and in the end he concluded to fear God and keep his commandments (as opposed to idol worship).
 - i. What is fascinating about Ecclesiastes is that Solomon is going to tell us about women. Really? Solomon is the best Bible example of how not to choose good women! The man whose foreign wives led him into idolatry! That would be amusing! Fortunately, Solomon essentially trashes himself in the passage of Eccl 7:25-28. But he redeems himself by admitting at the end of his life he knows nothing about woman!
 - ii. "House and wealth are an inheritance from fathers, But a prudent wife is from the Lord." (Proverbs 19:14) "From the Lord" does not mean that God has one "prudent" wife he made as your perfect mate, set aside for you when the time is right. Rather it means that she is a woman of faith who obeys the laws revealed in the Bible. Any woman who is an obedient, faithful Christian *is prudent*. The proverb does not mean God has chosen one prudent woman "just for you", rather it instructs a man to limit his search for one of many God-fearing sisters in the church. Any sister who attends all church services of her own free will, is active when she needs to be and holds herself to the high moral standards of Jesus Christ would be considered "prudent" and exactly the kind of woman a man should marry. God does not choose our wives, we do, but be warned, the only prudent wives are the ones who faithfully attend every service.
 - iii. "I directed my mind to know, to investigate and to seek wisdom and an explanation, and to know the evil of folly and the foolishness of madness. And I discovered more bitter than death *the [definite article] woman [idolatrous wives of Solomon] whose heart is snares and nets, whose hands are chains*. One who is pleasing to God will escape from her, but *the sinner [Solomon] will be captured by her*." "Behold, I have discovered this [from personal experience as everyone is painfully aware]," says the Preacher, "adding one thing to another to find an explanation, *which I am still seeking but have not found*. I have found one man among a thousand, but I have not found a woman [none of Solomon's 1000 wives were worth marrying, in fact the only good wife was the Shulammite who wouldn't marry him!] among all these. "Behold, I have found only this, that God made men upright, but they have sought out many devices."" (Ecclesiastes 7:25-29)
 - iv. It is clear from this passage that Solomon was not labeling all women evil, only the idol worshipping foreign wives he married. Far from being misogynistic, Solomon said this

about the good wife: “Enjoy life with the woman whom you love all the days of your fleeting life which He has given to you under the sun; for this is your reward in life and in your toil in which you have labored under the sun.” (Ecclesiastes 9:9)

- v. This is kind of like the last thing Solomon ever said in light of his life work and the 1000 wives he married who led him away from YHWH: “The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person. For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.” (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14)

c. Proverbs (not the entire book of course was written by Solomon)

- i. Proverbs chapters 1-4 deals with a father teaching his son to learn and obey the commandments of God. This is the very thing Solomon failed to do with Rehoboam who went into idolatry after he became king.
- ii. Perhaps in reference to Solomon's own beautiful wives: “As a ring of gold in a swine’s snout So is a beautiful woman who lacks discretion.” (Proverbs 11:22)
- iii. The ideal woman of Proverbs 31 WAS NOT written by Solomon. You would think that after having 1000 wives he would be the expert to write such a section. But the Holy Spirit attached this wisdom on at the end of "Solomon's 3000 proverbs" from the pen of the gentile "King Lemuel of Massa" (likely Midianite). Here even a gentile king knew more about women than Solomon!

7. Only when you read Proverbs, SONG OF SOLOMON and Ecclesiastes as a self-judgement on a sinful and foolish man confessing his sins, do you unlock the correct tone and meaning of these three books. The Song of Solomon is best viewed as his cost of penance or repentance before God for his own material superficial stupidity:

- a. "Critics who regarded the Song as a polemic against Solomon, an attack on his morals or his ultimately disastrous political policies, set the date close to Solomon’s time. C. D. Ginsburg, e.g., who regarded it as a drama celebrating the victory of a humble shepherdess’ virtue over Solomon’s determined effort to seduce her, placed the date “in the most flourishing age of the Hebrew language, and about the time of Solomon” (p. 125). Leroy Waterman (1948) interpreted the book as a political polemic reflecting the bitterness of the Northern Kingdom against the South following Solomon’s death and the rupture of the union." (AYB, SONG OF SOLOMON, p23, 2008 AD)
- b. "L. Waterman develops a redaction history for the Song and uses it to propose a history of Solomon’s succession to the throne. Equating “Shunammite” with “Shulamite,” he suggests that Solomon tried to woo Abishag the Shunammite (the young woman who kept the dying David warm in 1 Kgs 1:3-4) but that she rejected the king and returned to her lover in the north. His interpretation suggests that Song 4:2 lampoons Solomon for examining the girl as if she were an animal (Song of Songs, 41), that 4:4 is meant to make Solomon look ridiculous (Song of Songs, 42), and that 6:4 serves to exalt Tirzah, the capital of the northern kingdom (Song of Songs, 41). Many three-character interpretations turn the Song into an anti-Solomonic tract." (Word Biblical Commentary, SONG OF SOLOMON, p 78, 2004 AD)
- c. "But the prevailing view which Jacobi (1771) established, and which has predominated since Umbreit (1820) and Ewald (1826), is different from ours. According to them, the Song celebrates the victory of the chaste passion of conjugal love. The beloved of Shulamith is a shepherd, and Solomon acts toward her a part like that of Don Juan with Anna, or of Faust with Gretchen. Therefore, of course, his authorship is excluded, although Anton (1773), the second oldest representative of this so-called shepherd hypothesis, supposes that Solomon at a later period of his life recognised his folly, and now here magnanimously praises the fidelity of Shulamith, who had spurned his enticements away from her; and a Jewish interpreter, B. Hollnder (1871), following Hezel (1780), supposes that Solomon represents himself as an enticer, only to exhibit the idea of female virtue as triumphing over the greatest seduction. Similarly also Godet (1867)" (Keil & Delitzsch, SONG OF SOLOMON, introduction)

8. Although it was humiliating for Solomon to write this book where he is the villain, it showed the way he viewed woman as meat for his own physical pleasure, and breed them as incubators of the state for his personal fame. It is noteworthy that of all Solomon's wives and children, only one son is named, Rehoboam and only one wife is named as a matter of required official record keeping, Rehoboam's mother. Whereas we are told several of the names of David's wives and children, with Solomon we know the numbers, but the Holy Spirit chose to ignore their identities. Solomon must have had thousands of children, yet we are not given any idea of the actual number.

F. The three stage Jewish Marriage in the Song of Solomon:

1. Most Christians have completely overlooked the study of Ancient Jewish marriage customs. In order to understand what is happening in the Song of Songs, it is critical that you know these wedding customs.
2. There were three stages of a marriage in the Bible:
 - a. Stage 1: signing the "ketubbah" contract (Creating the marriage bond)
 - i. The bride would chose her husband and her father would sign a legal contract with him called a "ketubbah".
 - ii. Once this is signed the couple is 100% married but does not yet have sex.
 - iii. Young children were often married, (arranged marriage) but did not consummate until of age.
 - b. Stage 2: The "chuppah": sexual consummation.
 - i. Up to 7 years later, the groom is able to raise the money as set out in the ketubbah contract and notifies the father of the bride, who then sets a date to consummate the marriage at the bride's home.
 - ii. The bride waits with her maidens, for the arrival of the groom and his companions.
 - iii. The couple enters the chuppah room (usually the bedroom of the bride's parents) and consummates the marriage while the companions of the bride and groom wait and celebrate outside or in the next room.
 - iv. The groom hands the bloodied "proof of virginity cloth" to the witnesses chosen by the bride's parents, who then give it to the bride for safekeeping.
 - v. Deuteronomy 22:13-21 is quoted in the Dead Sea Scrolls which adds the comment about the "virginity cloth": "When a man takes a wife, has sexual intercourse with her and takes a dislike to her, and brings a baseless charge against her, ruining her reputation, and says, 'I have taken this woman, approached her, and did not find the proof of virginity in her', the father or the mother of the girl shall take the girl's proof of virginity and bring it to the elders at the gate. The girl's father shall say to the elders, 'I gave my daughter to be this man's wife; he has taken a dislike to her and has brought a baseless charge against her saying, "I have not found the proof of virginity in your daughter." Here is the proof of my daughter's virginity.' **They shall spread out the garment before the elders of that city.** The elders of that city shall take that man and chastise him. They shall fine him one hundred pieces of silver which they shall give to the father of the girl, because he (the husband) has tried to ruin the reputation of an Israelite virgin." (Dead Sea Scrolls: The Temple Scroll, 11QT = 11Q19)

c. Stage 3: The wedding feast

- i. After consummation, the entire wedding party walks to the house of the groom in a procession for a wedding feast.
- ii. At the conclusion of the wedding feast, the couple has completed the ancient ritual of marriage.

The three C's of Marriage in the Bible:		
	Marriage in the Bible	Church is the bride of Christ
Contract (Stage 1)	Genesis 34:12 bride price and dowry gift 1 Cor 7:38 the father controlled the marriage of the daughter, even though she would tell him who she wanted to marry. Rebekah: Gen 24:33; 51-53; 57-58 Leah: Gen 29:15-19 Rachel: Gen 29:27	Initial salvation We come into contract and covenant with Christ when are saved. Mk 16:16 believe and be baptized to be saved Romans 5:8-10 While we were worthless sinners the blood of Christ made us pure virgins. Ephesians 5:25-27 Christ offered a dowry for the bride in that He died for her and shed His blood.
Consummation (stage 2)	Deuteronomy 22:13-21 Mt 25:1- parable of ten virgins John 3:29 voice of bridegroom outside consummation bedroom Rebekah: Gen 24:64-67 Leah: Gen 29:21-26 Rachel: Gen 29:30	Second Coming Jesus returns for His virgin bride after preparing a place for us to live together in heaven. 2 Corinthians 11:2 the virgin blood we lack is supplied by the blood of Christ. Our proof of virginity is the blood of Christ.
		John 3:29 Joyful voice of Christ at second coming John 5:28-29 voice of Jesus
Celebration (Stage 3)	John 2:1-11 Wedding feast at Cana Mt 22:1-14 Parable of the wedding feast Leah and Rachel: Gen 29:27-28	Heaven Revelation 19:7-9 wedding feast in heaven

3. What we see in the Bible is the Jewish custom of ARRANGED MARRIAGES. Today, we combine all three customs into one day:
- Contract is the signing of the marriage license
 - Wedding feast is the reception
 - Consummation happens in the bridal suite that night in the hotel.

Bible Marriage vs. Modern Marriage		
	Bible Marriage	Modern Marriage
Women choses groom	She goes to her father and asks him to arrange the marriage. Notice Rebekah accepted bracelets and a nose ring, gave consent to marriage. The Shulammitte in SONG OF SOLOMON chose her husband.	The groom asks the father for his daughter's hand in marriage and consent. No marriage unless the woman says yes and accepts a ring. Weeks or years later the groom prepares for the bride
Contract (Stage 1)	Groom or agent of groom signs a contract with the father of the bride	The bride and groom sign the marriage license at the wedding ceremony.
Consummation (stage 2)	Weeks or years later when the groom has met the conditions of the contract the father of the bride consents to consummation	Happens in the honeymoon suite of the hotel after reception
Celebration (Stage 3)	Days or weeks	Reception after signing of marriage contract at ceremony.

4. This pattern of three stage Hebrew weddings is clearly seen in the Song of Solomon:
- Contrary to the false notion that brides were auctioned off to the highest bidder against the will of the bride, the Shulammitte chooses her husband. This is how arranged marriages worked.
 - "Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon; He entrusted the vineyard to caretakers. Each one was to bring a thousand shekels of silver for its fruit. "My very own vineyard is at my disposal; The thousand shekels are for you, Solomon, And two hundred are for those who take care of its fruit."" (Song of Solomon 8:11-12)
 - The bride would go to her father, who would in turn, meet with the groom to sign the legal documents of marriage. The actual meeting between the groom and the father of the bride, might be initiated by the groom, In this regard, it is not any different than today when the groom asks the father of the bride for permission to marry his daughter.
 - It is interesting that the parents of the bride are non-existent. This underscores that it was her, not her parents, who made the choice of who to marry.
 - The bride could say no or the father could refuse both bride and groom to marry. Ultimately, there was a perfect balance where the bride chose her husband but the older wiser father would look out for the best interest of his daughter.
 - "So then both he who gives his own virgin daughter in marriage does well, and he who does not give her in marriage will do better." (1 Corinthians 7:38)
 - Stage two, Consummation, takes place in the bedroom of the bride's parents.
 - "Scarcely had I left them when I found [Shepherd] him whom my soul loves; I held on to him and would not let him go Until I had brought him to my mother's house, And into the room of her who conceived me." (Song of Solomon 3:4)

- ii. While we puzzle as to what this means and modern commentators are all over the map as well, it is clearly the time when the groom comes to the brides house and consummates the marriage as per Deuteronomy 22:13-21, complete with virginity cloth.
- 5. Solomon had no power to unilaterally force her to marry him against her will or without her father's consent:
 - a. While scripture is clear that he could take by sons and daughters in various slave capacities, nowhere does it say he could take their daughters to be his wives: "This will be the procedure of the king who will reign over you: **he will take your sons** and place them for himself in his chariots and among his horsemen and they will run before his chariots. "He will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and of fifties, and some to do his plowing and to reap his harvest and to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. "**He will also take your daughters for perfumers and cooks and bakers.**" (1 Samuel 8:11-13)
 - b. The Shulammitte willingly left Shunem with the full consent of her father, brothers or mother.
 - c. The point of the book is that king is trying his best to get her to agree to marry him.
 - d. If he had the unilateral power to snatch her up and marry her, he would have forgone the formalities of telling her how pretty she was and just bedded her.
 - e. As we can see, at the end of the book, she clearly states that Solomon has power over his literal vineyards, just as she has power over her body to give it to whomever she chooses. "Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon; He entrusted the vineyard to caretakers. Each one was to bring a thousand shekels of silver for its fruit. "My very own vineyard (body) is at my disposal; The thousand shekels are for you, Solomon, And two hundred are for those who take care of its fruit." (Song of Solomon 8:11-12)
 - f. This is the reason we accept that the opening lines of 1:2-4; 1:16-2:7 are addressed to the king, not the shepherd. She was in Jerusalem on her own free will. She was there to consider his offer to be queen. Most girls would do the same. She was not with Solomon against her will like some medieval wicked king who steals the girl, locks her in the tower and forces her to marry him while she is in love with another man who rescues her.

G. Determining the screenplay:

1. Determining the speaking parts of the screenplay based upon grammar:
 - a. There are singular and plural pronouns that indicate if it is one person or many speaking
 - b. There are personal pronouns in the original Hebrew which allows us to determine if the person who is being spoken to, is a man or a woman.
 - c. There are contextual statements that indicate who is talking.
2. Example of grammar: ""Draw me (**singular**) after you and let us run together! The king (**Solomon**) has brought me (**Shulammitte**) into his chambers." "We (**plural girls**) will rejoice in you (**masculine: Solomon**) and be glad; We (**plural girls**) will extol your love more than wine. Rightly do they love you (**masculine: Solomon**)."" (Song of Solomon 1:4)
 - a. First you have one person address the king, with the statement she has been brought into the palace by the king. This is the Shulammitte.
 - b. Then you have plural speakers addressing a man. This cannot be the Shulammitte. So it is the daughters of Jerusalem (female attendants in Solomon's palace) addressing Solomon.
2. Natural divisions in the book:
 - a. Note that different Bibles have different numbering schemes for the book in assigning verse chapter and numbers. Generally, the difference is only by one verse.
 - b. Some divisions (but with exception) are based upon this identical "theme statement" repeated 4 times in the song: "I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, By the gazelles or by the hinds of the field, That you will not arouse or awaken my love Until she pleases." (SONG OF SOLOMON 2:7; 3:5; 5:8; 8:4)
 - c. There is universal agreement of major section breaks in the two essentially identical statements: "Who is this coming up from the wilderness?" where the first time it is when Solomon brings Abishag to Jerusalem (3:6) and the second time is when the shepherd brings her home to Shunem. (8:5) Regardless of how you interpret the book, all agree on these breaks.

- d. Some sections are easily discernible like the two dreams she has while sleeping on two different nights.
 - e. "Internal Divisions in the Song of Songs. We have already noted that there is much debate concerning the book's unity and the links between the various sections. The following list of scholarly attempts to set out the book's structure and divisions demonstrates the problem:" (A handbook on the Song of Songs, UBS United Bible Societies Handbook Series, p 5, 1998 AD)
3. Echo statements: The identical statement is first made in reference to Solomon, then in reference to the shepherd.
- a. I am lovesick: 2:5 Solomon. 5:8 shepherd. Note: lovesick does not mean puppy love, or deeply in love. It means torn between two men not knowing what to do. After she gives Solomon the boot, she never again says she is lovesick, even though she is with the shepherd. Once she makes her choice, she is deeply in love, but no longer lovesick.
 - b. "Let his left hand be under my head And his right hand embrace me." 2:5-6 Solomon; 8:3 Shepherd
 - c. "Who is this coming up from the wilderness" 3:6 Solomon; 8:5 shepherd
 - d. The exact phrase, "*Until the cool of the day. When the shadows flee away*" was used by Abishag in 2:17 in direct reference to the shepherd working till sunset. In 4:6, Abishag says the exact phrase to Solomon so she can think about her final answer. There is a key difference. In 2:17 the shepherd is *coming from the mountains* to her, but in 4:6 *she is going to the mountains*.
4. Unique identical statements:
- a. "my sister, my bride" is an exception to the echo sequence above, but a telling one. From 4:8-5:1 the phrase is used in one continuous dialogue between the shepherd and Abishag.
 - b. Solomon never calls her a sister, or a bride.
 - c. Both men call her "my darling".
 - d. Only Solomon says to Abishag that her "eyes are like doves". The shepherd, on the other hand, never says that the Shulammite's eyes are like doves. She once says it to Solomon and once to the shepherd.
 - e. The shepherd never calls Abishag "her beloved". However she calls both men beloved. Solomon also calls her beloved.

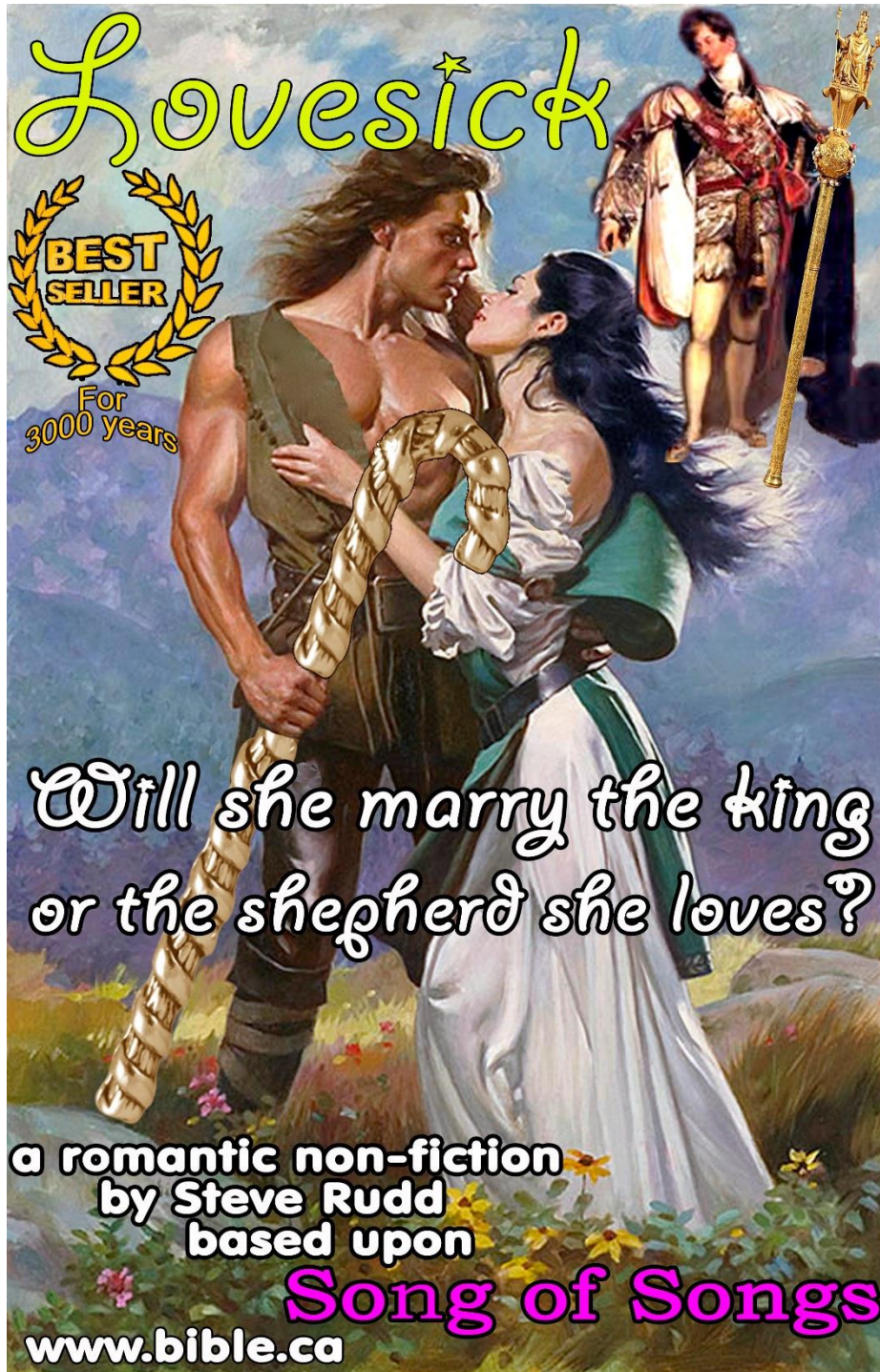
A handbook on the Song of Songs, UBS United Bible Societies Handbook Series, p 5, 1998 AD (Rudd added)

G. Teaching the SONG OF SOLOMON in church:

1. It is God's marriage preparation manual for singles.
2. Teaching the SONG OF SOLOMON is special because it is unlike any other book in the Bible.
3. While the book is indeed written like a Shakespearean play, turning the church into a theater, complete with painted back drops, props, costumes and curtains that raise and lower each scene will add little to the message of the book, and greatly detract from the focus on the word. Let the imagination through word pictures paint in the details of each scene the same way the Shulammite merely told her dreams to the maidens with words alone.
4. Print two copies of the screenplay below. One for the teacher and the other cut each part up into strips of paper for the "cast members" to read.
5. Assign 9 different characters to nine different members in the church and give them their corresponding paper strips to read from.
6. Since part/paper strip is numbered sequentially, it is easy to know when each person is supposed to read their line.
7. The teacher can call for each section of Bible verses to be read directly from the audience as they are seated.
8. As each member reads their "lines in the play" the teacher can make appropriate comments to bring the meaning to the surface.
9. It might be helpful for the teacher to say, "chapter 1, verses 2-4 is Abishag to Solomon", "Maidens to Abishag" etc. before each reads their section.
10. After each major section, you can reassign the 9 "reading roles" to different people.



"Lovesick" Read the story in the Song of Solomon, Songs, Canticles



"Lovesick"

Will she marry the king with 140 wives for his money or the poor shepherd she loves?

[Overview](#) to Song of Solomon

[Introduction](#) to Song of Solomon

[Commentary](#) on the Song of Solomon

Meet the Caste

Read the Novel

Meet the Cast of Song of Solomon:

1. Abishag, the Shulammitte Maiden
2. Shepherd Boyfriend
3. King Solomon
4. Queens and Concubines
5. Maidens of Jerusalem
6. Citizens of Jerusalem
7. Villagers of Shunem
8. Audience
9. God



The Romantic Shepherd

Song of Solomon 1:7; 2:16; 6:3



Townsfolk

Song of Solomon 3:6; 8:5



Maidens (virgins)



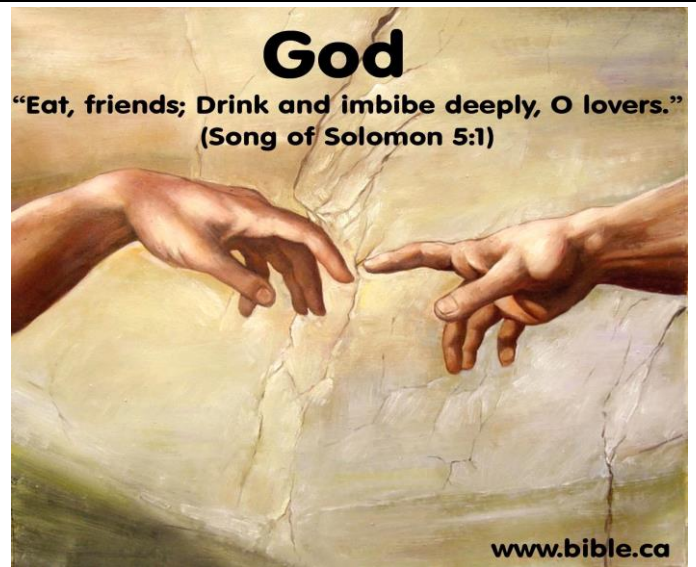
The Audience

Song of Solomon 1:4,12; 2:8; 3:6; 6:11; 8:5,11



God

"Eat, friends; Drink and imbibe deeply, O lovers."
(Song of Solomon 5:1)



The Story of a beautiful woman who must choose between two very different men

God's Marriage preparation manual

Quick facts:

1. Solomon was born in 999 BC when David was 41 years old.
2. Abishag became David's nurse, likely the year he died in 970 BC.
3. Solomon became king at age 29 in 970 BC.
4. About one year later, in 969 BC, Adonijah asks Solomon through Bathsheba for Abishag as his wife and is executed for insurrection. Abishag probably moves back to Shunem. She starts working in the vineyard and takes a liking to the shepherd.
5. The shepherd proposes to Abishag just before Solomon visits Shunem and takes her back to Jerusalem.
6. The story of Song of Solomon happens about 967 BC, when Solomon is about 33 years old in the 4th year of his reign.
7. The events in the SONG OF SOLOMON happened the same year as Solomon began to build the temple (967 BC), which was completed 7 years later in 960 BC.
8. During the story, the Ark of the Covenant is in the tabernacle of David in the city of David in Jerusalem and the Mosaic tabernacle of Moses, along with the original altar and brass wash basin, are in Gibeon. Once the temple is complete, the ark will be moved into the temple for use and the tabernacle of Moses will be disassembled and goes extinct but likely stored in a room in the temple. It is the tabernacle of David that is the anti-type of the church, not the tabernacle of Moses. They are two different things. Amos 9 + Acts 15.
9. We have no idea how old Abishag is when Solomon proposed to her, but likely around 18-20 years old.

Verse	Cast	Scene details	Comments
Song of Solomon 1:1		Title	Playwright by God; Screenplay by Steve Rudd ©2013
Scene 1 1:2-4	Abishag has willingly left Shunem for Jerusalem because she was swept off her feet with the prospects of marrying the king. She is in the palace alone with the maidens but Solomon soon walks in. She is still dressed in her peasant clothes, necklace and earrings.		
1:2a Abishag to Maidens "May he kiss me with the kisses of his mouth!"	<i>Speaking excitedly and with great genuine emotional rapture with hands folded held next to her heart. She says this to the maidens and pauses. "May he" not "May you" (third party not directly to Solomon, but about him to the Maidens)</i>		
1:2b-4a Abishag to Solomon "For your love is better than wine. "Your oils have a pleasing fragrance, Your name is like purified oil; Therefore the maidens love you. "Draw me after you and let us run together!"	<i>After a pause, Solomon walks in and she then turns with a bright loving smile begins to praise him in a somewhat forced tone in an attempt to conjure emotion that is lacking because she hasn't really developed a personal relationship yet with Solomon.</i> "Your oils" spoken directly to Solomon now. This is one of Abishag's bimbette moments she later regrets. Solomon had no power to force her to marry him. She came of her own free will. She is seriously considering marrying the king. Abishag is used to spending lots of time with the Shepherd. She transfers this expectation upon Solomon when she says, "Draw me after you and let us run together". Oh how she will be disappointed by Solomon who spends lots of time marrying women, but almost time with them. As an idealistic young woman, who is also the prettiest girl in all of Israel, with guys constantly seeking to spend time with her, she will soon learn that all her beauty will not make any difference after she marries Solomon. He will ignore her just like the other 140 queens.		

1:4b Abishag to Audience The king has brought me into his chambers."	<i>Abishag turns to face audience and narrates with continued elevated excitement.</i>
1:4c Maidens and Abishag to Solomon "We will rejoice in you and be glad; We will extol your love more than wine. Rightly do they love you."	<i>All the women now turn and sing 3 times to Solomon in dreamy harmony: "We will rejoice in you and be glad"</i>

Scene 2 1:5-8	Solomon smiles smugly then leaves the stage leaving only Abishag and the maidens together. Everything quiets down and the excitement abates. For the first time, the maidens take a close look at her and immediately notice how much different she looks. The last time they had seen her in the palace she was David's nurse. They stare at her with silent puzzlement and say with their eyes: "What happened to you?" Abishag, the perfect skinned beauty in high fashion palace clothes they knew when she was David's nurse has become sunburnt, scruffy looking and dressed in peasant's clothes.
1:5-6 Abishag to Maidens ""I am black but lovely, O daughters of Jerusalem, Like the tents of Kedar, Like the curtains of Solomon. "Do not stare at me because I am swarthy, For the sun has burned me. My mother's sons were angry with me; They made me caretaker of the vineyards, But I have not taken care of my own vineyard."	<i>With her eyes down cast, she looks at her clothes and remembers her home life and her job as a common labourer in a vineyard and the shepherd whom she adores.</i> She explains her appearance to the Maidens. " <i>She therefore does not have the pampered beauty of urban women of the upper class.</i> " (NAC, 1:6) Why were her brother's angry with her? Why did her brothers, not her father, send her to work in the vineyard? Was her father dead and she is under the guardianship of her older brothers? Most likely the anger of the brothers is related something to her two years in Jerusalem nursing the King. Were they angry because upon her returned from nursing David, she had "gone Hollywood" in spoiled self-obsessed vanity over makeup, jewelry and fancy clothing? Is this why they sent her to keep a vineyard where she was unable to keep her preppy appearances up? Another possibility is that the family had bid to gain the contract with Solomon to run the vineyard at BaalHamon and her absence or sense of entitlement upon return from Jerusalem has triggered a financial loss. We really have no idea why her brother's were mad at her or why they put her to work in the vineyard.
1:7 Abishag to Shepherd ""Tell me, O you whom my soul loves, Where do you pasture your flock, Where do you make it lie down at noon? For why should I be like one who veils herself Beside the flocks of your companions?""	<i>Her eyes look upward, as she speaks quietly and dreamily with great genuine feeling, (in a different tone from when she excitedly forced herself to praise Solomon above.)</i> Here the shepherd is introduced for the first time. Remember, Solomon never kept flocks, so this verse proves the shepherd boy interpretation.

1:8 Maidens to Abishag ““If you yourself do not know, Most beautiful among women, Go forth on the trail of the flock And pasture your young goats By the tents of the shepherds.”	<i>The maidens are stunned, look at each other in surprise, and after a long thoughtful pause they tell her to go look for him (read v 8)</i> It is immediately clear that she is not speaking about Solomon, a spoiled palace rich boy who never cared for sheep a day in his life. They are surprised to learn for the first time that she is in love with another man. They tell her to leave the palace, go look for him and not waste Solomon's time. She does not leave and they take little notice at this point of the shepherd. Later in her second dream they learn she is still in love with the shepherd and leave the palace to help her find him.
Scene 3 1:9-11	Solomon returns to the stage in the presence of Abishag and the maidens who silently revel in knowledge of the love triangle drama and wonder how it will all play out. They know something Solomon doesn't know, and they keep their secret to themselves with buttoned lips, wide bug eyes and enjoy the entertainment. Boy has palace life suddenly become exciting. A royal scandal is brewing and they are the only ones who have the inside scoop! The paparazzi will be busy as bees once it becomes public when Abishag leaves Solomon standing at the altar! Until then, only the maidens know that Solomon's wedding plans for this girl are uncertain.
1:9-10 Solomon to Abishag ““To me, my darling, you are like My mare among the chariots of Pharaoh. “Your cheeks are lovely with ornaments, Your neck with strings of beads.””	<i>Abishag snaps out of her dream of the shepherd and gives full attention to Solomon.</i> Although still dressed as a commoner in her home-made folk jewelry, Solomon compliments her appearance. Solomon visualizes the shape of her body and doesn't care about her attire. She is a trophy, like his personal horse he rides alongside the chariots supplied by Pharaoh when Solomon married the Egyptian princess three years earlier. She looks as good as the prize mare reserved for him alone to ride. She is a showpiece for him to display, like the horse he rides.
1:11 Maidens to Abishag ““We will make for you ornaments of gold With beads of silver.””	<i>Excitedly, the maidens jump in with help to clean up the peasant with a makeover.</i> Notice that the Shunem "folk jewelry" she was wearing when Solomon complimented her was going to be replaced by the maidens with "palace issue" royal jewelry. The maidens plan to replace her common peasant beads, with "earrings of gold and beads of silver". Although Solomon complimented her own choice of peasant jewelry, the maidens offer her a makeover to bring her up to palace standards.
Scene 4 1:12- 2:7	Now she is seated at the king's table for a formal banquet in her honour and as a welcome to the palace. After the makeover, Abishag is again the palace beauty that Solomon remembers three years earlier when she was David's nurse (1 Kings 1:1-3). She forgets about the shepherd with all the excitement of the glitter and glamour of her makeover. She once again presents herself before Solomon as a delight for his senses by enchanting him with perfume. She is at the king's dinner table and her perfume goes out from her, she starts again to dream about Shunem. She remembers how she would lay in bed at night wearing myrrh perfume, fantasizing how the perfume would travel from her bed to the shepherd's bed. Of course, the shepherd never knew she did this, but many times in the past she has gone to bed at night wishing her perfume would be noticed by the shepherd. Now she is wearing nard perfume for the king to notice.
1:12 Abishag to the audience ““While the king was at his table, My perfume gave forth its fragrance.”	<i>In a dreamy voice she looks directly at the audience, with Solomon and the maidens behind her then goes into a trance signaling she is remembering something from her past. Although she is still at the king's table her daydream indicates a new scene in her mind.</i> The perfume she is now wearing for Solomon triggers a flashback to when she wore the same perfume for the shepherd and she begins to daydream.

<p>1:13-14 Abishag muses to herself about Shunem and the Shepherd “My beloved is to me a pouch of myrrh Which lies all night between my breasts. “My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blossoms In the vineyards of Engedi.””</p>	<p><i>After a pause, she stands up from the table, clutches her hands together over her heart with the bag of myrrh and visualizes how many times she had worn perfume for the shepherd. She dreamily begins to slowly swirl and sway as she speaks.</i></p> <p>Putting myrrh between her breasts while she sleeps is not something she just started when she arrived in Jerusalem. This is a behaviour she had begun back home in Shunem for the shepherd while they slept apart in different houses. She lay perfumed in her bed, fantasizing that the fragrance would reach the shepherd. She associates the shepherd with the famous and beautiful vineyards of Engedi. "<i>En Gedi was a royal estate and its inhabitants employed in the production of perfume balm.</i>" (AYBC, SONG OF SOLOMON, p 354) As a woman who lived in Jerusalem for probably two years and as vineyard keeper, she would compare the basic vineyards under her care in Shunem with the best royal vineyards in Solomon's kingdom at En Gedi, the place where he cut Saul's robe.</p>
<p>1:15 Solomon to Abishag interrupting her day dream “How beautiful you are, my darling, How beautiful you are! Your eyes are like doves.””</p>	<p><i>As she swirls and she sits down again, Solomon watches her as she dreams in silence of the shepherd. He notices how cute she is as she quietly sits there. As he begins to speak, she snaps out of her dream, mentally comes back to the king's table and gives him her full attention.</i></p> <p>Here Abishag, like a good guest knowing what is expected of her, smiles as Solomon speaks to her. All three in the love triangle are told their eyes are doves!</p>
<p>1:16-17 Abishag to Solomon “How handsome you are, my beloved, And so pleasant! Indeed, our couch is luxuriant! “The beams of our houses are cedars, Our rafters, cypresses.”</p>	<p><i>She plays the "love game role" as best she can and returns the compliment as sincerely and heartfelt as she can.</i></p> <p>This is the first and only time she tells Solomon how handsome and good looking he is. She cannot be talking or dreaming of the shepherd because his peasant couch is not luxuriant and his house certainly would not be built from cedars and cypress. This is expensive wood Solomon imported from Tyre for his own palace which is under construction in year 3 of his reign. (1 Ki 5:8; 7:1-4) She sizes Solomon up and notices he is both good looking and rich!</p>
<p>2:1-2 Solomon to Abishag ““I am the rose of Sharon, The lily of the valleys.” ““Like a lily among the thorns, So is my darling among the maidens.””</p>	<p><i>Solomon, looking smugly down at his fingernails, breathing on them, then polishing them on his chest, agrees with Abishag and says, "Well now that you mention it, I am rather good looking aren't I? I was wondering when you were going to notice. What took you so long to notice? But of course, your beauty is equal to my good looks and we deserve each other.</i></p> <p>Solomon was very handsome, with two very attractive parents and he knew it. (David and Bathsheba) “David was ruddy (suntanned like Abishag from being outside), with beautiful eyes and a handsome appearance.” (1 Sam 16:12) Such narcissism is uncharacteristic of Abishag's humility (see 1:6). However, for Solomon this is what we would expect. Jesus was even struck with Solomon's vanity: ““Observe how the lilies of the field grow ... not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these.” (Matt 6:28-29) This vanity may have run in the family, because Absalom prided himself with his good looks too. “Now in all Israel was no one as handsome as Absalom, so highly praised; from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no defect in him.” (2 Sam 14:25)</p>

2:3-7

Abishag to Solomon

"Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest, So is my beloved among the young men (literally "sons", no indication of age). In his shade I took great delight and sat down, And his fruit was sweet to my taste. "He has brought me to his banquet hall (lit house of wine), And his banner over me is love. "Sustain me with raisin cakes, Refresh me with apples, Because I am lovesick. "Let his left hand be under my head And his right hand embrace me." "I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, By the gazelles or by the hinds of the field, That you do not arouse or awaken my love Until she pleases."

Abishag speaks sincerely, passionately and with genuine emotion.

"House of wine" is used only here, but Jer 16:8; Eccles 7:2 have literally, "house of drinking". Then adding Esth 5:6; 7:2,7-8 with the fact that Abishag is in the king's chambers in 1:4 this is clearly a formal banquet with eating and drinking. It is likely Solomon's queens and other important people had been invited and were in attendance. It is likely that Abishag has some level of alcohol in her blood given the way she throws herself at the king, then regrets it the next morning.

At the end of the royal dinner scene, Abishag has her last romantic address to Solomon. She is sincere, but unsure, given she has already told the maidens about the shepherd. The royal dinner is in her honour and she is not about to be a bad guest. She throws the towel in on the shepherd for the moment and gives Solomon her heart as best as she can. Keep in mind that she chose to come willingly when Solomon visited her working in his "state owned vineyard" in Shunem. Perhaps she missed the easy palace life for the hard peasant working class life where she had no time for the makeup or fancy clothing she once enjoyed when she was David's nurse. Abishag's affection for Solomon might be a genuine crush that dates back three years earlier, when she spent 2 years in the palace with David as his nurse.

Solomon's brother Adonijah was executed for asking to marry her. Perhaps she was quite willing to marry Adonijah which gave him the confidence to ask in the first place. Perhaps her dreams of marrying royalty were cut short when Adonijah was executed and the idea of marrying

Solomon appealed to her. The wives and concubines of kings were a symbol of power. When Absalom lay with David's 10 concubines on the palace roof, it was a display that said, "I am king now. I have the former king's wives." (2 Samuel 16:21-22) Adonijah was executed because his request to marry Abishag, who lay with David (even though he kept her a virgin), was a sneaky way of creating the appearance that he was David's rightful successor.

Solomon saw through it and had him executed. (1 Ki 2:22)

Twice in the SONG OF SOLOMON Abishag says this: "Let his left hand be under my head And his right hand embrace me." (2:6) Here where she is still swooning for the king, and in 8:3 when she has finally chosen the shepherd. She had a strong desire to be loved, needed, wanted and cuddled by a man. She is uncertain which one yet. This is why she concludes that she is lovesick. She is torn between two men. **Lovesick does not mean puppy love**, but an injury in love, a disquieting in love. She wants to eat sweets as a way to take her mind off her divided heart. The scene closes with the transition statement: "I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem" which signals she is uncertain about the superficially passionate things she just said to Solomon. From outward appearances and what she said, it would appear she loves Solomon, but in fact it is all artificial and not how she really feels in her heart.

Solomon is about 33 at the time and the phrase "young men" is wrong, it is literally "sons" with no indication of age. However the shepherd is described as a "young stag" in 2:17 and 8:14.

<p>Scene 5 2:8-17</p>	<p>The next day after the banquet, Abishag is alone. The party is over and she has morning after blues, regretting what she said to Solomon the night before and how she threw herself at him. She may have been a bit drunk, given the banquet is literally described as a "wine house". When a girl is looking for a good man to marry, the worst place to find one is a bar, pub or dance club. When a girl goes to a pub, she finds superficial men like Solomon who want to buy them drinks. When a girl goes clubbing to find true love, she will feel like she got hit with a club the next day. The dinner party was the last time she ever speaks of her "love" for Solomon. Now she focuses on the shepherd boy she really loves. She dates Solomon and essentially dumps him after the first date. Most women know after one date, if she will say yes to a second date. However, she is a three day journey of 100 km from home in the palace of Solomon. It's not like she can simply ignore Solomon and let her cell phone go to answering service when he calls.</p>
<p>2:8-9 Abishag to the Audience "Listen! My beloved! Behold, he is coming, Climbing on the mountains, Leaping on the hills! "My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag. Behold, he is standing behind our wall, He is looking through the windows, He is peering through the lattice."</p>	<p><i>Excitedly Abishag monologues to herself about the shepherd, as if she is still in the presence of the maidens. This all happens in her imagination, acted out in her own voice to the audience.</i></p> <p>This is certainly talking to the shepherd not Solomon. She would never imagine Solomon climbing or leaping on the mountains but walking in the royal courtyards or through the streets of Jerusalem. Solomon was a city boy who kept himself to the paved roads. It was the shepherd that actually climbed mountains and hills every day. She must know that she has made the shepherd jealous (cf. 8:6) and she imagines he has come to Jerusalem because he misses and loves her. She imagines him, driven by true love, searching all of Jerusalem for her and spying on her in stealth from over the wall, through the windows and the crisscross screens for privacy. Don't trash the guy for being a peeping Tom. <i>This is her dream</i> of what she wants him to do. To portray the shepherd as a voyeur predator misses the purity of her thoughts. She imagines he just wants to see her wherever she might be.</p> <p><i>"Hear my voice where you are, Take a train, steal a car, Hop a freight, grab a star, come back to me. Catch a plane, catch a breeze, On your hands, on your knees, Swim or fly, only please, come back to me!"</i> (Come back to me, Shirley Horn)</p>

<p>2:10-14</p> <p>Shepherd to Abishag</p> <p>““My beloved responded and said to me, ‘Arise, my darling, my beautiful one, And come along. ‘For behold, the winter is past, The rain is over and gone. ‘The flowers have already appeared in the land; The time has arrived for pruning the vines, And the voice of the turtledove has been heard in our land. ‘The fig tree has ripened its figs, And the vines in blossom have given forth their fragrance. Arise, my darling, my beautiful one, And come along!’ ”</p> <p>“O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, In the secret place of the steep pathway, Let me see your form, Let me hear your voice; For your voice is sweet, And your form is lovely.””</p>	<p><i>The shepherd sincerely speaks to Abishag in her dreams. It is Abishag who is speaking in the voice of the shepherd to the audience.</i></p> <p>This is the first time the shepherd actually speaks. This is either Abishag fantasizing how she wants the shepherd to speak to her or how he already has spoken to her at some time in the past. It matters not, for the setting is in Shunem not Jerusalem. There are several clear indications this is the shepherd and cannot be Solomon.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Working outdoors, the shepherd is astutely attuned to the season changes and notices the simple things like the arrival of the turtledove. 2. Without exception, Solomon always describes how much he loves her body. The shepherd, on the other hand, describes romantic destinations he wants to take her. Solomon wants to spend time alone in the bedroom but the shepherd wants to spend time alone outside under the moonlight romancing his beloved. The way each man wants to spend time with her is very different. Solomon wants to hold her body, but the shepherd wants to hold her hand while doing all those silly things together in the country like looking at flowers in a field or going for a mountain hike. Take note that without exception, Solomon only talks about her body while the shepherd (who loves her body), is portrayed as doing things together throughout the day. Solomon wants to spend 3 ½ minutes with her, while the shepherd wants to spend the entire day. 3. He makes two references to her job as a keeper of vines in Shunem.
<p>2:15-17</p> <p>Abishag to Shepherd</p> <p>“Catch the foxes for us, The little foxes that are ruining the vineyards, While our vineyards are in blossom.” “My beloved is mine, and I am his; He pastures his flock among the lilies. “Until the cool of the day when the shadows flee away, Turn, my beloved, and be like a gazelle Or a young stag on the mountains of Bether.”</p>	<p>Abishag envisions being married to the shepherd each with their own separate jobs. She is a vineyard keeper and he a herder of sheep. Obviously this cannot be how she would see her life with Solomon. As queen, she certainly would not be taking care of vineyards herself and as king, Solomon would not be chasing foxes from her vineyard. She dreams of what married life with the shepherd will be. During the day, they work apart and she looks forward to when evening comes, "the cool of the day" so they can be together again. She cannot wait for the day to be over, when he returns home to be with her and they can spend time snuggling together and enjoying each other's presence. This is a very mature and realistic view of home life. This Solomon certainly would never do.</p>
<p>Scene 6 3:1-5</p>	<p>The first dream: Before she is married, she looks for the shepherd and finds him. Notice that this was a recurring dream several nights in a row while she was in Jerusalem. She was in Jerusalem to marry the king, but in her dreams, she longed for the shepherd 90 km north (4 days journey) in Shunem.</p>

<p>3:1-5</p> <p>Abishag to Maidens</p> <p>"On my bed night after night I sought him Whom my soul loves; I sought him but did not find him. 'I must arise now and go about the city; In the streets and in the squares I must seek him whom my soul loves.' I sought him but did not find him. "The watchmen who make the rounds in the city found me, And I said, 'Have you seen him whom my soul loves?' "Scarcely had I left them When I found him whom my soul loves; I held on to him and would not let him go Until I had brought him to my mother's house, And into the room of her who conceived me." "I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, By the gazelles or by the hinds of the field, That you will not arouse or awaken my love Until she pleases."</p>	<p><i>She speaks in an excited, elevated, almost panicky voice to the maidens.</i></p> <p>While she was being courted by Solomon during the day, her heart was courting the shepherd by night. While her words did not match her true feelings during the day, her dreams never lied.</p> <p>She leaves her bedroom in the palace and goes out into the streets of Jerusalem. With the help of the city guards, she finds the shepherd and clings tightly too him until she has consummated her marriage to him in the same room in which her parents conceived her. This is state two (consummation) of the three stages of Jewish marriage found throughout the Bible as discussed in detail in the introduction above.</p> <p>Stage one was where the groom and the father of the bride sign a legal contract. In stage two the bride would have 10 maidens as witnesses and the groom would have ten male witnesses. This is seen in the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25:1-13. They would be having a party in the house while the bride and groom were in the bedroom. The mother of the bride would make a virginity cloth with the bride and grooms names with the date sewn on. The groom would hand out the bloodied cloth to the witnesses outside and it was given to the father of the bride for safekeeping, in case the groom ever accused her of not being a virgin.</p> <p>For the second time, she tells the maidens: "I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem".</p>
<p>Scene 7</p> <p>3:6-11</p>	<p>Solomon is travelling from the wilderness towards Jerusalem in his royal procession on the day he proposes to Abishag. As he travels the road, the townsfolk come out and line the streets to see him pass by like when the Toronto Maple Leafs win the Stanley cup someday and parade on Young Street</p>

3:6-11

Townfolk to Audience

"Who is this coming up from the wilderness Like columns of smoke, Perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, With all scented powders of the merchant?
 "Behold, it is the traveling couch of Solomon; Sixty mighty men around it, Of the mighty men of Israel. "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. "King Solomon has made for himself a sedan chair From the timber of Lebanon. "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. "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.""

Spoken in an excited broadcasting voice.

This is actually an amazing and unparalleled description of the king from a historical point of view because it gives us insight into the customs of the iron II age of the 10th century BC. As we said earlier, he was a city boy who stuck to the roads with 60 body guards and was not the kind of man who would secretly "steal away" with Abishag into the villages alone together at night.

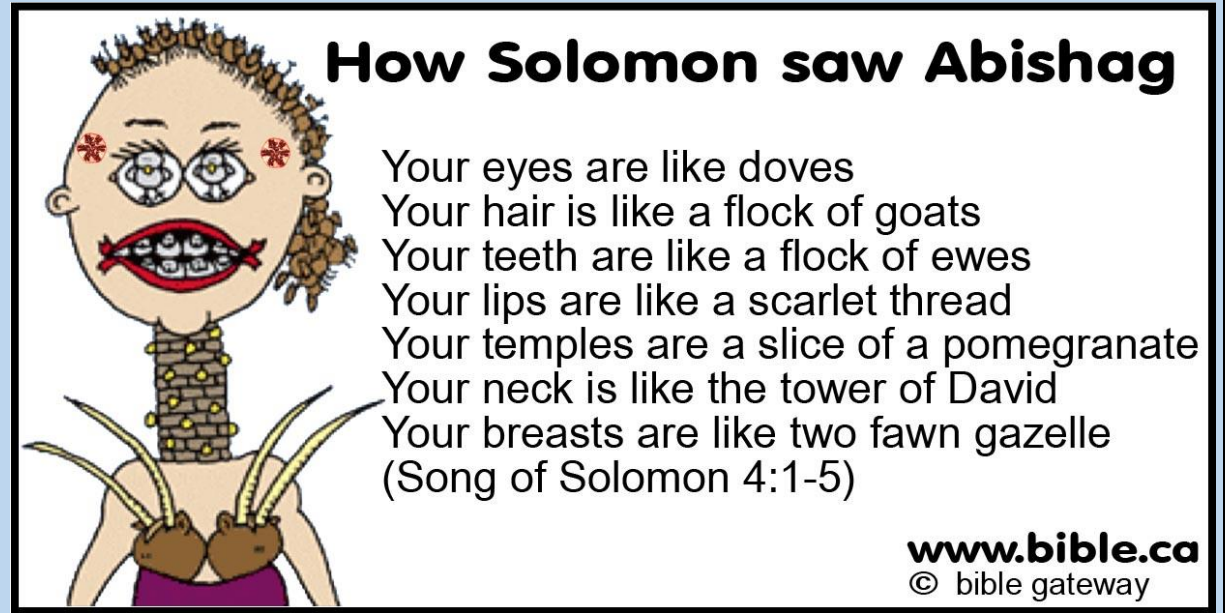
The scene has happened 140 times in the last three years, so the town people have seen this before. The novelty had likely worn off. Solomon was getting ready to formally propose to Abishag. Bathsheba, his mother, had placed the crown on his head personally, confirming that this is early in Solomon's reign around year 3.

Exactly why this procession is mentioned here is unclear. Is this simply a historical narrative that everyone is familiar with or is this the actual procession with Solomon heading to marry Abishag, to see if she will say yes? Solomon already has Abishag in the palace so this is likely historical of when he brought home one of his foreign wives. It is likely a multiple allusion to past events and the present situation.

Twice in the book we have: "Who is this coming up from the wilderness". Here we have the townfolk of Jerusalem asking it of Solomon without Abishag and in 8:5 we have the townfolk of Shunem asking it of the shepherd with Abishag: "Who is this coming up from the wilderness Leaning on her beloved?" (SONG OF SOLOMON 8:5). Notice Abishag is absent in 3:6, her but leaning on the shepherd in 8:5. If this a historic event, then it creates an even more powerful contrast of Solomon bringing home a foreign pagan wife to Jerusalem from afar & the shepherd bringing YHWH worshipping Abishag home to Shunem. Here we have an elaborate description of Solomon's fancy car with which he hopes to impress the girl but in 8:5 the shepherd has no car at all, is walking with together with her. The two scenes could not be more opposite. Notice that the NASB translates it "WHAT is this coming" when it is literally, "who is this coming". Like Shania Twain said: "You're one of those guys who likes to shine his machine. You make me take off my shoes before you let me get in. I can't believe you kiss your chariot good night C'mon baby tell me-you must be jokin', right? Oh-oo-oh, you think you're special Oh-oo-oh, you think you're something else. Okay, so you've got a car. That don't impress me much So you got the moves but have you got the touch Don't get me wrong, yeah I think you're alright. But that won't keep me warm in the middle of the night. That don't impress me much." This sets the scene for the second dream, where she imagines she has married Solomon.

Scene 8
4:1-6

Solomon has arrived in his palace and in the most formal of setting he proposes to Abishag. Two men propose to her. She tells Solomon she will sleep on it. As she walks out of the palace she remembers the words of the shepherd when he proposed to her just before Solomon brought her from Shunem to Jerusalem. This creates an exciting and tension filled narrative, all of which was 100% true history. Often a woman is not sure if she is ready to say yes when a man proposes to her. Leaving him for Solomon should not surprise us. She is considering her options and she already has had a taste of palace life when she was David's nurse. Maybe in her heart she missed the glitter, glamour and excitement of palace life. Perhaps as she worked sunburnt and unkempt in peasant clothes working in a vineyard the temptation of the easy life as a queen was why she dumped the shepherd in the first place. Now she is in the palace, she can clearly see the choices in front of her and it's time for her to choose!



4:1-5

Solomon to Abishag.

"How beautiful you are, my darling, How beautiful you are! Your eyes are like doves behind your veil; Your hair is like a flock of goats That have descended from Mount Gilead. "Your teeth are like a flock of newly shorn ewes Which have come up from their washing, All of which bear twins, And not one among them has lost her young. "Your lips are like a scarlet thread, And your mouth is lovely. Your temples are like a slice of a pomegranate Behind your veil. "Your neck is like the tower of David, Built with rows of stones On which are hung a thousand shields, All the round shields of the mighty men.

Solomon formally proposes to Abishag. Spoken passionately as a man captivated by a beautiful woman.

Solomon has arrived in his formal procession to make a formal proposal of marriage to Abishag, her moment of decision has arrived. He will ask her, "Is you is or is you ain't my baby" (Emilie-Claire Barlow) and she will have to give him her answer.

In chapter 4, two men propose to Abishag. First Solomon proposes to Abishag, she says, "let me sleep on it" and then she remembers the shepherd's proposal back in Shunem.

Typical of a man, Solomon describes her body parts from the top down. Later the queens describe her from the feet up. Most of the language is selfexplanatory except for describing her teeth as sheep. Most people had teeth missing by the time they were 20. Broken, chipped and surgically removed teeth were common. Abishag had a perfect set of white teeth. She was flawless.

Solomon was an experienced man who used fancy lines to picking up beautiful women. Young, inexperienced men are at a disadvantage to understanding a woman's heart. However, as Abishag stood there listening to Solomon's highly polished lines and she was not impressed.

"Your two breasts are like two fawns, Twins of a gazelle Which feed among the lilies."

When Solomon said softly and romantically, "*your eyes are like doves*" what she heard was "*hey baby*". Remember, Abishag was like any exceptionally beautiful woman today, who turns all men's heads and is constantly having to deal with men peacocking for her attention. Everywhere she went, men would try to pick her up, tell her a joke, tell her they are "doctors in the off season", make fake phone calls in her hearing to sell million shares of stock, flex their muscles, ask her if she would like to visit Paris with him, show off their car. In a kind of battle of the titans, Solomon's experience with beautiful women was equal to her experience with shallow men trying to seduce her. Solomon's proposal was nothing more than saying, "Wow, you are hot! Lets get married." The shepherd, in contrast wants to spend time doing things together. The Shulammite had plenty of experience with men, to assess the smug and confident Solomon who is flattering her with fancy words. Solomon had said these same words to 140 other women and Abishag likely had heard these same words before from 140 other men. *As a well-adjusted beautiful woman, she found Solomon's praise of her body rather boring and unimaginative.* Don't worry about Abishag being taken advantage of by Solomon. Weep for Solomon. She is a pro with men. This is a battle of the titans and she is about to put Solomon in his "low place".

4:6

Abishag to Solomon

"Until the cool of the day When the shadows flee away, I will go my way to the mountain of myrrh And to the hill of frankincense."

Her answer: Let me sleep on it. Quietly with her eyes downcast.

DECISION TIME: Will she say yes? She tells Solomon she wants to think about it: "I will go my way until evening." In fact she has her second dream that night where she imagines she said yes. This is a clear transition between the proposal of Solomon and the shepherd's that follows. The fact that she told Solomon she needed to think about it rather than ecstatically and hysterically yelling YES like the 140 wives of Solomon probably caught him by surprise. She is probably the first woman to refuse him and he is likely puzzled. This is not Solomon saying he will wait for her decision until evening because he is a city boy who doesn't climb mountains. The very imagery of climbing hills and mountains never refers to Solomon and always the shepherd. In beautiful poetic symbolism, her reply to Solomon actually invokes direct memories of the shepherd. The exact phrase, "*Until the cool of the day When the shadows flee away*" was already used by Abishag in 2:17 in direct reference to the shepherd. However in 2:17 the shepherd is *coming from the mountains* but in 4:6 when she answers Solomon, *she is going to the mountains*. Only when Solomon wrote the SONG OF SOLOMON at the end of his life, did the Holy Spirit reveal to him that the imagery of her answer "cool, shadows, mountains etc.", was a very direct reference to the shepherd. Solomon asks her to marry him and she replies, let me go to the mountain where the shepherd is and think it over. Solomon had no idea he was competing with a peasant shepherd for the girl. What a crushing revelation this would be to Solomon. How foolish and shallow he must have felt.

<p>Scene 9 4:7-5:1</p>	<p><i>Although the scene could change to when she is alone in her room, it works well to have this brief historical dialogue happen in the palace so everyone there, especially Solomon, hears how a real man proposes to a woman. Remember, Solomon wrote this as a penitent self-rebuke, he always wondered why she said "no" and this is a perfect setting for the Holy Spirit to reveal it to him. After saying she will "sleep on it" she starts walking out of the palace, stops and pauses to remember how the Shepherd had proposed to her recently back home in Shunem. Everyone in the palace "time freezes" as she has a flashback of the words the shepherd spoke when he proposed to her. It is interesting that she told both the shepherd and Solomon the same thing: "let me think about it". Now she has two men waiting to hear her answer. The shepherd assumes he is out of the picture, given the fact she left Shunem for Jerusalem with Solomon to be his wife. She has broken his heart and made him very jealous. But he likely doesn't fault her for choosing a king over a common peasant shepherd. Back home in Shunem, he has no idea what is happening and assumes she has married Solomon.</i></p>
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<p>4:7-15 Shepherd to Abishag ""You are altogether beautiful, my darling, And there is no blemish in you. "Come with me from Lebanon, my bride, May you come with me from Lebanon. Journey down from the summit of Amana, From the summit of Senir and Hermon, From the dens of lions, From the mountains of leopards. "You have made my heart beat faster, my sister, my bride; You have made my heart beat faster with a single glance of your eyes, With a single strand of your necklace. "How beautiful is your love, my sister, my bride! How much better is your love than wine, And the fragrance of your oils Than all kinds of spices! " Your lips, my bride, drip honey; Honey and milk are under your tongue, And the fragrance of your garments is like the fragrance of Lebanon. "A garden locked is my sister, my bride, A rock garden locked, a spring sealed up. "Your shoots are an orchard of pomegranates With choice fruits, henna with nard plants, Nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, With all the trees of frankincense, Myrrh and aloes, along with all the finest spices. "You are a garden spring, A well</p>	<p><i>This flashback is spoken romantically with genuine feeling by the shepherd.</i> When you compare the way Solomon and the shepherd spoke to the girl, the contrast in the words of the two men is dramatic. Solomon wanted to <i>do something to her</i> but the shepherd wanted <i>to do something with her</i>. Solomon wanted to spend time in the bedroom, the shepherd wanted to spend time in the country. Solomon never invites her to do anything together as an outing and always enumerates her body parts. The shepherd tells her he finds her beautiful then describes all the places and things they will do together. The shepherd only mentions her eyes and lips. A woman wants a man to Look directly into her eyes, not stair at her chest. Women always notice where a man looks. She noticed Solomon looked at her body but the shepherd looked into her soul. Conversely, a woman who uses her chest and enjoys men looking at it, is not someone any good man would want to marry. I am reminded of a young single mom bar tender who worked near our church building. I would talk to her about becoming a Christian over the years. One sunny day I talked to her and she was dressed in a very low cut top exposing her rather well-endowed chest to the limit of obscenity laws. I continued to make eye contact with her, never once looking down. After about two minutes of conversation, she broke into laughter and I asked her what was so funny. She said, knowing I was a preacher, "You are not going to look down at my boobs are you?" I said no. "I have made a covenant with my eyes; How then could I gaze at a virgin?" (Job 31:1) She replied, "Well you are the first man today who hasn't". She was entertaining herself by playing this deliberate game. This lost soul was using the wrong part of herself to attract the wrong kind of men. This is the very type of woman a good man must avoid. Contrast this "loose" young woman with how the shepherd describes Abishag's body: "a locked garden", which means he wouldn't touch her body and she wouldn't offer it. Although they had the strongest sexual desire for each other, they had the self-control to wait. In 8:10 Abishag says of her appearance: "I was a wall (chaste), and my breasts were like towers (modestly displayed); Then I became in his eyes as one who finds peace." The shepherd, on the other hand, recognized her beauty and saw how other men looked at her but he knew she would keep herself a virgin until her consummation night. The shepherd was as discerning for that quality mate as she was. She knew he valued <i>her high morals</i> above her towering breasts. Finally the shepherd speaks to the strongest desire of every woman to have children: "Your shoots (children) are an orchard". He tells her he wants to be</p>
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<p>of fresh water, And streams flowing from Lebanon.””</p>	<p>the father of her children. Later Abishag says to the shepherd: “The mandrakes (aphrodisiac of fertility) have given forth fragrance; And over our doors are all choice fruits (children)” (SONG OF SOLOMON 7: 13) Never does Solomon speak of children. Solomon wants her body for sex, but the shepherd wants her body for children. Ps 45, as noted in detail above, Solomon told his wives they would be famous as mothers of future kings. “In place of your fathers will be your sons; You shall make them princes in all the earth. I will cause Your name to be remembered in all generations; Therefore the peoples will give You thanks forever and ever.” (Psalm 45:16-17)</p> <p>What both men offer "in the children department" are two opposites and Abishag knows it. Solomon is an absentee father who offers her fame as an incubator of the state in producing future kings, but she envisions the shepherd reading his children night time stories as he tucks them in each night and prays with them. With Solomon she raises her kids in the harem commune with the children of 140 other wives. Just how much quality time will he spend with her children? With the shepherd, she gets him all to herself and her kids all day, every day. Solomon loved making babies, the shepherd loved babies. Here the wisdom and insight of Abishag exceeds that of Solomon.</p> <p>I always have a counseling session before I marry a couple. The first question I ask when they sit down is: "So how many kids are you planning to have?" More than one has gone like this: Man: "Uhhh. I don't like kids" Woman sits there thoughtfully twitching in shock says: "Really?" I have known many women to terminate a relationship, even divorce because the man doesn't want to have children. The reverse is also true. A man who loves kids is a real "turn on" for most women. It is easy for a woman to tell by simply observing her boyfriend around young children. If he doesn't interact with them or play a bit, beware! Actions speak louder than words. The same lack of interest in other's children will surface with his own.</p>
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<p>4:16 Abishag to Shepherd "Awake, O north wind, And come, wind of the south; Make my garden breathe out fragrance, Let its spices be wafted abroad. May my beloved come into his garden And eat its choice fruits!"</p>	<p><i>Spoken passionately.</i> When she remembers the proposal of the shepherd a few weeks earlier, she asks the wind to carry her feeling 90 km north to her shepherd in Shunem. Right there in the palace, after hearing the second man's proposal (Solomon's) she knew she wanted to marry the shepherd. She is calling for the shepherd to marry her so he can enjoy her garden (body). She has now made her choice and calls to him, through the wind, to marry her. Of course, he is unaware of any of this and is still licking his wounded heart back home having lost her forever to Solomon. He quietly and sorrowfully sings, "<i>I don't stand a ghost of a chance with you.</i>" (Dianna Krall) Being cursed with being the most beautiful girl in Israel, she had to endure the constant attention and harassment from men and she was well experienced to deal with them. Little did he know that she wasn't looking for a sophisticated ladies man, but a friend and companion to share her life. Abishag, the expert of men, saw that what the shepherd lacked in experience and sophistication, he made up for in the purity of his love for her as a person. She was suspicious of Solomon because she knew he was cunning enough to feed her lines. With the inexperienced shepherd <i>what he said was what he was</i> and she liked what she heard from him. Solomon saw her as an object, the shepherd saw her as a best friend. As Solomon wrote SONG OF SOLOMON and Ecclesiastes, he could see the vanity of what he offered compared to the shepherd and why he was dumped by Abishag.</p>
<p>5:1 Shepherd to Abishag "I have come into my garden, my sister, my bride; I have gathered my myrrh along with my balsam. I have eaten my honeycomb and my honey; I have drunk my wine and my milk."</p>	<p><i>Spoken with great desire.</i> This is not something the shepherd has ever said to her, but this is how she imagines he would reply as she stands in the palace after the wind transported her love to him. <i>She imagines</i> how he has fantasized loving her. This cannot mean that he has already physically loved her as some wrongly suggest. If she was not a virgin on her consummation night, she would surely be stoned by Solomon. She also clearly states she is chaste (a wall) in 8:10. Just as she has imagined what it would like to be with him, so also she knows he has imagined what it would be like to love her.</p>
<p>5:1 God to Abishag and Shepherd "Eat, friends; Drink and imbibe deeply, O lovers."</p>	<p><i>Spoken in whatever tone you image God sounds like.</i> This is something said to both Abishag and the shepherd. Although it might be spoken by someone in the palace or the maidens, it is more likely God himself. God created man and woman to enjoy each other to the fullest, body and soul. Perhaps Abishag heard this from God directly or perhaps it is something the Holy Spirit had Solomon add at this point, showing him that it is God's desire for her to marry the shepherd and not him.</p>
<p>Scene 10 5:2-6:3</p>	<p>Abishag leaves the palace and goes to her bedroom and sleeps. It is decision night. In the morning she will give Solomon her answer. In the first dream she is single in this second dream she is married to Solomon. She is in a room with the maidens the next morning telling them her dream. In her dream, she is awakened by the shepherd in her bedroom as he knocks on her door. The meaning of the dream is obvious to them: She is in love with someone other than Solomon. The maidens are shocked.</p>

<p>5:2 Abishag to Maidens "I was asleep but my heart was awake. A voice! My beloved was knocking:</p>	<p><i>Spoken in the natural way a girl tells a group of friends a story, but with a twinge of horror as the story progresses.</i> Dream 1: 3:1. She dreams she is not married to Solomon and the city guards help her find the shepherd. Dream 2: 5:2. She dreams she married Solomon and the city guards beat and strip her naked when she is seen as an adulteress looking for the shepherd.</p>
<p>5:2 Shepherd to Abishag 'Open to me, my sister, my darling, My dove, my perfect one! For my head is drenched with dew, My locks with the damp of the night.'</p>	<p>As she tells her dream to the palace maidens the next morning, she narrates to them what the shepherd said to her. Only the shepherd refers to her as his sister. He saw her as a relationship, Solomon saw her as an object.</p>
<p>5:3-7 Abishag to Shepherd "I have taken off my dress, How can I put it on again? I have washed my feet, How can I dirty them again? "My beloved extended his hand through the opening, And my feelings were aroused for him. "I arose to open to my beloved; And my hands dripped with myrrh, And my fingers with liquid myrrh, On the handles of the bolt. "I opened to my beloved, But my beloved had turned away and had gone! My heart went out to him as he spoke. I searched for him but I did not find him; I called him but he did not answer me. "The watchmen who make the rounds in the city found me, They struck me and wounded me; The guardsmen of the walls took away my shawl from me."</p>	<p>As a married woman, she jilts the shepherd and sends him away. Crushed in his longing for her, he reaches for her by extending his hand through the window into her bedroom. She chose Solomon over him and he gets the message and leaves forever. Unlike the first dream where she finds the shepherd, in this second dream she does not find him. However, when she sees how much he loves her, she snaps and rushes to the door to open up to him. This time the watchmen of the city of Jerusalem do not help her find the shepherd, because now she is married. Instead they beat and strip her naked and send her home. This harsh treatment was a reminder that adulterers are stoned under the Law of Moses.</p>
<p>5:8 Abishag to Maidens "I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, If you find my beloved, As to what you will tell him: For I am lovesick."</p>	<p><i>Spoken in an excited, panicky voice.</i> It is obvious from the second dream that Abishag is deeply in love with another man and not Solomon. Weeks earlier, when she first arrived at the palace, she told the maidens that she was in love with another man and they told her to leave the palace and look for him. (1:7-8) This is the third time (of four) that Abishag says "I adjure you". It serves as a dramatic conclusion to her emotions. This is the second time (of two) that she says she is "lovesick" (torn between two men, not puppy love).</p>

<p>5:9 Maidens to Abishag “What kind of beloved is your beloved, O most beautiful among women? What kind of beloved is your beloved, That thus you adjure us?””</p>	<p><i>Spoken in shock, disbelief but extreme curiosity.</i> The maidens ask her to describe this man she desires more than Solomon. This cannot be Solomon, because they know everything about him, including the way he treats women. Indeed, they have witnessed 140 previous weddings themselves. For them to ask "what is this mystery man like?" proves the love triangle interpretation.</p>
<p>5:10-16 Abishag to Maidens “My beloved is dazzling and ruddy, Outstanding among ten thousand. “His head is like gold, pure gold; His locks are like clusters of dates And black as a raven. “His eyes are like doves Beside streams of water, Bathed in milk, And reposed in their setting. “His cheeks are like a bed of balsam, Banks of sweetscented herbs; His lips are lilies Dripping with liquid myrrh. “His hands are rods of gold Set with beryl; His abdomen is carved ivory Inlaid with sapphires. “His legs are pillars of alabaster Set on pedestals of pure gold; His appearance is like Lebanon Choice as the cedars. “His mouth is full of sweetness. And he is wholly desirable. This is my beloved and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.”</p>	<p><i>Just like at the king's dinner table when her perfume filled the room, she clasps her hands together on her chest and describes the shepherd in dreamy passionate excitement.</i> The maidens want her to describe him physically to them, so she does. Notice she describes his head, hair, eyes, cheeks, lips, hands and legs. Her description "My beloved is dazzling and ruddy, Outstanding among ten thousand." Is almost identical to ruddy (suntanned shepherd) David who had killed 10,000 philistines. A man breaks into a sweat over a photograph of a woman whose name he cares not to know. A woman needs to develop a relationship with a man. Indeed. A man's self-esteem is derived from his performance at work and the resulting possessions like a pretty wife, big house, sports car. It is well documented that a woman derives her self-esteem not from things but her relationship with a single man whose name she wears. In fact, most of her attention in describing the shepherd focuses on his face because those are the body parts fundamental to a relationship. Solomon is supposed to be the wisest man who ever lived, but when it came to understanding women, he was utterly clueless. Only at the end of his life, does he realize that his wives only married him for money, fame and power, because he never thought to offer them anything else. Solomon's rival, on the other hand was among the wisest men who ever lived. The shepherd understood that a woman needs a companion and a friend not a financier. She needs a co-parent who will help her raise their children, not a daycare. She is more interested in his face than his physique. She evaluated her life with the two men and realized she would be sitting in her rich cloths in the harem, eating caviar, dividing Solomon's attention with 140 other women while raising her kids as a single mom in a state daycare. David actually instituted an officer of education for his children and Solomon likely continued with this tradition. “Jehiel the son of Hachmoni tutored the king's sons.” (1 Chron 27:32)"A woman needs attention like the flowers need the sun, without that attention, a woman feels undone" (Let it shine, Olivia N. John)</p>
<p>6:1 Maidens to Abishag “Where has your beloved gone, O most beautiful among women? Where has your beloved turned, That we may seek him with you?”</p>	<p><i>Spoken with curious excitement.</i> The maidens ask Abishag where her mystery man is and offer to help her find him. They must be in shock that she would choose any man over Solomon, but they must have fainted when they learn he is a poor shepherd of sheep.</p>

<p>6:2-3</p> <p>Abishag to Maidens</p> <p>"My beloved has gone down to his garden, To the beds of balsam, To pasture his flock in the gardens And gather lilies. "I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine, He who pastures his flock among the lilies."</p>	<p><i>Spoken with longing and excitement.</i></p> <p>Again she tells them her mystery man is a common peasant shepherd. For the most beautiful girl in Israel, to dump the richest, wisest king in the world for a shepherd must have been a shock. Solomon had 1000 girls knocking at his door to marry him. <i>Only once did the shepherd have 10 girls banging at his door at one time... and then he let them out!</i> On a serious note, the shepherd was likely a muscular, fit, handsome young man in top physical shape. From 1406 BC to the time of David, Israel was confined to live in the very hilly and mountainous regions of Canaan. The coastal plains were controlled by the Philistines. The shepherd would be doing a "workout class" every single day he worked as he moved with the sheep in the steep hills for pasture.</p>
<p>Scene 11</p> <p>6:4-7:9</p>	<p>Later that same day, in this final palace scene, Abishag gives Solomon her answer, first with her eyes, then with her feet. It was a formal assembly and all the queens were present in the room. The maidens are also present and already know she is going to tell Solomon NO. The queens read Abishag's hesitation for her body language and jump in to help the king to get her to say yes. This gripping climax to the story is packed with excitement and tension. While the crowd is whispering how lovely a wife she will make for Solomon it was the Shulammitte who "brings the house down" in shock when she tells the king no and walks out, leaving every one inside stunned. No woman had ever said no to the rich spoiled playboy king.</p>
<p>6:4-9</p> <p>Solomon to Abishag</p> <p>"You are as beautiful as Tirzah, my darling, As lovely as Jerusalem, As awesome as an army with banners. "Turn your eyes away from me, For they have confused me; Your hair is like a flock of goats That have descended from Gilead. "Your teeth are like a flock of ewes Which have come up from their washing, All of which bear twins, And not one among them has lost her young. "Your temples are like a slice of a pomegranate Behind your veil. "There are sixty queens and eighty concubines, And maidens without number; But my dove, my perfect one, is unique: She is her mother's only daughter; She is the pure child of the one who bore her.</p>	<p><i>Although Solomon was speaking to the girl, his bold and confident tone was more to impress his formal audience who were watching, listening intensively and taking notes to try these lines on girls they wanted to impress.</i></p> <p>Tirzah is 37 km directly south of Shunem and 53 km due north of Jerusalem. The three cities are in direct line of travel and Solomon would have stayed the night in Tirzah once he picked up Abishag in Shunem to bring her to his palace. In 960 BC, Tirzah was the second most beautiful city in Israel, next to Jerusalem. Abishag would have visited Tirzah many times and Solomon knew she would be familiar with the place. Shortly after Solomon died in 924 BC, Jeroboam chose Tirzah as his capital city of the 10 northern tribes. As soon as Solomon makes eye contact with the girl he knows he is in trouble and that something is wrong. As Solomon begins to recite his boring and shallow praise of her body, her eyes continue to signal something is wrong and he tells her to look away. Solomon has had a lot of experience with women, and he does know that a woman's eyes don't lie unless she is a money grubbing con artist. But even his previous 140 gold diggers never looked at him the way Abishag is now looking at him! He notices that the sparkle and excitement in her eyes from just a few days ago is gone. Now in such a formal setting it would be strange for him to tell her to look away and then continue reciting his well-worn rhyming couplets. More likely, the Holy Spirit is inserting for Solomon as he writes the book, his secret thoughts as she stood there in silence. He remembers that she "left him standing at the altar" and how embarrassing this must have been for him and his guests. You would think Solomon's 140 wives must have been cut deep when he told the newcomer that she was better than them all. But evidently it didn't bother them and they join in praising her.</p>

<p>6:9-10</p> <p>Queens to Abishag</p> <p>The maidens saw her and called her blessed, The queens and the concubines also, and they praised her, saying “Who is this that grows like the dawn, As beautiful as the full moon, As pure as the sun, As awesome as an army with banners?”</p>	<p><i>Queens and concubines likely sang this rehearsed song they wrote for her.</i></p> <p>They sensed things were not going well, from Abishag's body language and they jump in to help the king get her to say yes.</p>
<p>6:11-12</p> <p>Solomon to his audience “I went down to the orchard of nut trees To see the blossoms of the valley, To see whether the vine had budded Or the pomegranates had bloomed. “Before I was aware, my soul set me Over the chariots of my noble people.”</p>	<p><i>Spoken in rapturous passion and excitement with a sense of giddiness.</i> At this point, Solomon knows he is in trouble. He now explains to the audience how he found Abishag while he was inspecting his royal vineyards.</p> <p>“Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon” (8:11) This is just south of Shunem by 18-23 km. (see details above) Her family were likely the tenant farmers who had the contract with Solomon. So this is a very realistic place for where Abishag was working. When Solomon went to collect his rent, or just to take a look, it was then he noticed Abishag and was struck by her natural beauty, unkept and sunburnt. Regardless of where Baal-hamon is located, she was working there just a few weeks prior. This 2 week old memory of how Solomon was struck by her appearance reinforced how he viewed her as an object not a person. Today a guy will say of a pretty girl “<i>she is hot</i>”. In the 1970's it was “<i>she's a bird</i>”. In the 1940's it was, “<i>isn't she a kick in the head</i>”. In the 1920's it was, “<i>she is drop dead gorgeous</i>”. In 967 BC the phrase was, “<i>my soul set me over my chariots</i>”. As Solomon himself said, “<i>there is nothing new under the sun</i>”. She is repulsed and offended and starts to walk out of the palace.</p>
<p>6:13</p> <p>Queens to Abishag</p> <p>“Come back, come back, O Shulammite; Come back, come back, that we may gaze at you!”</p>	<p><i>Spoken loudly but with a sulking tone.</i></p> <p>The queens see things are turning into a disaster and they push the emergency button and all scream out for her to stay because Solomon is not the only one who likes to look at her. They like to look at her too! In this way they are trying to counter her feelings of being a mere sex object for Solomon to look at. They certainly do not view her as a sex object in any way at all, being women, yet they want to look at her.</p> <p>While it is clear that Shulammite is identical to Shunammite (a resident of the city of Shunem) it is also possible that she was referred to as a “Solomoness” (Shulammite). They are not even calling her by her real name, but a pet name like “Fifi”, “Sugar” or “Buttercup”.</p>

<p>6:13 Abishag to Queens “Why should you gaze at the Shulammite, As at the dance of Mahanaim?”</p>	<p><i>Spoken loudly but with a tone of anger.</i> While she knows Solomon can't keep his eyes off her body, she asks why the women want to look at her. She invokes the imagery of the apparently famous dances at Mahanaim. Although there is no record of dances ever having taken place here, there were yearly dances at Shiloh dating back to 1290 BC (Judges 21:19-21). Mahanaim did have a rich and central history to Israel. The place was named by Jacob when he was visited by angels. Mahanaim literally means, "two camps": Jacob's camp and "God's camp" were located in the same place. (Gen 32:2) Later Mahanaim became a Levitical city under Joshua and a capital city of Saul's son Ish-bosheth and an army base by David against Absalom (2 Sam 17:24). It was then destroyed by Shishak in the fifth year of Rehoboam's reign in 926 BC. While the alternate reading in SOS 6:13 is sometimes given as "dance of two armies/companies/people", it is preferable to simply translate it as "Dance of Mahanaim". Either way, Abishag was valued by the queens as entertainment for their personal enjoyment. In this way they differed not from Solomon in spite of their twisted logic. As noted above, Shulammite is the feminine of "Solomon", meaning, one of Solomon's girls or "the Solomoness". This likely explains why she refers to herself in the third person in 6:13 "Why do you want to look at the Shulammite" rather than saying, "Why do you want to look at me". It was a clever play on words, but just another example of how she had become a depersonalized object in that they didn't even call her by her real name. She was "the Shulammite" from Shunem.</p>
<p>7:1-5 Queens to Abishag “How beautiful are your feet in sandals, O prince's daughter! The curves of your hips are like jewels, The work of the hands of an artist. “Your navel is like a round goblet Which never lacks mixed wine; Your belly is like a heap of wheat Fenced about with lilies. “Your two breasts are like two fawns, Twins of a gazelle. “Your neck is like a tower of ivory, Your eyes like the pools in Heshbon By the gate of Bathrabbim; Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon, Which faces toward Damascus. “Your head crowns you like Carmel, And the flowing locks of your head are like purple threads; The king is captivated by your tresses.”</p>	<p><i>Spoken excitedly with a sense of nervousness & hope.</i> They succeeded in stopping Abishag from leaving as she stops and listens to the queens as they answer her question. Note that whereas Solomon always starts at the head, the queens start at her feet. However, in order to help Solomon get the girl, they begin to describe her in a sensual way. It may be that the body parts they focus on are the very ones that are highlighted at the dance in Mahanaim, which may have been an ancient version of the modern sensuous "belly dance". They end by saying, "The king is captivated by your tresses" and so are we! Don't you want to be the center of attention and be famous? The Beautiful Shulammite had lived her entire life as the center of every man's attention and she was looking for more. Her wisdom is seen in that she knew she would soon be replaced by another palace beauty. Indeed, Solomon went on to marry another 860 more women.</p>

<p>7:6-9</p> <p>Solomon to Abishag</p> <p>"How beautiful and how delightful you are, My love, with all your charms! "Your stature is like a palm tree, And your breasts are like its clusters. "I said, 'I will climb the palm tree, I will take hold of its fruit stalks.' Oh, may your breasts be like clusters of the vine, And the fragrance of your breath like apples, And your mouth like the best wine!" "It goes down smoothly for my beloved, Flowing gently through the lips of those who fall asleep."</p>	<p><i>Spoken with emboldened confidence like a hungry man about to eat a meal. Solomon tries to kiss her, but she walks out of the palace, leaving him "standing at the altar" humiliated and embarrassed. No other woman has ever said no.</i></p> <p>Abishag was walking out, the Queens already stepped in to help and now Solomon is at the end of his rope and gives it one last try in a desperate effort to win the girl. Solomon salivates over the girl like a hungry dog. In describing Abishag, Solomon skips her face, eyes, teeth, hair or feet and, focuses solely and intensely on her breasts in a rather direct, even vulgar metaphor. It's nothing she hasn't heard many times before and it doesn't interest her. She thought a king would have more class and be more romantic. Is this the man she left the shepherd for? She now realized the whole thing is a mistake.</p> <p>Solomon tries to kiss Abishag: He finally focuses on her mouth and may have moved towards her to kiss her but she refuses and walks out. So we finish where we began. At the beginning of the song when she first entered the palace a week earlier, Abishag wanted to kiss Solomon in 1:2: "<i>May he kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! For your love is better than wine.</i>" Now Solomon wants to kiss the girl so he tells her: "your mouth is like the best wine!" His reference to her kisses being like wine may in fact remind her of the stupid things she said to Solomon when he gave her wine to drink in his "wine house" at the banquet. The circle of the story is now complete. Oh how Abishag feels like a fool for leaving the shepherd for such a shallow dolt as Solomon. Oh how she is embarrassed for swooning after Solomon like a school girl having a crush on the most popular football player in school who turns out to be worthless. With all her experience with men, how could she actually end up in the situation where she now finds herself? She must escape.</p>
<p>7:9-10</p> <p>Abishag to Solomon</p> <p>"It goes down smoothly for my beloved, Flowing gently through the lips of those who fall asleep. "I am my beloved's, And his desire is for me." (Song of Solomon 7:9–10)</p>	<p><i>Spoken quietly but with intensity.</i></p> <p>These are the last words she speaks to Solomon before she walks out. Solomon had just described how kissing her was like drinking the best wine. She replies, indeed, when she kisses the shepherd good night and they both go to their separate homes, he enjoys and cherishes that kiss until he falls asleep. What a beautiful and romantic thing to say in contrast to Solomon's crass allusion to her as a palm tree. She finally finds some agreement with Solomon that her kisses are sweet. She bluntly tells Solomon that her kisses are going to be enjoyed by another man, not him. It's over. First she signals with her eyes, then her feet as she tries to leave the palace and finally now she tells him no. She will marry another man.</p> <p>Like a bride who runs from the groom when the preacher asks her to say "I Do" in a modern wedding, she leaves Solomon standing there stunned in a huge audience of his Queens, maidens and public officials. Someone might have been heard whispering, "That was awkward". Only now at the end of Solomon's life, as he write the Song of Songs, does the Holy Spirit reveal to him why the Maidens were the only ones in the room who were not surprised.</p>

Scene 12 7:10-8:4	This is the last scene in the palace. She is back in her room with the maidens. She tells them how she feels about the Shepherd one last time.
<p>7:10-8:4</p> <p>Abishag to Maidens/Shepherd</p> <p>““I am my beloved’s, And his desire is for me. “Come, my beloved, let us go out into the country, Let us spend the night in the villages. “Let us rise early and go to the vineyards; Let us see whether the vine has budded And its blossoms have opened, And whether the pomegranates have bloomed. There I will give you my love. “The mandrakes have given forth fragrance; And over our doors are all choice fruits, Both new and old, Which I have saved up for you, my beloved. “Oh that you were like a brother to me Who nursed at my mother’s breasts. If I found you outdoors, I would kiss you; No one would despise me, either. “I would lead you and bring you Into the house of my mother, who used to instruct me; I would give you spiced wine to drink from the juice of my pomegranates. “Let his left hand be under my head And his right hand embrace me.” “I want you to swear, O daughters of Jerusalem, Do not arouse or awaken my love Until she pleases.”” (Song of Solomon 7:10–8:4)</p>	<p><i>Spoken naturally with a tone of excitement.</i></p> <p>Notice she starts in the third person ("his desire is for me" rather than "your desire is for me", moves to the second ("let us go"), then back to the third at the end ("Let his left hand be under my head" rather than "Let your left hand be under my head). At the end, it is clear she is still talking to the maidens in Jerusalem while the shepherd is back home in Shunem.</p> <p>There is a lot of information in this monologue. Notice that she envisions her relationship with the shepherd as spending time together alone in the villages. This cannot be Solomon because like the President of the USA, he is always surrounded by people to protect him. Neither would Solomon be interested in going to her home. While Solomon wanted to <i>do things to her</i>, the shepherd wanted to <i>do things with her</i>. As we saw in 4:7-15 the Shepherd had already been doing those silly things as an excuse to spend time together. Silly things like going on early morning hikes just to see if the flowers have bloomed or going pollywog hunting or ice skating on a frozen pond under an eclipsing moon or cuddling on a bench in a park and counting the autumn leaves as they fall. Solomon wanted to spend a few minutes with her and the shepherd wanted to spend the rest of his life with her.</p> <p>Mandrakes are an aphrodisiac used by barren Rachel in Genesis 30:14-22 which seemed to allow her to conceive. Abishag tells the maidens she wants to have a family with him. Remember he has already said to her, “A garden locked is my sister, my bride, A rock garden locked, a spring sealed up. “Your shoots are an orchard of pomegranates With choice fruits, henna with nard plants,” (Song of Solomon 4:12-13). Basically she is saying she is ready to marry him and start a family.</p> <p>She feels as close to him as a brother. The Shepherd could easily pass for one of her brothers. Because sex represents a tiny fraction of actual married life, a brother and sister growing up together is very close to what actual married life is like. So if you want to know what marriage is like, take a close look at your relationship with your siblings. If you cannot get along with your brother or sister, you won't be able to get along with a husband or wife. She tells the maidens that she would love to be seen kissing the lowly shepherd more than king Solomon even though they will say, "Look who she is kissing, when she could be kissing Solomon". This proves the love triangle interpretation because she would never feel despised for kissing a king. She had already told the maidens in her first dream she wanted to consummate her marriage (stage two, see above) and to bring "him to my mother’s house, into the room of her who conceived me.” Now she repeats this a second time by saying: "I would lead you and bring you Into the house of my mother".</p> <p>Twice she says, “Let his left hand be under my head and his right hand embrace me.” In 2:6 she said this to Solomon. Here in 8:3 she says it to the Shepherd.</p>

	<p>"my mother who used to instruct me". Jewish mothers specifically "home schooled" their daughters in the "art of love". If the girl didn't bleed, she was stoned in the morning as a harlot. They discussed in great detail what to do and what not to do on their consummation night. Contrast this to the modern, "they will figure it out" approach today.</p> <p>Abishag leaves the palace and heads home to marry the Shepherd. How surprised the shepherd will be. He sits heartbroken over being dumped by her, but she will make it all right and turn his sorrow into joy.</p> <p>Abishag heads home for Shunem.</p>
<p>Scene 13 8:5-12</p>	<p>Homecoming to Shunem: Abishag has found the shepherd and she is bringing him home to her parent's house. As they enter town the two lovers are talking about old memories. Abishag needs to repair the damage she caused by breaking the shepherds heart. First, she reminds him of the day she first came to visit him, signaling she had chosen him as a boyfriend. Second, she promises never to make him jealous again and he asks her to be a seal on his heart as a pledge.</p>
<p>8:5 Townfolk to Audience "Who is this coming up from the wilderness leaning on her beloved?"</p>	<p><i>Spoken with curiosity.</i></p> <p>In an exact echo of when Solomon was entering Jerusalem in his procession on the day he proposed to her, the town's people of Shunem notice with equal curiosity Abishag and wonder who she is leaning on? Notice that townsfolk of Jerusalem marveled at Solomon's pomp and wealth but here the remarkable and noteworthy thing was the way she was in love with this man and the way they snuggled as they walked together. Notice also that the Jerusalem townsfolk said, "Who is this" (3:6) and go on to describe the wealth of Solomon in material possessions but the townsfolk of Shunem say, "WHO is this" and describe their relationship devoid of material possessions. They can tell she chose love over money.</p>

8:5-7

Abishag to Shepherd

"Beneath the apple tree I **awakened** you [masculine gender]; There your mother was in labor with you [masculine gender], There she was in labor and gave you [masculine gender] birth. **Put me like a seal over your heart, Like a seal on your arm.** For love is as strong as death, Jealousy is as severe as Sheol; Its flashes are flashes of fire, **The very flame of YHWH.** "Many waters cannot quench love, Nor will rivers overflow it; If a man were to give all the riches of his house for love, It would be utterly despised."

Spoken quietly but earnestly to the shepherd

As the town folk watch them walk by, Abishag heals the shepherd's broken heart with her soothing words. Remember, he had proposed to her, just before she chose to dump him for Solomon and ride with him back to Jerusalem in his royal procession. She has some work to do in order to make things right again.

Note: Many commentators mistakenly have the shepherd speaking these words (8:5-7) to the girl, rather than the other way around. This error is caused by failing to notice that the person being addressed is masculine gender in the original Hebrew.

First, she tells him that she was the one who chose him, "I awakened you". In other words, she noticed him first and chose to make first contact with him as a boyfriend. Apparently she would visit him often at his house and the two would sit and talk under the apple tree in his back yard until she caused him to fall in love with her. Throughout the animal kingdom it is the female who chooses the male, not the other way around. It is no different with humans. The males compete for a female against other males with fancy plumages and complex dances.

The work "awake" is used 7 times in the song.

- Four times: "Do not arouse or **awaken** my love Until she pleases."
- One time where she awakens the wind to send her perfume to awaken the shepherd's desire for her: "**Awake**, O north *wind*, Make my garden breathe out *fragrance*".
- Once when his love for her had "**awakened** her" in her bed at night so she could not sleep.
- Finally here, she reminds the shepherd that she had initially "**awakened**" his love under the apple tree in his back yard when she dropped in for a surprise visit.

She is in damage control mode:

First she fixes his broken heart. She reminds the shepherd that she chose him in the past when she awakened his interest in her and she now feels the same in the present. We have a picture of her visiting the shepherd's house with his mother bringing cookies and milk to them as they talked under the apple tree. She reminds him that it was her who made the first move by knocking on his door unannounced one day. He would remember this day of joy when he comprehended that the prettiest girl in the world wanted to be his girlfriend. This memory heals his heart. Oh how many times he wanted her back and wished she had never left him for Solomon.

Second she repairs the jealousy and betrayal he feels. She betrayed him by dumping him for Solomon. Her words indicate she had obviously made him very jealous of Solomon. This is seen in her dream back in Jerusalem when he knocked on her door to "Awaken her" and put his hand through the opening. She knew exactly how much he loved her and how she had hurt him. Now she says, "Put me like a seal (signet) over your heart, Like a seal on your arm." His heart is broken and she asks him to wrap her around his heart as a promise to never make him jealous again. She is pledging to be his alone for the rest of their lives. These seals were stamped into soft clay then left to dry and attached to letters as certification of the identity of the sender, while keeping the contents private. Seals were an outward sign of an inward

	<p>communication. The seal on his heart was her inner promise to him and the seal on his arm was the equivalent of a wedding ring, as an outward sign to others she was his alone.</p> <p>This is the only place in the book that God is mentioned by name. "flame of the Lord" is literally, "flame of YHWH". The allusion is obvious. Jealously in human love can trigger rage the same way making God jealous by worshipping other gods will bring eternal judgement. "Wrath is fierce and anger is a flood, But who can stand before jealousy?" (Proverbs 27:4) "It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (Hebrews 10:31)</p> <p>Finally, as they walk together, she has a story to tell him about what happened in Jerusalem, if he will just listen. The entire story of the Song of Solomon is what she wants to tell him.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>"Speaking of the devil. Well, here I am. May I come in? Feelin' like a lost and lonely lamb, May I come in? Don't slam the door. Before you hear my story. Please let me stay till I can say I am, oh, so sorry. Sorry that I ran out and lost my mind, with someone new. Carelessly I left my heart behind, It's still with you. What can I do? I am standing on your welcome mat. But the welcome's wearing thin. Speakin' of the fool I've been. May I please come in?"</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">(May I come in, Carol Welsman)</p> <p>The story she wants him to hear is simple. She considered both men, chose him over King Solomon. She chose his true love over all the wealth of Solomon. That would make him happy. How many guys can say his girlfriend dumped a king to be with him?</p>
<p>8:8-9</p> <p>Townfolk to Abishag</p> <p>"We have a little sister, And she has no breasts; What shall we do for our sister On the day when she is spoken for? "If she is a wall, We will build on her a battlement of silver; But if she is a door, We will barricade her with planks of cedar."</p>	<p><i>Spoken loudly as the couple walk by the audience who have gathered to see them.</i></p> <p>Abishag is famous throughout Israel as the girl who nursed King David, cost another king his head when he asked Solomon if he could marry her and then chose to marry a local boy, known to all the townfolk over king Solomon. As she has been walking and talking to the shepherd, they understand the wisdom of this girl. They want what she has for their younger sister. The wall represents virginal and the door represents promiscuous. Notice a chaste girl is allowed to show off her body, but a whore is covered in sackcloth. If parents can trust that their daughters will say, "No" to fornication, drinking, club dancing, drugs or texting while driving, then they will be given huge freedoms very easily. Parents, who cannot trust their daughters to exercise self-control, restrict their freedoms and constantly check up on them. They are suspicious, worry all night and pray they won't get hurt. <i>What kind of daughter are you?</i></p>

<p>8:10</p> <p>Abishag to Townsfolk</p> <p>"I was a wall, and my breasts were like towers; Then I became in his eyes as one who finds peace."</p>	<p><i>Spoken confidently but quietly.</i></p> <p>Abishag had a body that caused men to follow her around like mindless Muppets. She told them her secret to finding a good man, was to not have sex with him until they are married. Notice this created a peace in the relationship because he was committed to her and wanted to actually marry her. Men know that if a woman is willing to violate God's law with fornication before they are married, they will violate God's law with adultery after they are married. When a woman is chaste with a man before marriage, she will be faithful to him after marriage and this brings him peace of mind. Notice what she said, her chastity brought him peace and trust! For the godly woman her breasts are her tower of strength but for the fornicator her breasts are her weakness. So many women today make this mistake. Common-law is an even bigger mistake because the guy has an "<i>equivalent to marriage</i>" relationship with zero commitment. It's the woman's fault when she says yes, and they shoot themselves in the foot. The Shulammitte was pure on her wedding night. Single girls need to ask themselves when they are alone with a man if their breasts are towers of strength and resistance or the vulnerable weak spot a man can take advantage of as a point of first contact that leads to fornication.</p>
<p>8:11-12</p> <p>Abishag to Audience</p> <p>"Solomon had a vineyard at Baalhamon; He entrusted the vineyard to caretakers. Each one was to bring a thousand shekels of silver for its fruit. "My very own vineyard is at my disposal; The thousand shekels are for you, Solomon, And two hundred are for those who take care of its fruit."</p>	<p><i>Spoken in a preachy narrative voice.</i></p> <p>Here we have Abishag's final answer to Solomon. She may have actually told this to him just before she walked out and is now retelling it for the audience. This is the vineyard owned by Solomon just south of Shunem. It is likely that her family was the "caretakers" and that is why her brothers sent her there to work. The contract was likely granted to the highest bidder and it stated they must pay 1000 shekels to Solomon and another 200 shekels to the workers. They only made a profit when they sold more than 1200 shekels of fruit. This is a large operation. Her brother's anger in 1:6 may have been related to her time away nursing David which shorthanded the family's ability to be profitable in their contract with Solomon. This is the vineyard where Solomon began to drool when he saw the sunburnt peasant worker. (6:11-12)</p> <p>The play on words is clever. Just as Solomon owns his vineyard and rents it out to the highest bidder, so too she owns her body and can give it to the highest bidder. She says that materialistic Solomon gets her money, but the shepherd who truly loved her gets her body. Really this is what the whole story is about: Who gets the girl's body? In the end she gives it to the one who truly loved her. Given that the book was written by Solomon in the last year of his life (924 BC), at a point when he had gone on and married 1000 women, the Holy Spirit may be pointing out the metaphor between Solomon getting 1000 shekels (wives) for his vineyard (body) but the shepherd gets only one.</p> <p>It's a dramatic self-rebuke that shamed Solomon which likely caused him to pause and say, "Was I really that shallow 36 years ago?". In this way Abishag was wiser than Solomon for she chose wisely.</p>

	Keep in mind, that in the theatre, she says 8:11-12 to the audience either as a flashback to her actual words in the Palace or a summary of what she had learned from her life experience hob-knobbing with the rich and famous. Her message to the poor townsfolk was choose love over money. News of why she dumped the king for a popper would spread throughout the town so that next time they saw her kiss the shepherd they would praise her instead of despise her.
Scene 14 8:13-14	A few days later the shepherd makes Abishag his wife by fulfilling stage one by negotiation and signing the contract of marriage (ketubbah) with Abishag's father or guardian. (see above) Now that the paper work is complete, the shepherd is now married (known as betrothed) to Abishag. It may takes months (or in Jacob's case 7 years) for him to satisfy the financial requirements of the contract. Once her father is satisfied, he gives the OK for the couple to proceed to stage 2: consummation in the bedroom of the bride's mother. With a green light from her parents, the shepherd calls out and asks if she has completed all the preparations. Later that night there would be a wedding feast (stage 3) in the home of the shepherd, which he had prepared.
8:13 Shepherd to Abishag "O you who sit in the gardens, My companions are listening for your voice- Let me hear it!"	<p><i>Spoken with joyful excitement.</i></p> <p>With marriage contract in hand, he calls out to his new wife. The companions of the groom echoes the words of John the Baptist: "He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom (the shepherd companions), who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. So this joy of mine has been made full." (John 3:29) This verse specifically speaks of when the marriage would be consummated and the witness of the groom, standing outside the bedroom listening for the confirmation from the groom, that she was a virgin. The virginity cloth could be given to the witnesses, then the father of the bride for safekeeping in case the groom ever made a false charge in the future that she was not a virgin.</p> <p>The three stage marriage custom of the Israelites has never changed from the time of Abraham down to the time of Christ.</p> <p>Here in the 967 BC, the shepherd announces he has met the conditions of the marriage contract by paying the dowry (Exodus 22:16-17) to her family and raised the bride price (50/100 shekels silver: Deut 22:19,29) which is a penalty paid to the bride's family if he divorces her for no cause or takes on a second wife. This condition was often written into the contract by fathers as a way to protect their daughters. Given what Abishag has been through with Solomon, you can bet this condition was in the contract!</p> <p>So the shepherd has met all the conditions of the ketubbah and is ready to consummate the marriage. He has also made preparations at his house for a wedding feast (stage 3). He calls out to Abishag his wife, announcing that he is ready and he has his witnesses waiting to meet her in her parent's bedroom.</p>

<p>8:14</p> <p>Abishag to Shepherd</p> <p>"Hurry, my beloved, And be like a gazelle or a young stag On the mountains of spices."</p>	<p><i>Spoken with joyful excitement.</i></p> <p>Before the shepherd could go to her father to sign the ketubbah, Abishag had to tell her father that she wanted to marry the shepherd. Once she has told her dad, (and knowing the shepherd will quickly come to sign the contract) Abishag would launch into "consummation night mode" with preparations for the event. She would prepare food for up to 20 witnesses (usually 10 for the bride and 10 for the groom. cf. parable of the ten virgins were the bride's witnesses), family and friends. The mother would embroider the names of the bride and groom on the virginity cloth. "It was not uncommon within Jewish and Arab communities in the Middle East, until recent times, for the 'wedding cloth' to be displayed by the proud parents of the bride" WBC, Deut. 25:15) It was kept by the bride's father in case the groom ever accused her of not being a virgin. While the bride and groom are in the bedroom located on the second floor, the guests are having a party on the main floor of the same house. The cloth would be handed out the bedroom door to the witnesses and given to the father for safekeeping. So the Shepherd announces he has signed the contract and satisfied her father's conditions and he calls out to Abishag that he is ready to consummate the wedding and has his witnesses waiting to hear that she has completed all preparations at her house. Abishag replies: "Yes, everything is prepared, come to my parent's house." This is the day she has been dreaming about:</p> <p>"Scarcely had I left them When I found him whom my soul loves; I held on to him and would not let him go Until I had brought him to my mother's house, And into the room of her who conceived me." (Song of Solomon 3:4)</p> <p>The bride and groom would then walk in a procession to the groom's house for a wedding feast he has prepared. (Stage three: John 2;)</p> <p>And they lived happily ever after.</p> <p>The End.</p>
Playwright by God; Screenplay by Steve Rudd ©2013	

Printable cast speaking parts:

Below is a printout of just the speaking parts of the Song of Solomon. This is an aid that makes it easy to do the play in a public setting with a standard church audience where the cast members read their parts "from the pews". You can either print this out and hand it out to everyone, or print one copy out and cut the parts into strips and give the strips to those speaking the various parts. I recommend getting the kids to make 10 craft paddles with the pictures of each cast member glued on. The cast photos are above. You can save them individually to your hard drive by clicking on the photo then right mouse click, "save file as" to your desktop. Then insert each photo into a word document and scale full size and print two copies!

Here is how it works: When Abishag is talking to Solomon, the person speaking Abishag holds up the "Abishag" paddle in the air (with the cast photo glued to both sides so everyone in front or behind and see it) and person holding the Solomon paddle holds it up in the air. This greatly assists in communicating not only who is speaking, but who she is speaking to.



Scene 1**1:2-4**

1:2a

Abishag to Maidens

"May he kiss me with the kisses of his mouth!"

1:2b-4a

Abishag to Solomon

"For your love is better than wine. "Your oils have a pleasing fragrance, Your name is like purified oil; Therefore the maidens love you. "Draw me after you and let us run together!"

1:4b

Abishag to Audience

The king has brought me into his chambers."

1:4c

Maidens and Abishag to Solomon

"We will rejoice in you and be glad; We will extol your love more than wine. Rightly do they love you."

Scene 2**1:5-8**

1:5-6

Abishag to Maidens

"I am black but lovely, O daughters of Jerusalem, Like the tents of Kedar, Like the curtains of Solomon.
 "Do not stare at me because I am swarthy, For the sun has burned me. My mother's sons were angry with me; They made me caretaker of the vineyards, But I have not taken care of my own vineyard."

1:7

Abishag to Shepherd

"Tell me, O you whom my soul loves, Where do you pasture your flock, Where do you make it lie down at noon? For why should I be like one who veils herself Beside the flocks of your companions?"

1:8

Maidens to Abishag

"If you yourself do not know, Most beautiful among women, Go forth on the trail of the flock And pasture your young goats By the tents of the shepherds."

Scene 3**1:9-11**

1:9-10

Solomon to Abishag

"To me, my darling, you are like My mare among the chariots of Pharaoh. "Your cheeks are lovely with ornaments, Your neck with strings of beads."

1:11

Maidens to Abishag

"We will make for you ornaments of gold With beads of silver."

Scene 4**1:12- 2:7**

1:12

Abishag to the audience

"While the king was at his table, My perfume gave forth its fragrance."

1:13-14

Abishag muses to herself about Shunem and the Shepherd

"My beloved is to me a pouch of myrrh Which lies all night between my breasts. "My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blossoms In the vineyards of Engedi."

1:15

Solomon to Abishag interrupting her day dream

"How beautiful you are, my darling, How beautiful you are! Your eyes are like doves."

1:16-17

Abishag to Solomon

"How handsome you are, my beloved, And so pleasant! Indeed, our couch is luxuriant! "The beams of our houses are cedars, Our rafters, cypresses."

2:1-2

Solomon to Abishag

"I am the rose of Sharon, The lily of the valleys." "Like a lily among the thorns, So is my darling among the maidens."

2:3-7

Abishag to Solomon

"Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest, So is my beloved among the young men (literally "sons", no indication of age). In his shade I took great delight and sat down, And his fruit was sweet to

my taste. "He has brought me to his banquet hall (lit house of wine), And his banner over me is love.

"Sustain me with raisin cakes, Refresh me with apples, Because I am lovesick. "Let his left hand be under my head And his right hand embrace me." "I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, By the gazelles or by the hinds of the field, That you do not arouse or awaken my love Until she pleases."

Scene 5**2:8-17**

2:8-9

Abishag to the Audience

"Listen! My beloved! Behold, he is coming, Climbing on the mountains, Leaping on the hills! "My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag. Behold, he is standing behind our wall, He is looking through the windows, He is peering through the lattice."

2:10-14

Shepherd to Abishag

"My beloved responded and said to me, 'Arise, my darling, my beautiful one, And come along. 'For behold, the winter is past, The rain is over and gone. 'The flowers have already appeared in the land; The time has arrived for pruning the vines, And the voice of the turtledove has been heard in our land. 'The fig tree has ripened its figs, And the vines in blossom have given forth their fragrance. Arise, my darling, my beautiful one, And come along!' " "O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, In the secret place of the steep pathway, Let me see your form, Let me hear your voice; For your voice is sweet, And your form is lovely."

2:15-17

Abishag to Shepherd

"Catch the foxes for us, The little foxes that are ruining the vineyards, While our vineyards are in blossom." "My beloved is mine, and I am his; He pastures his flock among the lilies. "Until the cool of the day when the shadows flee away, Turn, my beloved, and be like a gazelle Or a young stag on the mountains of Bether."

Scene 6**3:1-5**

3:1-5

Abishag to Maidens

"On my bed night after night I sought him Whom my soul loves; I sought him but did not find him. 'I must arise now and go about the city; In the streets and in the squares I must seek him whom my soul loves.' I sought him but did not find him. "The watchmen who make the rounds in the city found me, And I said, 'Have you seen him whom my soul loves?' "Scarcely had I left them When I found him whom my soul loves; I held on to him and would not let him go Until I had brought him to my mother's house, And into the room of her who conceived me." "I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, By the gazelles or by the hinds of the field, That you will not arouse or awaken my love Until she pleases."

Scene 7**3:6-11**

3:6-11

Townfolk to Audience

"Who is this coming up from the wilderness Like columns of smoke, Perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, With all scented powders of the merchant? "Behold, it is the traveling couch of Solomon; Sixty mighty men around it, Of the mighty men of Israel. "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. "King Solomon has made for himself a sedan chair From the timber of Lebanon. "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. "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."

Scene 8**4:1-6**

4:1-5

Solomon to Abishag.

"How beautiful you are, my darling, How beautiful you are! Your eyes are like doves behind your veil; Your hair is like a flock of goats That have descended from Mount Gilead. "Your teeth are like a flock of newly shorn ewes Which have come up from their washing, All of which bear twins, And not one among them has lost her young. "Your lips are like a scarlet thread, And your mouth is lovely. Your temples are like a slice of a pomegranate Behind your veil. "Your neck is like the tower of David, Built with rows of stones On which are hung a thousand shields, All the round shields of the mighty men. "Your two breasts are like two fawns, Twins of a gazelle Which feed among the lilies."

4:6

Abishag to Solomon

"Until the cool of the day When the shadows flee away, I will go my way to the mountain of myrrh And to the hill of frankincense."

Scene 9**4:7-5:1**

4:7-15

Shepherd to Abishag

"You are altogether beautiful, my darling, And there is no blemish in you. "Come with me from Lebanon, my bride, May you come with me from Lebanon. Journey down from the summit of Amana, From the summit of Senir and Hermon, From the dens of lions, From the mountains of leopards. "You have made my heart beat faster, my sister, my bride; You have made my heart beat faster with a single glance of your eyes, With a single strand of your necklace. "How beautiful is your love, my sister, my bride! How much better is your love than wine, And the fragrance of your oils Than all kinds of spices! "Your lips, my bride, drip honey; Honey and milk are under your tongue, And the fragrance of your garments is like the fragrance of Lebanon. "A garden locked is my sister, my bride, A rock garden locked, a spring sealed up. "Your shoots are an orchard of pomegranates With choice fruits, henna with nard plants, Nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, With all the trees of frankincense, Myrrh and aloes, along with all the finest spices. "You are a garden spring, A well of fresh water, And streams flowing from Lebanon."

4:16

Abishag to Shepherd

"Awake, O north wind, And come, wind of the south; Make my garden breathe out fragrance, Let its spices be wafted abroad. May my beloved come into his garden And eat its choice fruits!"

5:1

Shepherd to Abishag

"I have come into my garden, my sister, my bride; I have gathered my myrrh along with my balsam. I have eaten my honeycomb and my honey; I have drunk my wine and my milk."

5:1

God to Abishag and Shepherd

"Eat, friends; Drink and imbibe deeply, O lovers."

Scene 10**5:2-6:3**

5:2

Abishag to Maidens

"I was asleep but my heart was awake. A voice! My beloved was knocking:

5:2

Shepherd to Abishag

'Open to me, my sister, my darling, My dove, my perfect one! For my head is drenched with dew, My locks with the damp of the night.'

5:3-7

Abishag to Shepherd

"I have taken off my dress, How can I put it on again? I have washed my feet, How can I dirty them again? "My beloved extended his hand through the opening, And my feelings were aroused for him. "I arose to open to my beloved; And my hands dripped with myrrh, And my fingers with liquid myrrh, On the handles of the bolt. "I opened to my beloved, But my beloved had turned away and had gone! My heart went out to him as he spoke. I searched for him but I did not find him; I called him but he did not answer me. "The watchmen who make the rounds in the city found me, They struck me and wounded me; The guardsmen of the walls took away my shawl from me."

5:8

Abishag to Maidens

"I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, If you find my beloved, As to what you will tell him: For I am lovesick."

5:9

Maidens to Abishag

"What kind of beloved is your beloved, O most beautiful among women? What kind of beloved is your beloved, That thus you adjure us?"

5:10-16

Abishag to Maidens

"My beloved is dazzling and ruddy, Outstanding among ten thousand. "His head is like gold, pure gold; His locks are like clusters of dates And black as a raven. "His eyes are like doves Beside streams of water, Bathed in milk, And reposed in their setting. "His cheeks are like a bed of balsam, Banks of sweet-scented herbs; His lips are lilies Dripping with liquid myrrh. "His hands are rods of gold Set with beryl; His abdomen is carved ivory Inlaid with sapphires. "His legs are pillars of alabaster Set on pedestals of pure gold; His appearance is like Lebanon Choice as the cedars. "His mouth is full of sweetness. And he is wholly desirable. This is my beloved and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem."

6:1

Maidens to Abishag

"Where has your beloved gone, O most beautiful among women? Where has your beloved turned, That we may seek him with you?"

6:2-3

Abishag to Maidens

"My beloved has gone down to his garden, To the beds of balsam, To pasture his flock in the gardens And gather lilies. "I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine, He who pastures his flock among the lilies."

Scene 11**6:4-7:9**

6:4-9

Solomon to Abishag

"You are as beautiful as Tirzah, my darling, As lovely as Jerusalem, As awesome as an army with banners. "Turn your eyes away from me, For they have confused me; Your hair is like a flock of goats That have descended from Gilead. "Your teeth are like a flock of ewes Which have come up from their washing, All of which bear twins, And not one among them has lost her young. "Your temples are like a slice of a pomegranate Behind your veil. "There are sixty queens and eighty concubines, And maidens without number; But my dove, my perfect one, is unique: She is her mother's only daughter; She is the pure child of the one who bore her.

6:9-10

Queens to Abishag

The maidens saw her and called her blessed, The queens and the concubines also, and they praised her, saying "'Who is this that grows like the dawn, As beautiful as the full moon, As pure as the sun, As awesome as an army with banners?'"

6:11-12

Solomon to his audience

"I went down to the orchard of nut trees To see the blossoms of the valley, To see whether the vine had budded Or the pomegranates had bloomed. "Before I was aware, my soul set me Over the chariots of my noble people."

6:13

Queens to Abishag

"Come back, come back, O Shulammitte; Come back, come back, that we may gaze at you!"

6:13

Abishag to Queens

"Why should you gaze at the Shulammitte, As at the dance of Mahanaim?"

7:1-5

Queens to Abishag

"How beautiful are your feet in sandals, O prince's daughter! The curves of your hips are like jewels, The work of the hands of an artist. "Your navel is like a round goblet Which never lacks mixed wine; Your belly is like a heap of wheat Fenced about with lilies. "Your two breasts are like two fawns, Twins of a gazelle. "Your neck is like a tower of ivory, Your eyes like the pools in Heshbon By the gate of Bathrabbim; Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon, Which faces toward Damascus. "Your head crowns you like Carmel, And the flowing locks of your head are like purple threads; The king is captivated by your tresses."

7:6-9

Solomon to Abishag

"How beautiful and how delightful you are, My love, with all your charms! "Your stature is like a palm tree, And your breasts are like its clusters. "I said, 'I will climb the palm tree, I will take hold of its fruit stalks.' Oh, may your breasts be like clusters of the vine, And the fragrance of your breath like apples, And your mouth like the best wine!" "It goes down smoothly for my beloved, Flowing gently through the lips of those who fall asleep."

7:9-10

Abishag to Solomon

"It goes down smoothly for my beloved, Flowing gently through the lips of those who fall asleep. "I am my beloved's, And his desire is for me." (Song of Solomon 7:9–10)

Scene 12**7:10-8:4**

7:10-8:4

Abishag to Maidens/Shepherd

"I am my beloved's, And his desire is for me. "Come, my beloved, let us go out into the country, Let us spend the night in the villages. "Let us rise early and go to the vineyards; Let us see whether the vine has budded And its blossoms have opened, And whether the pomegranates have bloomed. There I will give you my love. "The mandrakes have given forth fragrance; And over our doors are all choice fruits, Both new and old, Which I have saved up for you, my beloved. "Oh that you were like a brother to me Who nursed at my mother's breasts. If I found you outdoors, I would kiss you; No one would despise me, either. "I would lead you and bring you Into the house of my mother, who used to instruct me; I would give you spiced wine to drink from the juice of my pomegranates. "Let his left hand be under my head And his right hand embrace me." "I want you to swear, O daughters of Jerusalem, Do not arouse or awaken my love Until she pleases." (Song of Solomon 7:10–8:4)

Scene 13**8:5-12**

8:5

Townfolk to Audience

"Who is this coming up from the wilderness leaning on her beloved?"

8:5-7

Abishag to Shepherd

"Beneath the apple tree I awakened you [masculine gender]; There your mother was in labor with you [masculine gender], There she was in labor and gave you [masculine gender] birth. Put me like a seal over your heart, Like a seal on your arm. For love is as strong as death, Jealousy is as severe as Sheol; Its flashes are flashes of fire, The very flame of YHWH. "Many waters cannot quench love, Nor will rivers overflow it; If a man were to give all the riches of his house for love, It would be utterly despised."

8:8-9

Townfolk to Abishag

"We have a little sister, And she has no breasts; What shall we do for our sister On the day when she is spoken for? "If she is a wall, We will build on her a battlement of silver; But if she is a door, We will barricade her with planks of cedar."

8:10

Abishag to Townfolk

"I was a wall, and my breasts were like towers; Then I became in his eyes as one who finds peace."

8:11-12

Abishag to Audience

"Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon; He entrusted the vineyard to caretakers. Each one was to bring a thousand shekels of silver for its fruit. "My very own vineyard is at my disposal; The thousand shekels are for you, Solomon, And two hundred are for those who take care of its fruit."

Scene 14**8:13-14**

8:13

Shepherd to Abishag

"O you who sit in the gardens, My companions are listening for your voice- Let me hear it!"

8:14

Abishag to Shepherd

"Hurry, my beloved, And be like a gazelle or a young stag On the mountains of spices."

Playwright by God; Screenplay by Steve Rudd ©2013

Conclusion:

It is critically important for a Christian to marry another Christian who is faithful in their attendance every Lord's Day and active in spiritual life of the church. Additionally, a prospective spouse must live, in their private life, in a manner that is in harmony with the teachings of Jesus Christ.

1. **If you are single, marry only a Christian:**

- a. "In those days I also saw that the Jews had married women from Ashdod, Ammon and Moab. As for their children, half spoke in the language of Ashdod, and none of them was able to speak the language of Judah, but the language of his own people. So I contended with them and cursed them and struck some of them and pulled out their hair, and made them swear by God, "You shall not give your daughters to their sons, nor take of their daughters for your sons or for yourselves. **"Did not Solomon king of Israel sin regarding these things?** Yet among the many nations there was no king like him, and he was loved by his God, and God made him king over all Israel; nevertheless the foreign women caused even him to sin. "Do we then hear about you that you have committed all this great evil by acting unfaithfully against our God by marrying foreign women?" (Nehemiah 13:23–27)
- b. "Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them; And I will be their God, and they shall be My people. "Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate," says the Lord. "And do not touch what is unclean; And I will welcome you. "And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me," Says the Lord Almighty." (2 Corinthians 6:14–18)

2. **If your spouse dies, marry only a Christian:** "A wife is bound as long as her husband lives; but if her husband is dead, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, **only in the Lord.**" (1 Corinthians 7:39)

By Steve Rudd. Edited by Julia Page and Cindy Wilson: [Contact the author for comments, input or corrections.](#)

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