

A Pastoral Approach to the Song of Solomon

It is the duty and pleasure of the pastor to bring his people to feast on Christ each Lord's Day. The Song of Solomon presents a beautiful picture of our Saviour's love for his Church and how the Church should respond in love to the Saviour.

But there is also, in the lives of Solomon and the Shulamite, a rich and instructive example of how the husband is to be Christ-like and love his wife as Christ loves the Church (Ephesians 5:25).

It is helpful to see this in three stages in our interpretation. **First**, the real-life story, in this case, the love story of Solomon and the girl. Here, you will do all the necessary grammatical-historical exegesis to understand the plotline of the story. What is the meaning of the story that is being told?

Then, **second**, there is what the story symbolised to the people in the moment. What did the event represent or symbolise to the original readers? The ark of Noah was a symbol to the people who looked on of God's deliverance from judgment. The sacrifice of Abraham represented faith in God. The Exodus was a symbol to any observer of God's deliverance from bondage and slavery. The tabernacle was a symbol to the Israelites that God dwelt among them. The office of the king in Israel was a symbol that God reigned over them. To those who first read the Song of Solomon, this was a symbol of the ideal marriage.

Third, and finally, we need to ask what the story pointed to. What did the story typify? These Old Testament stories, people, events, and things all pointed forward, in the purpose of God, to the person and work of the Lord Jesus.

We need to find Christ in these stories, or we have failed in the great purpose of the Scripture to testify of Christ (John 5:39).