



Further Clues; The Appeal to “Come Along” Constitutes a Proposal for Marriage: the Analysis of “Halak”: the Verb for a Lifetime Journey with Purpose and Goal

24. The word for fig tree is **הָאֵנָה** *t'enh* which is the *Ficus carica* and defined as follows by:

Harris, R. Laird, Gleason L. Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1980), 963:

The fig tree, *Ficus carica*, is native to western Asia and has flourished in Palestine especially in the hill country throughout recorded history.

Unlike the olive, the fig casts its leaves in autumn and blooms in the spring (late March). The early figs begin to form in March and are ripe in May. The late figs developing on new shoots, ripen in late summer and are gathered from the middle of August into October.

25. Therefore the sequence of events is (1) the spring tryst of the Shepherd and Shulammite at the family estate in Shunem occurs in mid April, (2) due to the disapproval of her brothers the Shepherd has to meet with her in secret, (3) this is followed by the brothers' banishment of the Shulammite to the vineyard to shoo off foxes, and (4) the encounter of the Shulammite with Solomon and his Virgins.
26. What we may conclude from this is that the Shepherd had decided to encourage the Shulammite to marry him before the spring pruning of the vines occurs. He wants to spirit her away, make her his wife, and set up a household.
27. He has determined that if they do not take advantage of the moment she will be involved in the spring pruning and possible fox duty while he will have to return to the flocks as the spring grasses cover the Sharon Plain.
28. Therefore his appeal to her is sung with beautiful lyrics but it is really an urgent request for her to come away with him and to marry him. Here is a corrected translation:

SOS 2:12 - [SL] 'The flowers have already appeared in the land; the time has arrived for pruning the vines and the singing of songs for the singing of the turtledove has been heard in our land.

v. 13 - [SL] 'The fig tree has put forth its green figs, and the vines in blossom have given forth their fragrance. Arise, my darling, my beautiful one, and come along!'

29. The Shepherd introduces his proposition to her in verse 10 and concludes it in verse 13 with the same phrase. 'Arise, my darling, my beautiful one, and come along.'
30. The appeal begins with the Qal imperative of the verb **קום** *qum*. It is an appeal for her to prepare herself to travel. The sentence concludes with another Qal imperative, this one of the verb **הלך** *halak*. This word is a synonym of **דָּרַךְ** *derek* and both refer to a lifestyle based on wheel-tracks of righteousness.
31. How this emerges from the English translation “come along” is revealed by an analysis of the word *halak*:

Botterweck, G. Johannes and Helmer Ringgren (eds.). *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Translated by David E. Green. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1978), 3:388-92; 396:

הלך *halak* has a metaphorical meaning in the sense “live, behave, act. To go with someone means to accompany him. (pp. 388-89)

Secular Use. Concrete Meaning. The spatial movement expressed by *halak* depends on specific fixed points that define the starting point or destination of the journey. A specific locality, person, or action can constitute the starting point of a journey.



It is not just the starting point and destination of a journey that are defined; the path between them is also so defined. (p. 390)

Metaphorical Meaning. Human life is a journey or way. This understanding implies the metaphorical use of *halak*. The goals may be different; what they have in common is that they are reached by certain ways, i.e., by certain courses. (p. 391)

When someone “goes,” he follows certain criteria. When someone “goes” he undertakes something, he has a purpose. His going has a goal. (pp. 391-92)

Theological Use. *Walking in the Ways of Yahweh.* Deuteronomy understands life as a journey. But not all ways lead to the desired goal, only the ways Yahweh has shown his people, namely, his commandments. Whoever follows God’s commandments in his actions and conduct is going on the paths of Yahweh. To go on the paths of Yahweh means to do his commandments or to keep them; to love him, to obey his voice, and to serve him only. In the last analysis, what we are concerned with here is adherence to Yahweh alone and exclusive fidelity to him. (p. 396)

32. We have studied in the past the concept of wheel-tracks of righteousness and of wickedness. Both *halak* and *derek* connote the development of lifestyle habits that can be good (righteous) or bad (wicked), contrasts that are compared at length in the King James translation of Proverbs.
33. The Shepherd is inviting the Shulammite to accompany him on a journey that is well-defined and will follow the biblical mandates related to marriage.
34. They will start from a fixed point, her home in Shunem, and undertake a destination—life together in matrimony in concert with the commandments of Yahweh which will lead them to a desired goal.
35. The theological interpretation of this proposal is the appeal God makes to the believer to place his loyalty in Christ as Head of the church. The believer’s duty is to keep His commandments, love Him, obey Him, serve Him only, and show exclusive fidelity to Him.
36. These obligations become the duty of the wife in marriage. Her part in the corporate testimony to the world is to demonstrate the same fidelity to her husband as the church is required to extend to Christ.
37. This is complementary to the husband’s testimony which is to lead his wife on the journey dependent upon biblical mandates that when followed will lead them to the desired end and will result in super abundance of happiness accented by guaranteed provisions, earthy blessings, and eternal rewards.
39. The appeal of a man for a woman to follow him on romantic journeys is typical among the standards as well as other genres. Here’s one by Ian Tyson who is famous for his songs about the West and in this one tells a tale that is very close to the circumstance faced by the Shepherd and the Shulammite. It’s called:

**“Someday Soon”
(Ian Tyson)**

I am a young man, so you’ll know, my age is twenty one.
I come from down in southern Colorado.
Just out of the service, and I’m looking for my hon.
Someday soon, she’s going with me, someday soon.

Her parents cannot stand me ‘cause I work the rodeo.
Her daddy says that I will leave her crying.
But she would follow me right down the toughest row to hoe.
Someday soon, going with me, someday soon.



When I call her Pa ain't got one good word to say.
I can't help thinking he was just as wild in his younger days.
So blow you old blue norther! Come on, blow me back to her.
I'm drivin' in tonight from California.
I love that dammed old rodeo as much as I love her.
Someday soon, she's going with me, someday soon.

40. There are some other lyrics that don't include family friction and uncertainty but convey the lightheartedness and anticipation of taking one's bride away on exotic flights or slow cruises:

"Come Fly with Me"
(Sammy Cahn / Jimmy van Heusen)

Come fly with me, let's fly, let's fly away.
If you can use some exotic booze
There's a bar in far Bombay.
Come fly with me, we'll fly, we'll fly away.

Come fly with me, let's float down to Peru.
In llama land, there's a one-man band
And he'll toot his flute for you.
Come fly with me, we'll float down in the blue.

Once I get you up there where the air is rarefied
We'll just glide, starry-eyed.
Once I get you up there, I'll be holding you so near
You may hear angels cheer because we're together.

Weather-wise it's such a lovely day.
You just say the word, and we'll beat the birds
Down to Acapulco Bay.
It's perfect for a flying honeymoon, they say.
Come fly with me, let's fly, let's fly away.

"On a Slow Boat to China"
(Music and Lyrics by Frank Loesser, 1948)

I'd love to get you
On a slow boat to China,
All to myself alone.

Get you to keep you in my arms evermore,
Leave all your lovers
Weeping on the faraway shore.

Out on the briny
With the moon big and shinny,
Melting your heart of stone.

I'd love to get you
On a slow boat to China,
All to myself alone.

"Fly Me to the Moon"
(Bart Howard)

Fly me to the moon;
Let me play among the stars.



Let me see what spring is like
On Jupiter and Mars.
In other words, hold my hand.
In other words, darling, kiss me.

Fill my heart with song
And let me sing forevermore.
You are all I long for
All I worship and adore.
In other words, please be true.
In other words, I love you.

41. The context of our passages makes these lyrics anachronisms but the sentiments are the same: let's leave here and go off on our own as right man-right woman.
42. The Shepherd's voice, physical appearance, and words are as real in her memory as if she were still there. For the Shulammite her memory has eyes that can see as clearly as her physical eyes did on this day he proposed to her.
43. It is these memories that sustain and protect her as she continues to do mental battle with the king of Israel. After recalling the Shepherd's proposal she then recalls what happened next in their midnight rendezvous.