

THE WEDDING

TEXT: SONG OF SOLOMON 8:3-14

I. THE SHULAMITE'S ANTICIPATION (8:3-7).

1. This final section of the Song of Solomon “describes not only the mutual satisfaction and delight of the bride and Bridegroom in each other, but the recognition of her position and her beauty by the daughters of Jerusalem” (Hudson Taylor, *Union and Communion*).
2. She is waiting for her wedding day when she and her beloved would be together all the time (8:3; cf. 2:6).
3. Then for the third time the Shulamite tells the daughters of Jerusalem not to stir up or awaken her love until the time was right (8:4; cf. 2:7; 3:5).
4. “Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?” (8:5a). It appears that some one other than the Shulamite and her beloved shepherd is speaking in 8:5a.
5. It is not King Solomon for he has disappeared from the story. This speaker is the friend of the bridegroom, getting ready for the wedding.
6. John the Baptist said, “He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled” (John 3:29).
7. The shepherd speaks to the Shulamite in the latter part of 8:5. “I raised thee up under the apple tree: there thy mother brought thee forth: there she brought thee forth that bare thee” (8:5b).
8. He is recalling the first time they met. The shepherd won the heart of the beautiful Shulamite “under the apple tree.” And we should always remember fondly when we first met the Lord.
9. The woman at the well left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and said to the men there, “Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?” (John 4:29).
10. The apostle Paul told King Agrippa how he met the Lord on the road to Damascus, and said, “Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision” (Acts 26:19).
11. “Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame” (8:6).

12. The Shulamite is now speaking again. She asks the shepherd for a “seal” (signet used as a signature in marking official documents) upon his heart (cf. Gen. 38:18; Jer. 22:24; Job 38:14; Esther 3:12; 8:8; Dan. 6:17; Hag. 2:23).
13. The Shulamite wanted his assurance that their love was permanent – “for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel (unyielding) as the grave.”
14. She desired to be his and his alone. It is difficult to imagine the Shulamite making this request to a notorious polygamist like King Solomon.
15. The “seal” would be a token of their love. Oftentimes a signet was part of a ring. Today couples use the wedding ring as a seal or a token signifying their wedding vows.
16. I remember a few years ago dropping a young preacher friend off at JFK Airport in New York City. He was flying out to Colorado to propose to his sweetheart (now his wife). As he stepped out of my van, I asked him if he had everything. He reached into his pocket, and with a great big smile, said, “Yes, I have the ring!” That was his most important piece of luggage!
17. “Set me as a seal upon thine heart” (8:6a). Today we are “looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13).
18. And as we eagerly look forward to the marriage supper of the Lamb, the Lord has left us with His seal (Eph. 1:13, 14; 4:30). This seal is the token of His great love for us. It is like an engagement ring – “the earnest of our inheritance” (Eph. 1:14).
19. King Solomon tried his best to woo the Shulamite but her love for her beloved shepherd was too strong – “strong as death” (8:6). It was a fervent, jealous love – “cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame” (8:6).
20. The Shulamite’s love was kindled by God Himself. “We love him, because he first loved us” (I John 4:19). The Shulamite speaks of love’s strength, love’s jealousy, and love’s fervency.
21. She continues on in verse 7 with the endurance of love and the value of love. “Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned” (8:7).

Ian Paisley finds in this text seven characteristics of love:

1. It is *marked outwardly in the arm*, but is *sealed inwardly in the heart*. The love of Christ constraining you will be seen in your arm, and it will be seen in your heart, and your heart will love the soul that you are after, and your arm will be reaching out to bring that soul to Jesus. It is unchangeable love.
2. Then it is *unconquerable* love. It is as strong as death. Death is the great conqueror of queens, clever men, foolish men, well educated men, illiterate men: they all fall before the power of death. It is unconquerable, as strong as death.
3. Then it is *unbreakable*. It is like the grave and the word cruel. If you have a marginal reference Bible, it is hard. It is hard, firm, impregnable. The unbreakable love, the unconquerable love, the unchangeable love.
4. Then, you will notice, it is *untamable*. It is like a great coal fire and has a most vehement flame. It is untamable.
5. Then it is *unquenchable*. Many waters cannot quench love.
6. Then it is *undrownable*. Floods cannot drown it.
7. Lastly it is *unpriceable*. The whole substance of a man's house cannot buy it. That is the love that needs to be in my heart when I go out to win anyone to Christ...Oh for a baptism of the unchangeable, unconquerable, unbreakable, untamable, unquenchable, undrownable, unpriceable love of God!" ("The Irresistible Weapon of our Warfare in the Battle for Souls Chained by Rome").

22. The Shulamite and her beloved shepherd can now celebrate their love and consummate their marriage, away from King Solomon, and away from all other obstacles and hindrances (8:7).

"O love of God, how rich and pure!
 How measureless and strong!
 It shall forevermore endure
 The saints' and angels' song." – Frederick M. Lehman

II. THE SHULAMITE'S FAMILY (8:8).

1. As family and friends are gathering for the wedding, the Shulamite's brothers speak up (8:8, 9). These brothers were mentioned back in chapter 1 (1:6), and probably again in chapter 2 (2:15).
2. The reference to "no breasts" (8:8) suggests this "little sister" has not yet reached maturity. Some commentators believe

the brothers are referring to the Shulamite, but that seems very unlikely (cf. 8:10).

III. THE SHULAMITE'S PURITY (8:9-13).

1. "If she be a wall..." (8:9). "If she be a wall" (8:9) means "if she were chaste and pure."
2. In that case they would provide a good dowry – "a palace of silver." But if she "be a door" (8:9), i.e., promiscuous and easily accessible as a door, then she would be "inclosed," i.e., kept away from men.
3. In these wicked days of the "new morality," it would be good if brothers looked out after their sisters like these men did. There wouldn't be so many girls getting into trouble. Here in New York City, over half of all births are illegitimate, and in some neighborhoods the proportion reaches 80 percent.
4. The staggering illegitimacy rates are so central a cause of social pathologies, that one would expect the problem to be addressed — but the problem isn't even being discussed because modern man has turned his back on the Word of God.
5. "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Hebrews 13:4).
6. "If she be a wall, we will build upon her a palace of silver..." (8:9). The brothers are probably referring to the Shulamite's responses to King Solomon's persistent advances and flatteries. Many women would have yielded to such strong pressure, but not the virtuous Shulamite.
7. Likewise, the church must not yield to pressure from the world, the flesh, and the devil.
8. "I am a wall, and my breasts like towers: then was I in his eyes as one that found favour" (8:10). The Shulamite asserts that she had kept herself pure – "I am a wall..." (8:10). The Shulamite likens her chastity and impregnability to a strong castle wall.
9. She did not give in to King Solomon's solicitations. She kept herself pure for her beloved shepherd.
10. So must the church keep herself pure for her beloved Shepherd. "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (II Cor. 11:2).
11. In both the Old Testament and the New Testament, worldliness is considered spiritual adultery. Ezekiel 23:19 says, "Yet she

- multiplied her whoredoms, in calling to remembrance the days of her youth, wherein she had played the harlot in the land of Egypt.”
12. “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?” (James 4:4).
 13. “Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon...” (8:11). King Solomon had much to offer from a worldly perspective (8:11, 12), but the Shulamite was unimpressed.
 14. King Solomon could keep his vineyards and his great wealth for all she cared. She was much happier and content to be with her beloved shepherd.
The Shulamite had already stated that if one attempted to buy love, his wealth “would be utterly contemned (despised)” (8:7). “To attempt to buy a person’s love is to violate his personality as a creature of God made in God’s image, and so it is utterly reprehensible” (*Unger’s Commentary on the Old Testament*).
 15. *Baal-hamon* means “place of a multitude” (*Scofield Study Bible*). “This world is a veritable Baal-hamon, a place of thronging multitudes with scenes of pleasure, commerce, and material gain. Its idol is Mammon and its lord the ‘prince of this world’ (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; Luke 16:13)” (Arthur G. Clarke, *The Song of Songs*).
 16. “My vineyard, which is mine, is before me: thou, O Solomon, must have a thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred” (8:12).
 17. The Shulamite preferred her own humble vineyard to King Solomon’s thousand. In addition to his thousand vineyards, King Solomon also had a thousand wives (I Kings 11:3).
 18. In Ecclesiastes 7:28, Solomon says that he had not found one upright woman among a thousand. Obviously the Shulamite was not among that thousand.
 19. “Thou that dwest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice: cause me to hear it” (8:13). The shepherd dwelled in the gardens, not in worldly venues (cf. 6:2, 11).
 20. The “companions” (8:13) were probably wedding guests, relatives and friends of the bride and groom (cf. 8:5a). The Shulamite yearned to hear her Shepherd’s voice – “cause me to hear it.”

“Jesus is pleading, O list to His voice,
Hear Him today, hear Him today,

They who believe on His Name shall rejoice;
Quickly arise and away.” – Fanny Crosby

IV. THE SHULAMITE’S LAST WORDS (8:14).

1. “Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices” (8:14).
2. Earlier, the two lovers were separated by the “mountain of Bether” (2:17). Bether means “division” (JB Jackson, *A Dictionary of Scripture Proper Names*) or “separation” (*Scofield Study Bible*).
3. Obstacles kept the two of them apart, but now these obstacles were gone. King Solomon, the tempter, was gone. Now it was no longer the mountain of Bether, but “the mountains of spices,” which speak of sweet communion. The Song of Solomon ends on a joyful note.

CONCLUSION:

1. Our love poem ends in the garden. The first love poem in the Bible began in a garden – the Garden of Eden, but the tempter slithered in there and ruined it.
2. “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Rom. 5:12).
3. Now we see the paradise restored. The Shulamite has resisted Solomon’s flatteries and now she and her beloved will dwell in the garden forever.

“As unto the bow the cord is,
So unto the man is woman;
Though she bends him, she obeys him,
Though she draws him, yet she follows;
Useless each without the other.” – Henry Wadsworth Longfellow