



# Love's Abiding Hope

His Wife Has Made Herself Ready

| Song 8:1-14

## Introduction

The song is drawing to a close and thankfully it has a happy ending. Our culture has become so cynical and jaded. The critics would tell us not everyone lives happily ever after. But we know better: there is no reason people should not live happily ever after. It was the reason Christ came into the world.

### **Luke 19:10**

For the Son of man is come to seek  
and to save that which was lost.

### **John 10:10**

...I am come that they might have life, and  
that they might have it more abundantly.

The genius of the Gospel lies in the fact it tells us we can have a happy eternity once we give ourselves wholeheartedly to the Great Shepherd of the sheep.

## *The Shulamite's Wishes* **8:1-4**

The previous chapter closed with the Shulamite declaring what she wanted out of life. In the first verses of chapter eight, she allowed her imagination to soar to new heights. Trapped as she was, the young girl dared to let her heart describe its perfect setting...if all was right in the world. She wished for the period of waiting to be over so she could give full expression of her love for her beloved without being condemned or criticized.

**To Show Her Love Publicly verse 1** We must again be reminded about the Oriental setting that serves as the background of our story. Strict social conventions kept a bride and prospective groom apart. It would have been highly improper for her, under the rigid social code of the day, to have expressed her love for him publicly and openly. The Shulamite wished she could be more open in expressing all her heart felt for her beloved. She desired that life's social conventions did not stand between them: for society not to stare, condemn, or despise if she were to demonstrate all her heart.

Do we not often wish for the same thing? At times our social customs and conventions can be very strong. For instance, it is humorous and entertaining to go to a football game and yell, shout, and cheer...to wave our arms and paint our bodies with the colors and logos of our favorite teams.

On the other hand, try to get excited about the things of God. Go next door and share the Good News with your neighbor. Witness to a colleague at work or at school. The moment a person expresses any religious emotion, he is labeled as a fanatic. He has offended social custom by 'ramming his religion down the throats' of others. Most of us wish we had courage to be so strong. **Matthew 10:33**

**To Share Her Love Privately verse 2** In other words, she desired to be married. According to the social laws of the day, for her to take a man home, even to her mother's house, would have been an unthinkable liberty. For her to take him home and give him spiced wine and inflame his passions would have been unlawful. How she desired to give full display to her love without being disgraced. She longed for the marriage day to arrive so society would no longer intrude between her and him.

**To Show Her Love Passionately verses 3-4** What she wanted was right and proper, even in an Eastern culture...within the bounds of marriage. She did not want to do anything unseemly or improper. She was looking beyond the present to the future, when all restraints would be forever and properly removed.

This is the height of love for Christ: the height to which we should all aspire. Have we ever felt like the Shulamite? Has our longing for the Lord at times simply welled up in almost inexpressible longing and desire? Have we ever felt like trampling on every social restraint and shouting out loud: 'My Jesus, I love you.' Has the longing for the consummation of things in eternity at times become overwhelming? Do we love our Lord like the Shulamite loved her shepherd?

### *The Shulamite's Wedded Bliss* **8:5-14**

Like any good story with a happy ending, we see the culmination just as it was intended to be. The young girl, in love with a lowly shepherd, managed to:

withstand the tempter  
witness to the doubters  
win over her family  
wed her beloved

Everything tied up in a nice, neat package. This closing section of the *Song of Solomon* deals with the time of triumph for which all have been waiting.

**The Shulamite And Her Beloved verses 5-7** No details are given about how or when, but we are assured the shepherd kept his promise and rescued his young fiancé. They were together and she was leaning on the arm of her beloved. And we must pause to wonder: who is asking this question in **verse 5**?

Could it be the shepherd had a companion, someone who understood the circumstances and was willing to stand with his friend should the need arise?

*cf* **John 3:28-30**

Nevertheless, the Shulamite was free. We are never told how the shepherd managed to do it...to set her free from the pavilion of the king, surrounded by guards and the watchful eye of the Daughters of Jerusalem. All we know is one moment she was in the king's pavilion and the next moment she was gone! The shepherd had come, the shackles were broken, and they were together at last.

This is how it is to be with the saved of all the ages. As the Bride of Christ, we are to be ever-watching and waiting. He promised to come again (**John 14:3**) and so we are to be anticipating His arrival at any moment. We don't know when and we are unclear as to how it will be executed, but He promised...and so, we wait. With our eyes on the eastern sky, and our ears tuned for the trump of God we live in anticipation of that moment.

We are given precious little information on the pages of scripture concerning the rapture of believers. Enough to let us know it will happen, but not enough to explain it. The church will be taken out of the earth in an instant and the history of the world will again be forever altered. The restraining power of the Holy Spirit will be removed, but those who are saved will find themselves at the throne of God (**2 Thessalonians 2:7**).

Naturally, the bride and groom would have much to talk about after their long separation (**verses 5b-7**). They spoke little about their time apart. The past was just that...the past. They were far more interested in each other and what the years ahead would mean for them.

They did remember something important, however: how they met. It would seem it was somewhere in the vineyards, under an apple tree. Poetically speaking, for the shepherd it was as though the Shulamite had been born for that moment...at that moment in time. He recalled the instant he laid eyes on her and knew he would spend the rest of his life with her.

As Christians, we should also reflect on our salvation testimony. Do you remember the place? the time? the circumstances leading you to the Lord?

Tracing the transformation from wretched sinner to white-washed saint allows us to see the hand of God at work in conforming us into the image of His Son (**Romans 8:28-30**).

Praise God, we aren't home yet, nor are we the people that we used to be. We are sinners saved by grace.

Then, the couple relished a thought: they were to be together forever, unhindered by the constraints of others who might wish otherwise. In his heart, she was forever to be sealed as his bride. Outwardly though, a sign of some sort would indicate to others that she was spoken for; she was forever his.

**NOTE:** In this instance, perhaps there was some item to serve as the token. In Bible days, the signet ring actually stood for the person who wore it. These seals were used to make contracts binding and to serve as a symbol of ownership (**1 Kings 21:8, Esther 3:12**).

In modern times, handed down from medieval practices, brides and grooms exchange wedding rings as a symbol of love. While the ring serves as a reminder of the pledge taken by the one wearing it, it also puts others on notice that the person is spoken for and unavailable to outsiders.

As Christians, we were engaged to our Great Shepherd in the moment we first believed. As a promise of our life together, Christ gave us an evident token, a seal of our engagement. The Apostle Paul called the Holy Spirit our 'earnest' (see [2 Corinthians 1:21-22](#))...the down payment and seal of the promise of eternal life ([Ephesians 4:30](#)). We are now pledged to watch and wait and work for Him until the moment He arrives to take us home.

Likewise, it is appointed unto man once to die ([Hebrews 9:27](#)); but **love is strong as death**. Nothing can separate us from the love of God...not even death ([Romans 8:38](#); [1 Corinthians 15:51-58](#)).

For only a moment, there was a realization: another had intruded in their relationship. What about the king? He had been scorned and humiliated at the rejection of the Shulamite. Would he be vindictive and harsh? Could he pursue the couple and hinder their life together? Certainly, Solomon was hurt and searched fruitlessly for true love ([Ecclesiastes 7:25-28](#)), but he could never undo love's power.

Consider the spiritual comparison. Once the church is taken away in the Rapture, satan will no longer have access to the Bride of Christ. With his efforts to spoil her thwarted, he will vent his rage elsewhere. As believers are gathered to Christ in the air, satan will be cast down and confined to the earth for the duration of the seven-year Tribulation Period ([Revelation 12:12](#)). Being confined, he will pour out his vindictiveness on Israel particularly and on mankind in general.