

# Song of Solomon 8:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

## Analysis

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Continuing the meditation on love's nature, the bride declares: '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.' This verse presents love's indestructibility and priceless value through two powerful affirmations. First, love's endurance: 'Many waters cannot quench' and 'floods drown it' employ water imagery—in Scripture, water often represents overwhelming trials, chaos, or opposition (Psalm 18:16; 69:1-2, 14-15; 124:4-5; Isaiah 43:2). Mighty floods that destroy everything else cannot extinguish love's flame (continuing the fire imagery from 8:6). True covenant love persists through adversity, trials, and opposition—it is not a fair-weather emotion but enduring commitment. Second, love's value: 'if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned' teaches that love cannot be purchased. Offering all wealth to buy love would be scorned/despised (bazah, בָּזָה) because genuine love is not a commodity. It cannot be earned by merit or bought with riches—it must be freely given and received. This verse teaches that covenant love is both indestructible (persisting through trials) and invaluable (beyond price).

## Historical Context

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Ancient Near Eastern literature often portrayed water as threatening chaos (Mesopotamian flood myths, Egyptian texts). Israel's poetry employed water imagery for overwhelming danger—literal floods, military invasion, or personal

crisis (Psalms 18:16; 32:6; 69:1-2; 144:7). The Song declares that while floods destroy houses, crops, and lives, they cannot quench love—it endures beyond natural disasters and human catastrophes. The reference to 'all the substance of his house' (kol-hon beyto, כָּל-הוֹן בֵּיתוֹ) indicates total wealth and possessions. In ancient cultures where family wealth determined security and status, offering everything represented supreme sacrifice. Yet the verse insists love cannot be purchased at any price—it must be freely given. This counters transactional approaches to relationships (dowries, bride prices, arranged marriages for political/economic advantage). While ancient Near Eastern marriages involved financial elements, the Song celebrates love that transcends economics. Early church tradition saw Christ's love as both enduring ('neither death, nor life... shall separate us from the love of God,' Romans 8:38-39) and freely given ('the gift of God is eternal life,' Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8). The Reformers emphasized salvation by grace alone—God's love cannot be earned or purchased but must be received as free gift. Modern readers affirm that genuine love persists through trials and cannot be commodified or earned.

## Related Passages

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**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

## Study Questions

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1. What 'many waters' and 'floods' have tested your covenant love (in marriage or with Christ)—how has enduring love demonstrated its indestructible character?
2. How does understanding that love 'cannot be purchased' at any price shape your approach to relationships—are you trying to earn love through performance or receive it as free gift?

