

Preparing Our Hearts for the Return of Jesus

19- The Heart of Smyrna and Philadelphia & the Love Song of the Bride

I. The Cry of the Bride

From Genesis to Revelation, the story of Scripture is not just about rules or religion — it's a *love story*. It begins with a wedding in Eden and ends with a wedding in heaven — *"the marriage supper of the Lamb"* (Revelation 19:7).

The Holy Spirit is preparing the Church not simply to survive this world, but to become a lovesick Bride whose heart beats with one cry:

"Come, Lord Jesus." (Revelation 22:17, 20)

II. The Faithful Bride: The Hearts of Smyrna and Philadelphia

- Smyrna — The Fragrant Bride of Suffering

"Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life." (Revelation 2:10)

This is the picture of believers whose suffering produces the **fragrance of Christ** (2 Corinthians 2:15).

Their trials become worship; their pain becomes perfume.

This is the **Bride's humility and purity** — faithful even when misunderstood or persecuted.

Connection to Song of Solomon 7:5-9:

"Redeeming love crowns you as royalty... your love I will drink as wine."

The Bride here is **not bitter** from suffering — she has become fragrant. The King is captivated not by outward beauty, but by the inner aroma of love born through surrender.

Like Smyrna, she has been pressed, yet she releases worship — the **sweet aroma of devotion**.

- Philadelphia — The Faithful Bride of Love

"You have kept my word and have not denied my name." (Revelation 3:8)

They represent the **faithful remnant** whose love endures, whose hearts are open to Jesus' voice.

Christ calls them His **"pillar in the temple of God"** (Revelation 3:12) — steadfast and unshakable in affection.

Connection to Song of Solomon 8:6-7:

"Fasten me upon your heart as a seal of fire forevermore... Rivers of pain and persecution will never extinguish this flame."

This seal of fire is the *love* that defines Philadelphia — a love that remains even under trial.

It's what Jesus described in **John 14:15:**

"If you love Me, keep My commandments."

Philadelphia's heart is sealed with this divine flame — an unquenchable, covenantal love.

III. The Song of the Bride: A Prophetic Mirror of the Church

Throughout the *Song of Solomon*, the Bride's journey parallels that of the Church — from immaturity to maturity, from fear to fiery love.

Song of Solomon 8:5-7 — The Maturing Bride

“Who is this one? She arises out of her desert, clinging to her beloved... Fasten me upon your heart as a seal of fire forevermore...”

- The Bride emerges from the **wilderness** — purified by trials, like Smyrna’s suffering.
- She clings to her **Beloved** — like Philadelphia, steadfast in relationship.
- The *seal of fire* represents the Holy Spirit’s consuming love — ***“the very flashes of fire from the burning heart of God.”***

This is the heart Jesus is returning for: **a Bride sealed with divine love**, purified by perseverance, and longing for union with Him.

IV. The Bride’s Cry: “Come, Lord Jesus”

The story ends in **Revelation 22:16-17**:

“I, Jesus... the Bright and Morning Star.”

“And the Spirit and the Bride say, ‘Come!’”

The final cry of Scripture is **not from fear**, but **from yearning**.

It’s the cry of a **lovesick Bride** — not content with religion, not distracted by this world, but burning with the desire to see her King face to face.

This echoes **2 Peter 3:8-12**:

“With the Lord one day is as a thousand years... The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise... But the day of the Lord will come like a thief.”

Peter reminds believers to live with **holy longing** — looking forward to **“the new heavens and a new earth” (v.13)**.

This is not escapism — it’s *bridal expectation*.

The true Church doesn’t cling to this fading world; she prepares her heart for her Bridegroom.

V. The Prophetic Pattern of the Faithful Bride

Smyrna — means *myrrh*, the fragrance released through crushing.

Her life of suffering becomes worship; her trials release the aroma of Christ.

Jesus promises her the *Crown of Life* for her endurance and faithfulness.

Philadelphia — means *brotherly love*, the heart that holds fast to Jesus’ Word.

Though small in strength, she remains loyal and pure in affection.

Her reward is to become a *Pillar in God’s Temple*, secure and close to His presence.

The Fulfilled Bride — combines Smyrna’s fragrance and Philadelphia’s faith.

Her love burns as a *seal of fire* (Song 8:6-7), unquenchable and eternal.

Her reward is not just a crown or position—but *union with the Bridegroom Himself*.

Together, these two churches paint the picture of the **end-time Bride**:

- Smyrna shows the *suffering love* that refines.
- Philadelphia shows the *faithful love* that abides.
- Both are the **fragrant, faithful Bride** who cries, “Come!”

VI. Application: Preparing Our Hearts

How do we live as this lovesick Bride?

1. **Cultivate intimacy with Jesus.**

“Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you.” (James 4:8)

Make room daily for His voice.

2. **Embrace the refining fire.**

“Do not be surprised at the fiery trial... but rejoice that you share in Christ’s sufferings.” (1 Peter 4:12–13)

Let hardship make you fragrant, not bitter.

3. **Keep His Word and Name.**

“Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown.” (Revelation 3:11)

Stay faithful when compromise surrounds you.

4. **Live with longing.**

“Looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God.” (2 Peter 3:12)

Let every act of love, prayer, and obedience whisper, “Come, Lord Jesus.”

VII. The Hope for the Final Union

“Arise, my darling! Come quickly, my beloved... We will dance in the high place of the sky.” (Song of Solomon 8:14)

“And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come.” (Revelation 22:17)

The Bride who has endured like Smyrna and loved like Philadelphia will soon dance with her King.

The story ends not in suffering — but in **union**.

Her love, tested by fire and sealed with faithfulness, has made her ready.

The Heart Jesus Is Returning For (My Final thought)

The heart that Jesus is coming back for is not **distracted, divided, or defeated**.

It is a heart that **burns** — steady, discerning, and loyal to the purposes of God.

Yet today, too many believers have grown **feeble in spirit**.

They’ve forgotten that God’s hand is still moving through history — positioning nations, aligning prophecy, and preparing the earth for the return of His Son.

Instead of standing in awe of His unfolding plan, many are **turning their backs** — questioning, criticizing, even mocking what God is doing.

And most don’t even realize it.

This is where **offense** takes root ; when we make peace with our own ideas and begin to believe they are God’s truth.

But what if they’re not?

That’s when offense creeps in and blinds the heart.

We forget that the story of redemption **began with Israel**, and it will **culminate in Israel**.
From Genesis to Revelation, the thread of covenant love runs through God's chosen people and the land He calls His own.

The book of Revelation is not a Western story ; it is an **Israel-centric revelation of Jesus the Messiah**.
Paul reminds us in **Romans 11:11** that salvation has come to the Gentiles *"to provoke Israel to jealousy."*

Our calling, then, is not to despise Israel or debate its politics,
but to **live in such radiant love and faithfulness to Jesus**
that Israel , and the world can see what covenant truly looks like and are stirred to desire it.

A Messianic rabbi once asked me a sobering question:

"What evidence do the world and the Jewish people see that would draw them to jealousy?"

The truth is hard; modern Christianity is often too fickle, too shallow, too distracted.
Perhaps it will take the **pressing and crushing of the Church** to release a global oil, fragrant like myrrh,
that will testify of Jesus in power and purity once again.

When we join the world's narrative that paints Israel as the enemy,
we are not merely misinformed ,we are **out of alignment with God's redemptive heartbeat**.
Yes, Israel is imperfect. Yes, it's a nation among nations.

But **God's promises are not void**.

Through chaos, shaking, and conflict, He is **maneuvering the nations** to bring about what He foretold:
the **return of Jesus** and the **restoration of all things**.

So, Church; don't lose heart.

Don't be swept away by worldly opinions.

Lift your eyes. Discern the times. Keep your heart pure and burning.

It is the heart that cries,

"Fasten me as a seal of fire upon Your heart." (Song of Solomon 8:6)

It is **Smyrna's fragrance** and **Philadelphia's faith** the heart that burns for His return.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Let your heart burn again with the **love and loyalty of the Bride**,
the one who stands with the Spirit and says,

"Come, Lord Jesus." (Revelation 22:17)