

Songs - Fiery Seal of Love (8:5-14)



1. Who is This Coming from the Wilderness? (8:5)

- a. This chapter describes the destination and the pinnacle of our experience in the love of God. Songs 8:5-7 summarizes the journey of the overcoming bride who has cultivated a heart that leans on the bridegroom.
- b. This is the third and final *'Who is this...'* ... *'coming up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?'* (8:5; C.f. 3:6; 6:10) The bride is coming out of the wilderness of testing, leaning upon her beloved! This is the picture of an end-time church. Finally at the end of her journey, the bride comes to a place of total dependence on the Lord. The original sin is the *'sin of independence.'* Our problem is not that we are too weak, but that we are too strong - in our self-driven life independent of God. It is so easy to depend on the false props of worldly success and man's adulation to comfort us and make us feel significant. Only as we lean on the Lord fully and draw daily from Him, are we able to walk in intimacy, love and humility.

Jesus calls us to abide in His Him and His love, *'I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.'* (John 15:5, 9)

- c. *'I awakened you under the apple tree. There your mother brought you forth...'* (8:5) This is the summary of the bride's life of faith and devotion. She started her journey under the apple tree of Jesus' delightful presence. *'I sat down in his shade [apple tree] with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.'* (2:3 c.f. 1:2) This journey brought her to the place of total dependence on the Lord, and receiving the fiery seal of His love (8:6-7). She has come a long way!

2. The Lord's Ultimate Invitation (8:6-7)

- a. *'Set me [Jesus] as a seal upon your heart...'* (8:6) - This is the pinnacle of the Song of Songs – the seal of His love upon our hearts. This divine seal is the progressive work of the Spirit on our hearts. (Rom 5:5)
Kings stamped wax seals on the royal edicts. They would press their signet ring on the hot wax to seal a scroll. Once the scroll is sealed it couldn't be tampered with, and the content of the scroll was fully backed by the king's authority. So, our hearts are to be sealed with the stamp of God's love in the heat of tests and battles. Receiving the seal of God's love is the destiny of every believer in Christ. Apostle Paul said, *'Clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but upon tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.'* (C.f. 2 Cor 3:1-3)
- b. *'As a seal upon your arm'* (8:6) - All our works and ministry are to flow from this internal seal of love in our heart. The fiery seal of God's love in our hearts and on our arms overcome all bitterness, disappointments, and temptations in life. How easily are we motivated by people's approval, recognition and honour for our sense of identity, significance, and self-worth?
- c. *'for love is as strong as death, jealousy is cruel as the grave; its flames are flames of fire, a most vehement flame.'* (8:6) - God's love is jealous love. It is demanding love. *'For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God.'* (Ex 20:4) Only two relationships are to be exclusive in this way, jealous and demanding – our relationship with the Lord, and our marriage relationship. Both are sealed by covenant. When our hearts are sealed by this holy jealous love, not even death and grave can overpower us. It will not yield even to the threat of death.

This seal of God's love is the only power strong enough to overcome Satan. *'And they overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.'* (Rev. 12:11) No sin can resist the transforming power of God's love in our hearts. His love will consume every evil and sin in our hearts – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. *'The Spirit who dwells in us yearns (epi-potheo: earnest desire) jealously.'* (James 4:5)

- d. *'Many waters cannot quench love, nor can the floods drown it.'* (8:7) – Water always quenches fire, but the supernatural fire of God's love burning in our hearts can never be put out by the floods of water. *'For our God is a consuming fire.'* (Heb 12:29) No amount of flood can drown out this vehement (raging) flame of God's fiery love. The very throne of God in heaven is burning with this fire. The devil may send a flood of

pain, disappointments, persecutions, and temptation, but *'Love never fails.'* (1 Cor 13:8) *'So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood...'* (Rev 12:15) The fire of God's love burning in our hearts will lick up the flood of water every time, and consume the sacrifice and bring out the purified love like gold refined by fire.

God's fire that fell on Elijah's altar licked up all the water from trenches, and consumed sacrifice (1 Kings 18:38). This is the seal of God we must receive in our hearts and on our arms (Rev 3:12; 7:3; 14:1). God is waiting for this seal to be upon us before He begins to break His seals to actively close this age. *'Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.'* (Rev 7:1-33). This is the heart of God's commitment as this age ends and the next age begins – the seal of His love upon His bride.

- e. *'If a man would give...all the wealth of his house, it would be utterly despised.'* (8:7) – True love cannot be bought. It is not for sale. Yet there is no price tag too high for love. Satan tempted Jesus with everything he had. Jesus utterly despised Satan's offer because He loved His Father (Matt 4:1-11). We too will *utterly despise* the temptation of Satan because of God's love burning in our hearts. This seal is a mighty defence against Satan. People whose hearts are sealed by God's love are incorruptible.

How do I know that I have this seal from the Lord? What I long for recognition, approval, and honour from men or from God? *'How can you believe, who receive honour from one another, and do not seek the honour that comes from the only God?'* (John 5:44) What motivates me to serve the Lord? Is it love for the Lord or something else? The highest reward for love is to love. Paul said, *'I count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ...for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ...'* (Phil 3:8). You cannot stop a person who serves because he loves.

3. The Seal of God's Love

Rather than speculating on the timing of Jesus's coming, we ought to keep alive and aflame this seal of God's love in our hearts in the last days.

- a. Rev 3:12 – God invites the end-time church to have His name written on their forehead. The name of God is threefold: The name of the Father, of the Bride (New Jerusalem), and the hidden name of the Son as the Bridegroom, *'I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of this world...Holy Father, keep (protect/preserve) through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are. While I was with them in the world, I kept (protect/preserve) them in Your name. And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You love Me may be in them, and I in them.'* (John 17:6, 11-12, 26) What is the seal of God that protects us? It is the Father's name with which the Holy Spirit seals us.
- b. Rev 7:1-3 – God's plan to close this age (Great Tribulation) cannot begin until God's servants are sealed on their foreheads. Ezek 9:3-11 describes the behind-the-scenes of God's judgment. The only thing that provided immunity from the utter destruction of God's judgment is His seal on His people's foreheads.
- c. Rev 9:4 – The wrath of God is exclusively for those who do not have the seal of God on their forehead. It is not for God's people who have His seal on them. (C.f. Ps 91)
- d. Rev 7:4-8 & Rev 14:1-5 –There are three major harvests in the last days: (i) the first-fruit harvest, (ii) the great harvest of souls, and (iii) the harvest of God's wrath. These will swiftly follow one after another. We are at the point of gathering the first fruits.
- e. The devil will put his mark either on the hand or on the head. But God will put His mark only on the head. The seal of God can only be voluntarily received as it is a seal of love. The seal of the beast will be coerced through the economic system. (Rev 13:16).
- (i) 2 Tim 2:19, *'Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: 'The Lord knows those who are His,' and, 'Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.'*
- (ii) Eph 1:13 – *'...the gospel of your salvation...having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.'*

- f. The seal of God and the mark of the beast are mutually exclusive (Rev 13:8).
- g. Rev 22:3-4 – Those who have God’s name on their foreheads will serve God and behold God’s face forever. (C.f. Song. 8:6-7)

4. The Bride’s Concern for the Immature Sister (8:8-10)

- a. *‘We have a little sister’ (8:8)* Is this a flashback to the Shulamite’s immature past, or is she the Shulamite’s younger sister?
 - (i) The little sister is unable and unwilling to nurture others, but herself. What shall ‘we’ do? The bride partners with the Lord for her little sister. This is the heart of spiritual fathers and mothers (6:11-12 c.f. *‘as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children, that you would walk worthy of God...’ (1 Thess 2:11)*). Also, note Paul’s burden for Israel (Rom 9:1-3)
 - (ii) The bride will help her little sister to get ready for the wedding day. She will help her to develop her gift and calling, whether she has : (i) ‘the wall ministry’ of protection and nurture (pastoral); (ii) ‘the door ministry’ of opening new opportunities in evangelism or intercession etc. (C.f. Col 4:3)
 - (iii) The bride’s concern is like the ministry of ‘the friends of the bridegroom.’ (Jn 3:29; Rev 19:7)
 - (iv) *‘I am a wall and my breasts like towers. Then I became in his eyes as one who found peace.’* – She has very effective ‘wall ministry’. She has found peace in how the Lord has called her and gifted her. Are there many dissatisfied believers with their gifts & callings? We can never be effective until we find ‘peace’ in His eyes.
- b. Until He comes... (8:11-12)

‘Solomon had a vineyard at Baal Hamon’ (8:11) = ‘Possessor of multitudes’

 - (i) Parable of the vineyard (8:11) – (Matt 21:33-44 c.f. Is 5:1-7) The Lord requires the full return for the investment He has made in our lives. It is not about numbers, size, influence, title, but how faithful we were with the grace we have been given. We’ve been given time and resources to cultivate the Lord’s vineyard until His return. The Shulamite says that a 1000-fold return is due to Him!
 - (ii) She is at peace with her own vineyard (8:12). This is not a presumption, but godly confidence in the faithfulness of God before the judgment seat of Christ. *‘Nevertheless, I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.’ (2 Tim 1:12 c.f. 4:7-8)*
- c. The Lord’s Final Commission & the Bride’s Final Prayer (8:13-14)
 - (i) Bridegroom (8:13)
 - ①. *‘You who dwell in the garden (perpetually)’* - Our journey is a marathon, not a sprint. How many serve the Lord to the end with joy and vigour? Many dial down their zeal over time.
 - ②. *‘companions listen to your voice.’* – The bride’s credibility is intact. How many starts well with great gifts but lose credibility because of the failure in personal integrity?
 - ③. *‘let me hear it.’* – The Lord loves to hear the bride’s voice in worship, intercession, teaching, evangelism, etc.
 - (ii) Bride: ‘Make haste, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young stag on the mountains of spices...’ (8:14) This is equivalent to *‘The Spirit and the Bride say, ‘Come!’... ‘Surely, I am coming quickly.’ (Rev 22:17, 20)* Come near us in intimacy. Come to us in revival. Come for us to take us home at your coming.

‘Amen. Even So, come Lord Jesus!’ (Rev 22:20)