

Song of Songs

Chapter 2

I am a rose of Sharon, a lily of the valleys.

2:1 *rose*. Hbr likely describes a crocus-type flower (meadow saffron, narcissus, or asphodel). (TLSB)

It seems the maiden has caught the king's allusion to his palace. She banters back that she is just a country girls. She likens herself to a wild meadow flower – a crocus, or a rose. (PBC)

Sharon. The fertile coastal plain south of Mount Carmel. (CSB)

Fertile coastal plain extending from Joppa northward to Caesarea. “Rose of Sharon” is used as an image of the Virgin Mary, who bore and gave birth to God’s Son; it is also an image of the Church. The medieval hymn “Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming” (*LSB* 359) associates the Rose of Sharon with Christ Himself. (TLSB)

lily. Probably either lotus or anemone. (CSB)

In poetic parallelism to the rose of Sharon, the beloved proceeds to liken herself to a flower found in the valleys. Not to be confused with what we call the lily of the valley, the flower she alludes to was more likely a water lily. Perhaps this lily was a popular subject of the song writer. Psalm 45, a wedding song with many similarities to the Song of Solomon, has in its headline the note: “To the tune of lilies.” (PBC)

The girl’s shyness is evident in her choice of the rose and the lily. She likens herself to two ordinary wildflowers, often overlooked on the plain and hidden in the valleys. (PBC)

The NT supports the view that the Shulammite is likened to a flower that is commonplace but nevertheless has been endowed with glorious splendor by God. Jesus extolled the splendor of ordinary lilies in relation to Solomon: “Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. ...I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory was clothed as one of these” (Matthew 6:28-29) (CC)

valleys – Valleys generally have better soil and more moisture than the hill country and so foster plant growth. (CC)

He

2 As a lily among brambles, so is my love among the young women.

2:2 *as a lily among brambles* – Her lover teases her. In his eyes other women cannot compare to his beloved. Just as beautiful flowers spring up in the swampy plain or rough valets, so his flower has sprung up where he would least expect to find her. (PBC)

What splendor she does not claim for herself, he bestows forensically as he pronounces her most beautiful of all. She did not differentiate herself from the myriad of other flowers, but he does – with praise. Like the “sheep” in Matthew 25:31-40, she is blissfully unaware of the difference until he declares it. (CC)

brambles – Thorns are a symbol of misery ... and curse ... of a bleak and deadly world. Eschatologically, they signify impending divine wrath as the final judgment. They are reminder of man's sin in Eden, which incurred death for the whole creation (Gen 3:18). (CC)

She

3 As an apple tree among the trees of the forest, so is my beloved among the young men. With great delight I sat in his shadow, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. 4 He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love. 5 Sustain me with raisins; refresh me with apples, for I am sick with love. 6 His left hand is under my head, and his right hand embraces me! 7 I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or the does of the field, that you not stir up or awaken love until it pleases.

After the lovers' quick give and take, the beloved now launches into an extensive monologue. Here we might imagine a change of scenes since she is not speaking to him but about him. (PBC)

The imagery of 2:1-3 emphasizes the ordered aspect of the couple's relationship. She is a delicate flower; he is a sturdy tree. She affords him a pleasing sight and fragrance; he affords her protective shade and sustaining fruit. Though their delight in each other is mutual, he does not depend on her, but she does depend on. So it is with the church and her Lord. (CC)

2:3 *apple tree*. The precise nature of this fruit tree is uncertain. (CSB)

It is compared with the will trees of the forest which bear no worthwhile fruit. (PBC)

It probably includes the citron, and other trees with fragrant fruits. (CB)

A fruit tree uses its sap and life to create fruit, which, as it is broken off and eaten, sustains others. This fruit tree points to Solomon's sacrificial giving of himself for her benefit. Such was the self-giving of Christ, which Christian husbands are to imitate (Eph. 5:25). The self-giving may also be compared to the Lord's Supper in which Christ gives His very body and blood for the forgiveness of sins and sustains His faithful with the gift of Himself. (CC)

in his shadow – This symbolizes protection. For example, the psalmist states, "The Lord watches over you – The Lord is your shade at your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day, not the moon by night" (Psalm 121:5,6) (PBC)

his fruit – Not only is her life and protection, but also her sustenance. He provides for her needs. (PBC)

2:4 *banqueting house* – Literally "the house of wine." Here again the tone is one of modesty and propriety. (PBC)

Lit, "house of wine," in which are enjoyed the delicacies of raisins and apples (2:5). It is a place of feasting on rich food and aged wine (Is 25:6); a place where God's people may "taste and see that the LORD is good" (Ps 34:8). (TLSB)

The most likely location is Solomon's palace, which would have housed the royal bedchambers and a banquet hall. Hence "the house of wine," is a setting in which the married couple may savor the fruit of the vine and also imbibe in the intoxicating love that is "better than wine" (1:2, 4). (CC)

The house of wine might be compared to the temple, where libations of wine and offerings with other choice fruits are tokens of God's prior benefaction. But it is the outpouring of blood from the new temple, Jesus Christ, that offers sustenance for all of sin-sick humanity because it has merited the plenary forgiveness of sins for all. The proffering of that forgiveness with the bread and wine together with Christ's very body and blood in the Sacrament of the Altar furnishes the most lavish repast for all who are sick and hungry. This is the Feast of Victory, in which God unfurls His military standard of love over us: Christ crucified and risen. (CC)

banner. See 6:4; Num 2:2; Ps 20:5. The king's love for her is displayed for all to see, like a large military banner. (CSB)

Usually a military banner or battle standard. The Shulammite bride is escorted safely to the banquet hall under the standard of Solomon's love, even as Israel traveled beneath standards to the Promised Land (Nu 1:52; 2:2). (TLSB)

In the hall hangs the king's royal banner, just as the tribes of Israel had their unique banners (Numbers 1:52). The king's standard, or banner, was highly visible, a sign of his presence. Like a banner, the king's love for the maiden is evident to all. (PBC)

The church is compared to an army, and the love of Christ is the banner under which she marches. Compare chap 6:10. (CB)

As the church militant follows Christ, her captain, she is the heir of His once-for-all victory and is enlisted in the ongoing spiritual war. (CC)

This theology has practical implications for how a husband is to treat his wife and how a suite should woo a prospective bride. The man in this verse is not a macho vanquisher of women who seeks notches on his belt through his conquests. His victory come through self-sacrifice under the headship of Christ who gave Himself up unto death (Eph 5:21-27; Phil 2:5-11). A predatory seducer is motivated by lust, insecurity, and immediate self-gratification. A lover practices restraint, self-control, and gratification deferred until the God-pleasing time. (CC)

2:5 raisins ... apples. Probably metaphors for love's caresses and embraces. (CSB)

apples. Perhaps apricots. (TLSB)

Some commentators who follow the secular interpretation see here an erotic reference to ancient Canaanite fertility rites. The apples and raisins supposedly served as aphrodisiacs. The heathen often connected the eating of raisin cakes with their immoral worship (see Hosea 3:1). While there certainly is no need to see references to pagan worship here, it could well be that the beloved's mention of apples and raisins expresses something other than a call for actual food. It may very well allude to her desire for the love of the king. His love is her source of nourishment and strength. (PBC)

He who has once tasted the sweetness of God's love in Christ, can be satisfied with nothing short of its continued manifestation. In its absence, his soul "longeth, yea fainteth" for its renewal; and his heart and flesh "crieth out for the living God." (CB)

These are the most exquisite delicacies of God's good creation. Within the Song, they also are tokens of the sacrificial, redeeming love that is "the flame of Yahweh (8:6) that restores and transcends the creation. (CC)

sick with love. Love-induced weakness. (TLSB)

2:6 *embraces me* – The lover comes to her in her weakness and embraces her. He is her strength. Similarly, St. Peter urges husbands, “Be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner” (1 Peter 3:7). Without depicting one or the other as inferior or superior, the Bible regularly points to the man as the leader. We see this strong yet considerate quality in the lover in the Song of Songs. (PBC)

Her desire to be supported by food (2:5) melds into the picture of him upholding her in his arms. The classic Hebrew parallelism (“left hand...right hand”) suggests that he embraces her with the entirety of his being, expressing completeness of his love. (CC)

2:7 A recurring refrain in the Song (see 3:5; 8:4; cf. 5:8). It is always spoken by the beloved and always in a context of physical intimacy with her lover.

adjure. Place under oath. (CSB)

Legal term, putting someone under a vow or oath. (TLSB)

The daughters of Jerusalem are addressed as though being asked to take an oath. According to Deuteronomy 6:13, if people took an oath it was done in God’s name. But here they are charged (KJV, “adjure”) by gazelles and does of the field. (PBC)

While the adjuration’s warning condemns transgression, it also serves as a guide to a God-pleasing life according to His will. It expresses that God desires His creatures to experience the delightful pleasures He intends within the proper limits He has ordained. (CC)

you – When she uses the “you” it is masculine! This is another hint at another level of meaning; the beloved is not just speaking to the women. Back in 1:4 we noted how the maidens following the king could depict the believers in general. Here, too, we can see in the daughters of Jerusalem a reference to the church. (PBC)

gazelles ... does. Perhaps in the imaginative language of love the gazelles and does are portrayed as witnesses to the oath. This would be in harmony with the author’s frequent reference to nature. (CSB)

The Hebrew words for does and gazelles (ayyaloth, sebaoth) sound much like the name of the Lord of hosts (Elohei Sebaoth). The poem contains a number of such plays on words which are lost in translation, but would not have been lost to the original hearers. (PBC)

These are shy and easily frightened animals. Love like the Gospel, is gentle and rejectable. You cannot force love upon or out of another person. The invocation of “gazelles” and “does” may refer to the fact that they wait until the mating season. By instinct these animals conform to God’s design in a way that many humans do not. (CC)

love – Love is overwhelmingly powerful, “as strong as death” and “as fierce as Sheol” (8:6). That invocation of “death” and “Sheol” right after the final occurrence of the adjuration (8:4) is the most sobering danger to be mentioned in the Song. In future contexts, the Shulammite will be driven to pursue relentlessly – even recklessly – the one she loves. She will risk life and limb on the streets at night and endure a beating as the guards rip off her veil (3:1-5; 5:2-8). Yet “the Love” continues to impel her undeterred. By her adjuration she warns that “the Love” only comes with risks and suffering. (CC)

not stir up or awaken love. God's people are to live in faith according to His love and will. We spurn that love and will when we disregard the order that pleases God. In holy matrimony, husband and wife may enjoy a God-pleasing arousal and fulfillment of love, each one pleasing the other. (TLSB)

The supreme revelation of "the Love" is the suffering and death of the Christ on Golgotha. For the Lover sent from heaven, and the cross was inescapable. For the joy set before Him, He endured the cross, scorning its shame, and now is seated at the right hand of the Father (Heb. 12:2). (CC)

The greatest human need is for love – God's forgiving grace in Christ Jesus. It is also essential for the wholeness of a human being to love. The imprint of the original image of the Creator was love – active, obedient love for God and for the others He made. The fall into sin has acutely intensified the human need to be loved. Conversely, it has diminished or all but eradicated human ability to love. Nevertheless, the person who is most blissful is the one in love. In human relationships often it is not so much the loved received, but the love one possesses for the other dominates the emotions. Even those estranged from the Creator and soured on their fellow humans are still driven to seek and express love as best as they can. Love is inexorable. (CC)

until it pleases. Out of the beloved's experience of love comes wise admonition that love is not to be artificially stimulated; utter spontaneity is essential to its genuine truth and beauty. (CSB)

The idea, then, is that you can't hurry love. Sometimes people are so eager to find love that they rush into an unwise relationship. On the religious level, in their desire for inner peace and God's love, people often grasp at something less than the real thing. But real love in marriage and in our spiritual life is a gift of God. We can't force it or hurry it. Give it time. Give God time. He can bless your marriage and your life with love. Meanwhile stay close to Him and His Word, the only source for real, lasting love. (PBC)

Verses 8-13 Mark another change in scenery. From the banquet hall we move back to the countryside. (PBC)

The welfare of Zion is as the holiness of her individual members. The Savior tenderly adjures all who love Him and His church, not to do anything which shall hinder her union and communion with Himself, wherein lie her strength, comfort, and usefulness. (CB)

1:8–2:7 In a world of immediate gratification, it is tempting to satisfy our desires as quickly as they awaken. Such unbridled arousal of passion leads to many sorrows, complications, and sins. But God, in His passion to save us, sent forth His Son, born of a virgin, to redeem all who are under the Law's judgment and curse. In Christ, your sins have been forgiven, and now, as He told the woman caught in adultery, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more" (Jn 8:11). • Father, by Your love for us in Christ Jesus, teach us that we are truly set free from condemnation and sin. Keep the banner of Your love in Christ Jesus ever between us and our enemies—sin, death, and our own flesh—who do not want us to hallow Your name or let Your kingdom come. Amen. (TLSB)

The Bride Adores Her Beloved

8 The voice of my beloved! Behold, he comes, leaping over the mountains, bounding over the hills. 9 My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag. Behold, there he stands behind our wall, gazing through the windows, looking through the lattice. 10 My beloved speaks and

says to me: Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come away, 11 for behold, the winter is past; the rain is over and gone. 12 The flowers appear on the earth, the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. 13 The fig tree ripens its figs, and the vines are in blossom; they give forth fragrance. Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come away. 14 O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the crannies of the cliff, let me see your face, let me hear your voice, for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely. 15 Catch the foxes for us, the little foxes that spoil the vineyards, for our vineyards are in blossom.” 16 My beloved is mine, and I am his; he grazes among the lilies. 17 Until the day breathes and the shadows flee, turn, my beloved, be like a gazelle or a young stag on cleft mountains.

2:8 voice of my beloved –She hears his voice and thrilled. This is not to imply the idea, often connected with the word “lover” today, of an illicit sexual relationship. She uses it simply as a term of endearment for the one she loves. Not until the marriage scene (3:6-5:1) does the Song speak of the physical consummation of that love. It is interesting that Solomon’s other name, Jedidiah (2 Samuel 12:25), means “loved by the Lord.” (PBC)

This is a new scene. The bride in her winter retreat, hears the voice of her beloved coming in exultation to call her forth. Winter, like the scorching of the sun, is a symbol of adversity and depression; and spring, of returning prosperity. After the winter of adversity, God always appears for the relief of His people. (CB)

Solomon comes from a far to woo and marry the Shulammite. Hence 2:8-9 (and also 2:10-14) pertains to the period of courtship. In terms of the now/not yet eschatological tension, the emphasis in 2:8-14 is on the “not yet”: They are not yet married or united. (CC)

The mood in this setting, with its tension between separation and joyful expectation of union, may be compared to the tension in the church between inaugurated and future eschatology. In Christ “the kingdom of God has come near” (Mark 1:15). With Christ’s first advent the kingdom arrived, but it has not yet been consummated in all its fullness. The beloved strains to hear her lover’s voice. Which brings her great joy like that expressed by John the Baptist in nuptial terminology: “The Groom’s friend, who stands and listens for him, greatly rejoices because of the voice of the Groom, Therefore this joy, mine, is fulfilled” (John 3:29) (CC)

2:9 gazelle. Celebrated for its form and beauty. (CSB)

The speed and leaping ability of gazelles and hinds is proverbial in the OT and in the entire ancient Near East. Leaping and jumping express agile grace and a heightened feeling of life. (CC)

One may contrast the elegant alacrity of the gazelle and deer with the brute strength and crass sexuality of the bull, which frequently represented Baal in Canaanite mythology. A man who woos his wife by approaching her as a graceful gazelle, not a brutish bull, may become a superb lover. (CC)

God is a superb love in that He wins us over with the sweet Gospel and the bullish Law. (CSB)

young stag. An apt simile for youthful vigor (cf. Isa 35:6). (CSB)

behind our wall – The bride and her companions are behind the wall of the house. Christ comes to comfort His church. (CB)

gazing ... lattice. The eager lover tries to catch sight of the beloved while she is still preparing herself for their meeting. (CSB)

Return to courtship and yearning as the bridegroom comes near, but has not yet entered in to the fullness of wedded bliss—an image that develops the tension between promised love and consummation. (TLSB)

Solomon's excitement is as great as hers. He is pictured as bounding across the country side to reach his beloved. The poem likens Solomon to a gazelle or young stag. These animals symbolize youthful vigor and speed. In 2 Samuel 2:18 a swift young man is described as "fleet-footed as a wild gazelle," and in Psalm 18:33 David exalts in God's protection, "He makes my feet like the feet of a deer. (PBC)

Similarly, Yahweh "gazes down from", the same phrase as in Song 2:9, His dwelling place in heaven at all humanity (Ps. 33:14). "Behold, Yahweh's eye is on those who fear Him, who wait for His grace – to save their soul from death, to give them life ... Yahweh, may your grace be upon us, as we wait for you" (Ps. 33:18-19, 22). Believers are comforted by the knowledge that we are the object of God's loving gaze. The visual contact is onesided: God sees us, but we, in our "not yet" state, cannot perceive Him in His grace – except through His Word and Sacraments. (CC)

2:10–11 Spring has come and the wedding is drawing near, so Solomon invites his bride to begin a new life with him. Grooms would often send a representative to negotiate with her family (cf Gn 24), but here, Solomon himself comes to the Shulammitte. (TLSB)

the rain is over. The rainy season (Oct–Apr) is past, and the earth is watered and springing to life. (TLSB)

2:10 *Arise my love.* The OT attests a variety of ways in which a man might propose betrothal and marriage. Sometimes the prospective bridegroom would send a person representative or family member(s) to negotiate with the bride and her family. It is remarkable that here no less than King Solomon personally speaks to the Shulammitte and in his invitation even accords her the title "my friend" (darling). (CC)

Solomon's call to the Shulammitte to begin a new life with him is, in a small way, like God's call, which claims people as His own and calls them to an ongoing life of faith and faithfulness. (CC)

come away – As God called Abraham to leave his home and travel to a new land in which God would dwell with His people (Gen. 12:1-3), so Solomon calls the Shulammitte to leave her house (our wall," 2:9), leave the safe clefts of the cliff (2:14), and accompany him in the venture of marriage. (CC)

2:11–13 The first signs of spring appear (see 6:11; 7:12)—the time of love. (CSB)

Palestine's rainy winter season – roughly November to March – is past. As he invites his beloved to join him, Solomon paints a beautiful word picture of spring flowers, doves cooing, trees and vines blossoming and filling the air with fragrance, the whole earth alive with song. (PBC)

Christ's presence with His church fills her with the voice of gladness and singing, and makes everything within her borders green and fruitful. (CB)

2:12 *time of singing.* Or, “time of pruning.” Springtime brings with it the responsibility of pruning or cutting back branches so they will produce more fruit in the fall. It also brings singing, esp the songs of love. Either meaning is possible here. (TLSB)

turtledove. Turtledoves returned to Israel in April, after the rainy season (2:11). (TLSB)

2:13 *fig tree ripens its figs* – Next to the olive tree, the fig tree was the most important tree in Israel. It is frequently mentioned in Scripture. This tree blossoms in March and soon produces its “early fruit.” The actual figs come later and are not ripe until fall. (PBC)

The picture of springtime is another one that Scripture applies to Christ and His people, the church: “Israel will bud and blossom and fill all the world with fruit” (Isaiah 27:6). When Christ came, He made everything new and fresh. To this day His gospel produces life and fruit wherever it is sown. (PBC)

2:14 *dove ... in the clefts of the rock.* Cf. Ps 55:6–8; Jer 48:28. (CSB)

God’s people may be typified as doves (Mt 10:16) who take refuge in the Lord. (TLSB)

There are several Hebrew words for dove; the one used in these verses is the dove of the rocks (yonah, from which the name Jonah comes). Like the shy rock dove who hides in the clefts of a rock, the girl remains in her house. (PBC)

In the poetry of the Psalms, “cliff, rock,” is a metaphor for Yahweh, who provides protection, refuge, and salvation for His people. As for the “cliff, rock,” from which water flowed for the Israelites (Num. 29:8-11; Ps. 78:16), according to 1 Cor. 10:4 that rock is Christ. Song 2:14 has a long history of Christological interpretation in which the “dove” represents the church or the Christian and the “cliff” or “rock” represents Christ. (CC)

2:15 Perhaps spoken by the beloved. (CSB)

vineyards. As in 1:6 (“my own vineyard”), probably a metaphor for the lovers’ physical beauty. Thus the desire is expressed that the lovers be kept safe from whatever (“foxes”) might mar their mutual attractiveness. (CSB)

little foxes. Real threat to vineyards by their devouring of fruit and digging. Vineyards usually had walls to keep out wild animals. Little things often eat away at and erode love in marriage. St Paul warns that even a “little leaven” can threaten “the whole lump” (1Co 5:6). Thus, Luther warns against “false brethren in the church, and also heresies” which “worm their way in” and slowly wreak havoc on God’s vineyard (AE 15:221). (TLSB)

Foxes or jackals get into the vineyard and destroy the crop, more by digging at the roots of the vines by eating the grapes. These foxes might represent anything that would destroy the love between the man and the woman. Pride, selfishness, jealousy, lust, bad habits and lack of trust are all “foxes” in a relationship. The lover rightly calls on the maiden to work at whatever problems face them. The springtime of love – before marriage – is the best time to face and overcome obstacles to love. (PBC)

This is a petition for the curtailment of forces that would keep the couple apart. The foxes are despoiling the vineyard, and the vineyard is the place where she will desire to him her love. Luther cites Isaiah 5 and identifies two classes of foxes, little and big:

The little foxes are false brethren in the church, and also heresies which at first worm their way in so that they can be detected only with difficulty. But those who disrupt public affairs give themselves away immediately by their seditious plans, like bigger foxes.

Luther's view is supported by Ezekiel 13:4, where Ezekiel depicts false prophets as "foxes in the ruins," probably signifying that Jerusalem would soon lie in ruins because of her apostasy, which was exacerbated by the false prophets. (CC)

are in blossom. Their attractiveness is in its prime. (CSB)

2:16 *My beloved is mine and I am his.* They belong to each other exclusively in a relationship that allows no intrusion. (CSB)

Husband and wife belong to each other in the bonds of God's marriage covenant, where two become one flesh (Gn 2:18–25; Mt 19:4–6). There is real reciprocity in marriage (1Co 7:3–5; Eph 5:21–23), reflecting, however imperfectly, love created by God, who makes us His own in the bond of Christ (Lv 26:12; 1Pt 2:9–10). (TLSB)

These words are often used as a theme for weddings, because they serve as a reminder of the faithfulness God's looks for in marriage. (PBC)

This conveys rich theology. Its message may be compared to the Christological affirmation in 1 Cor. 6:19-20: "You are not your own; you were bought for a price." (CC)

While mutual love can be protected by the Law, the Law has no power to create love; only the Gospel can. Faithful human love that fulfills the First and Sixth Commandments is the fruit of God's love and God's fidelity to His covenant of grace. (CC)

Jesus used language reminiscent of the OT covenant as He assures His followers that His God and Father is theirs too: "I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God" (John 20:17). In 2 Cor. 6:16 St Paul affirms that Christians comprise the new temple of the living God, who dwells in them, fulfilling His promise: "I will be their God, and they will be my people" (see also 1 Peter 2:9-10). Rev. 21:3 contains the same two themes of tabernacle and covenant, and shows that the fulfillment of God's promises of indwelling and communion shall be for eternity: "Behold, the tabernacle of God [will be] with men, and He will tabernacle with them, and they will be His people,, and He Himself will be with them as their God." (CC)

grazes among the lilies. The lover is compared to a gazelle (see v. 17). The browsing is a metaphor for the lover's intimate enjoyment of her charms (see 6:2–3). (CSB)

2:17 *until the day breathes* – In this verse the young woman seems to look ahead to their actual marriage. She longs for his speedy return. Life will be dark for her, until he comes and refreshes her as a morning breeze. (PBC)

Indicates either the early morning breezes stirred by the warming of the earth at the rising of the sun or the cooling breezes at dusk, when shadows lengthen and take their flight. (TLSB)

The advent of the greater light causes the shadows to flee. The approaching day of salvation grows brighter and casts its beam upon the faithful. Is. 60:1 calls to God's people, "Arise, shine,

for your Light has come, and the glory of Yahweh has dawned upon you.” Epiphany celebrates the coming of the true light into the world. (CC)

These eschatological themes, including the Emmaus reference (Luke 24:29), are part of the opening Service of Light in Evening Prayer. Here too, the close of the earthly day moves the heart to eager expectation of the dawning eschaton. (LSB p. 243) (CC)

like a gazelle...stag – At his second advent too, the image depicts his graceful strength, swift speed, and God-given ability to leap over all obstacles, no matter how steep the mountains or treacherous the footing. One might compare the imagery to that in Is. 40:1-11 (fulfilled at Christ’s first advent in Luke 3:4-6), where no mountains or vales are able to prevent Yahweh’s approach to His people as a tender shepherd. In Revelation, the imagery of the Lamb who shepherds His people is intertwined with that of the church’s wedding and eternal nuptial feast. Christians receive Christ not as the terrifying judge seen by unbelievers, but as the Lamb who had been slain, who at His second advent will come to shepherd and embrace His own (Rev. 5:6, 12; 7:17; 13:8). The eschatological celebration is “the wedding feast of the Lamb” (Rev. 19:7, 9), and it is God in the form of the “Lamb” who joins Himself in marriage to the church as His “bride” (Rev 21:9). (CC)

2:8–17 Carelessness can ruin any earthly relationship. Mutual conversation and attention to each other is essential. How much more is required in that mysterious and wonderful union between Christ and His Church! Our Lord wants to hear our confession and our prayers, and even more so, He wants to give us His consolation and forgiveness. • Lord, speak tenderly to us, and let us hear. Pour out Your love within Your Word and Sacraments, and teach us to live by all You give us. Amen. (TLSB)