

Song of Songs

Chapter 4

Solomon Admires His Bride's Beauty

He

Behold, you are beautiful, my love, behold, you are beautiful! Your eyes are doves behind your veil. Your hair is like a flock of goats leaping down the slopes of Gilead. 2 Your teeth are like a flock of shorn ewes that have come up from the washing, all of which bear twins, and not one among them has lost its young. 3 Your lips are like a scarlet thread, and your mouth is lovely. Your cheeks are like halves of a pomegranate behind your veil. 4 Your neck is like the tower of David, built in rows of stone; on it hang a thousand shields, all of them shields of warriors. 5 Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle, that graze among the lilies. 6 Until the day breathes and the shadows flee, I will go away to the mountain of myrrh and the hill of frankincense. 7 You are altogether beautiful, my love; there is no flaw in you. 8 Come with me from Lebanon, my bride; come with me from Lebanon. Depart from the peak of Amana, from the peak of Senir and Hermon, from the dens of lions, from the mountains of leopards. 9 You have captivated my heart, My sister, my bride; you have captivated my heart with one glance of your eyes, with one jewel of your necklace. 10 How beautiful is your love, my sister, my bride! How much better is your love than wine, and the fragrance of your oils than any spice! 11 Your lips drip nectar, my bride; honey and milk are under your tongue; the fragrance of your garments is like the fragrance of Lebanon. 12 A garden locked is my sister, my bride, a spring locked, a fountain sealed. 13 Your shoots are an orchard of pomegranates with all choicest fruits, henna with nard, 14 nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense, myrrh and aloes, with all choice spices—15 a garden fountain, a well of living water, and flowing streams from Lebanon. 16 Awake, O north wind, and come, O south wind! Blow upon my garden, let its spices flow.

4:1–7 For other exuberant descriptions of the beloved's beauty see 6:4–9; 7:1–7. (CSB)

The adorning of the bride was a very costly and elaborate affair. Much time was given to the preparation of her person. Solomon begins by describing seven of her features. It is no accident that he chooses seven. It is the number of completion and perfection. In the king's eyes his bride is perfect. (PBC)

The purpose of the Song's metaphors and similes is to instill the same emotions of delight in beauty, love, pleasure, and so on as is aroused by the central point. The poet chooses images in such a way as to make us feel their sensory – even erotic – substantiality ... We are to see, smell, taste, and feel the things spoken of. Westerners often focus on visual appeal, but visual similarity is just one facet of the bodily descriptions, and the Western obsession with external appearance may even be misleading. (CC)

In actual fact, no sinful human being possesses perfection, and the church is composed of saints who yet remain sinners throughout this life. Humanly speaking, no amount of jewelry and perfume, and not even the most glorious of dress can cover up the many blemishes and faults of any person. But Solomon – in love – does not see, smell, feel, or otherwise detect any fault in his beloved bride. Likewise, through forensic justification, baptismal incorporation into Christ, is regarded by God an unblemished, robed in holiness, and perfect. (CC)

Ephesians 5:25-27, “²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing ^a her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷ and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.”

Galatians 3:27-28, “²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

Revelation 21:2, 11, “² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ¹¹ It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.”

4:1 *eyes... behind your veil.* With the rest of her face concealed, the lover’s attention is focused on the beloved’s eyes. (CSB)

doves. Solomon describes his bride’s eyes, which he sees through her wedding veil. (TLSB)

flock of goats. The goats of Canaan were usually black. The lover’s hair was also black (5:11). (CSB)

If you have ever seen a flock of black goats moving down a hillside, you’ll understand the imagery of her long, graceful, jet-black hair flowing in the wind. (PBC)

leaping down the slopes of Gilead. The beloved’s black tresses flowing from her head remind the lover of a flock of sleek black goats streaming down one of the hills of Gilead (noted for its good pasturage). (CSB)

Hilly region east of Jerusalem, where Jacob made a covenant with Laban (Gn 31:44–54). (TLSB)

4:2 *shorn ewes.* Clean and white. (CSB)

The simile is apt because newly shorn sheep would be relatively smooth and white. (CC)

come up from the washing. Still wet, like moistened teeth. (CSB)

Newly shorn sheep, smooth from sheering and then wet from washing, make an apt comparison to glistening wet teeth in the mouth. (TLSB)

When wet, perhaps with the sun reflecting off of the water still on them, the sheep together in a flock could be likened to glistening wet teeth within the mouth. (CC)

bear twins – The mention of twins pictures the evenness of her teeth. (PBC)

The simile suggests that the Shulammitte’s teeth are well-matched and symmetrical. Cf AE 15:228–29. (TLSB)

4:3 *Your lips ... scarlet.* Perhaps the beloved painted her lips, like Egyptian women. (CSB)

Crimson in color and vividly eye-catching. (TLSB)

halves of a pomegranate. Round and blushed with red. (CSB)

Rich, red fruit; an apt description of the rosy-cheeked bride. (TLSB)

The reddish color of this fruit would be a fitting description. The pomegranate fruit is very refreshing and was a popular food in Bible times. Images of pomegranates ornamented the hem of the high priest's robe (Exodus 28:33) and the great pillars in front of Solomon's temple (1 Kings 7:20). (PBC)

4:4 The beloved's erect, bespangled neck is like a tower on the city wall adorned with warriors' shields (cf. 7:4). (CSB)

tower of David. Probably a tower in Jerusalem built by David to fortify his defenses. (TLSB)

shields. Polished for decoration. Perhaps indicating a necklace the Shulammitte wears. (TLSB)

In his palace King Solomon had hung two hundred large gold shields and three hundred small ones (1 Kings 10:16,17). The gold jewelry around her neck is reminiscent of these shields. (PBC)

4:5 *fawns.* Representing tender, delicate beauty, and promise rather than full growth (cf. 8:8). (CSB)

While Christian reader today may be a bit squeamish about such physical references, the ancients were not. Speaking through the Prophet Isaiah, the Lord Himself used this kind of language, "For you [my people] will nurse and be satisfied at her comforting breasts; you will drink deeply and delight in her overflowing abundance" (Isaiah 66:11). (PBC)

gazelle. Elsewhere the simile is used of the lover. (CSB)

graze among the lilies. For a different use of this phrase. (CSB)

4:6 *Until ... shadows flee.* The first part of this verse is a repetition of 2:17, "Until day break and the shadows flee. (CSB)

There the woman had spoken; now Solomon uses her words. He looks forward to being with her until the break of day. (PBC)

mountain of myrrh ... hill of incense. Metaphors for lovers' intimacy. (CSB)

Here may allude to the Shulammitte's breasts, esp following v 5. (TLSB)

The mountain of myrrh could also be a subtle allusion to Mt. Moriah on which the temple stood. The Hebrew words for myrrh, more, is similar to Moriah. Certainly the best place to begin a marriage is in the presence of the Lord with His blessings and guidance. (PBC)

4:7 *are altogether beautiful...my love* – The heavenly bride, the Lamb's wife, is "the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth." She embraces in herself all the true excellence that is found among men. (CB)

4:8 To the lover the beloved seems to have withdrawn as if to a remote mountain. (CSB)

For the first time Solomon calls his beloved “my bride.” His invitation to leave her homeland makes mention of several mountains or mountain ranges. (PBC)

Lebanon ... Amana ... Hermon. Mountain peaks on the northern horizon. (CSB)

Lebanon. Mountainous region to the north known for its cedars and junipers, which Solomon imported for building the temple and his palace. The Shulammitte’s family home may have been in Shunem, near Lebanon, but still in Israel. Solomon may have escorted his bride to the lofty ranges of Lebanon to show her his kingdom. *Amana.* In the Anti-Lebanon range, north of Israel. *Senir and Hermon.* Possible synonyms for Mount Hermon, the tallest peak in the Anti-Lebanon mountain range. (TLSB)

All of these lie to the north of Galilee, and Solomon use them in a general way to refer to the north country. Each of these names has connections with Bible history. (PBC)

Lebanon means “white” and comes from the area’s impressive snowcapped mountain range which runs parallel to the Mediterranean coast. This area is still famous for the cedar trees which were used in the construction of Solomon’s temple (1 Kings 5:6). The little country of Lebanon is probably the most beautiful part of the Middle East; it is tragic that in our day this land has experienced so much warfare and destruction. (PBC)

A few miles to the east of the Lebanon mountains lies a parallel range known as the Anti-Lebanon range. The highest peak is Mt. Hermon (9,232 feet), also call Senir, located about forty miles northeast of the Sea of Galilee. Mt. Hermon’s melting snows are a main source of the Jordan River. In the midst of an arid land, “the dew of Hermon” (Psalm 133:3) came to symbolize life and joy. Many consider this site of Christ’s transfiguration. (PBC)

The Amana Mountains lie at the northern end of the Anti-Lebanon range. From them come the waters of the Abana River, which flows through the city of Damascus. When the Prophet Elisha told Naaman to wash in the Jordan River and be cleansed of his leprosy, Naaman, who was from Damascus, at first replied, “Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than any of the waters of Israel?” (2 Kings 5:12). The northern heights with their forests and sparkling rivers were known for their beauty. (PBC)

Lebanon is pictured as a primordial place like Eden, pristine and unspoiled by sin. Even its ferocious felines (lions and leopards, 4:8) do the Shulammitte no harm, recalling that all animals lived in harmony in Eden and anticipating the restoration of harmony in the new heavens and earth (Isaiah 11; 65:17-25). All of the references to Lebanon in the Song are similarly positive. (CC)

Throughout the OT and NT, God chose certain mountains as locations where He would reveal Himself to mankind and dispense His life-giving grace. These include Mount Sinai, Mount Moriah and Mount Zion (at Jerusalem), and Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18). In the Psalms of Ascent (Psalms 120-134), the pilgrims ascend up to Jerusalem, and in particular to the temple there, where God provided atonement for sins and conferred everlasting life (Ps. 23:6) –to be secured by Jesus’ death on Mount Calvary, where He was lifted up (John 3:14; 8:28; 12:32) and where He promised paradise to the penitent thief on the cross (Luke 23:43). (Today He does it in the worship service.) (CC)

Senir. Amorite name for Mount Hermon (Dt 3:9). (CSB)

from dens of lion – Solomon reminds his bride that he is also removing her from the dangers of that region. Lions and leopards once abounded in the Bible lands and were a very real danger in the countryside. (Leopards are still to be found in the region.) Samson was once attacked by a lion (Judges 14:5,6), and David had to kill a lion in order to protect his flock of sheep (1 Samuel 17:34-36). The OT also uses these animals in a symbolic way to represent dangers and punishments. Through the Prophet Jeremiah God warned His people, “A lion from the forest will attack them, ...a leopard will lie in wait near their towns to tear to pieces any who venture out” (Jeremiah 5:6). As Solomon protects his wife in the Song, Christ protects His people from evil. Likewise husbands ought to care for their wives. (PBC)

In the company of her bridegroom, the Shulammitte will be safe, even amidst such wild creatures as lions and leopards, which may also refer to the people of that region; Solomon calls his bride out of association with them (cf Rv 18:4). (TLSB)

4:9 *my sister*. For lovers to address each other as “brother” and “sister” was common in the love poetry of the ancient Near East (see vv. 10, 12; 5:1). (CSB)

Implies the intimacy of the bride and her husband, as though they were of one blood and one flesh (Gn 2:24; Eph 5:31). (TLSB)

This is a term of endearment and has no incestuous connotation. It expresses a desire for familiarity. (PBC)

The term is to be interpreted in the same sense that Christians are brothers and sisters in Christ, as supported by some NT passages. My sister connotes the intimacy of the marriage relationship, which is comparable to that profound degree of familial intimacy between brother and sister, who share the same flesh and blood. (CC)

your necklace – This most naturally relates to the Shulammitte’s adornments for the wedding ceremony itself. Solomon had first commented on her eyes in 1:15 in the context of marital intimacy, and in 4:1 he again praises her eyes as they are behind her veil – probably her wedding veil. She wears necklaces (denoted by different Hebrew terms) also in 1:10 and 4:4, both of which probably describe her jewelry during the wedding ceremony. (CC)

Since the Shulammitte seems to be from a humble background, her jewelry is most likely provided for her as a gracious gift, as in 1:1, where the chorus promises to make adornments for her. Hence her splendor in this passage is part of the Gospel theme of the Great Reversal. As in Eden, where God provided all that Adam and Eve needed, here all that the Shulammitte needs for her wedding to her king, is a gift of grace – and so too it is for the church. Glassius sees in this verse the attractiveness of the church, especially her love, which is the fruit of faith (Gal 5:6; 1 John 3:23) and which is worked in her through the Word of Holy Scripture, the spiritual neck of the church (Song 4:4). (CC)

4:10-11 The imagery of these verses centers on culinary delights. His delights of her love as “better than wine” in 4:10 is the converse of her comparison of his love as “better than wine” in 1:2. Similar imagery with wine recurs throughout the Song. Since wine is the fruit of the vineyard, it is related to the vineyard motif throughout the Song. Song 4:10 and 5:1 support the view that the association of love with wine in the Song is part of the OT background for the Lord’s Supper, the Sacrament in which the blood of Christ – poured out to bring the fullness of

divine love through the forgiveness of sins – is furnished to the communicant together with wine. Truly that wine is the most sacred and priceless gift of love. (CC)

The other viands comprise a banquet of the richest fare: honey, milk, pomegranates, and the choicest fruits (4:11, 13, 16; 5:1). These natural delicacies are like the apples and raisin cakes in 2:3-5, except that there the Shulammitte partakes of Solomon's sweet fruit. Here Solomon savors her delicacies, as also in 7:7-13) where dates, grapes, apples, fine wine, pomegranates, and delicious fruits are associated with her and provide the setting for love's consummation. (CC)

Since all delectables in 4:10-5:1 are fruits of creation, they contribute to the theme of the garden paradise in which the Creator Himself furnished everything needful and delightful. Like the Garden of Eden, in it all species are represented. The imagery does more than hearken back to Eden. It relates to the depiction of the Gospel as God's invitation to dine on wine, milk, and the most sumptuous fare. This Gospel banquet is free; it comes not through work or works (Is. 55:1), but through hearing the gracious Word (Is. 55:2-3). (CC)

The garden with the finest fruits and wine (Song 4:13-14; 5:1) is eschatological. It anticipates the day when the mountains will flow with wine (Amos 9:13), when God will swallow up death forever and furnish on Mount Zion the richest feast with the finest wines (Is 25:6-8). The Lord's Supper now provides a foretaste of that feast to come, the wedding supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:6-9). (CC)

4:10 *spice*. See v. 14; 5:1, 13; 6:2; 8:14. Spice was an imported luxury item (see 1Ki 10:2, 10, 25; Eze 27:22). Spices were used for fragrance in the holy anointing oil (Ex 25:6; 30:23–25; 35:8) and for fragrant incense (Ex 25:6; 35:8) as well as for perfume. (CSB)

4:11 *Your lips drip necttar*. The beloved speaks to him of love (cf. Pr 5:3; 16:24). People in the ancient Near East associated sweetness with the delights of love. (CSB)

honey and milk. Perhaps reminiscent of the description of the promised land. (CSB)

As God had blessed the people with the Promised Land, so Solomon's wife is a gift from the Lord. Too often married people forget that their spouse is a blessing from the Lord. (PBC)

under your tongue. See Job 20:12; Ps 10:7. (CSB)

fragrance of your garments – This is perhaps a reference to the smell of cedar. The other great wedding song of the OT, Psalm 45, speaks of the scent of the groom's robes, "fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia," Part of the richness of Solomon's Song lies in its many appeals to the five senses. (PBC)

May refer to the sweetness of the Shulammitte's breath, her speech, or to the pleasure derived from her kiss. (TLSB)

4:12 *garden*. A place of sensual delights. (CSB)

The wedding procession and the rejoicing have ended. From this point on until the end of the wedding section the imagery shifts to that of a garden. With this shy scene begins the consummation of love (4:12-5:1). PBC)

garden locked ... a spring locked, a fountain sealed. Vivid description of her premarital virginity and chastity. Luther says this description is indicative of the Church's being sealed and set apart from all others by God's gifts of "Word, Baptism, and the Sacrament of the Altar" (AE 15:234). (TLSB)

locked ... sealed. Metaphors for the beloved's virginity—or perhaps for the fact that she keeps herself exclusively for her husband. (CSB)

This is a common scene in the Middle East. It keeps out thieves and animals; only the rightful owner has access to it. (PBC)

Under OT laws a young woman would be stoned to death for "being promiscuous while still in her father's house." That is, before she married and left. And married partners who were unfaithful met with the same fate (see Deuteronomy 22:13-29.) Such is the high value God has placed on purity and total commitment between husband and wife. (PBC)

Christ will not share with others the affections of His people. If they would have Him dwell in their garden, its fruits must be consecrated to Him alone. (CB)

spring ... fountain. Sources of refreshment; metaphors for the beloved as a sexual partner, as in Pr 5:15–20. (CSB)

4:13–15 Verses 13–14 elaborate on the garden metaphor of v. 12a, and v. 15 on the fountain metaphor of v. 12b. The trees and spices in vv. 13–14 are mostly exotic, referring to the beloved's charms. (CSB)

Thorough list of Near Eastern spices, demonstrating the Shulammitte's lavish virtues. (TLSB)

The Song points to two main conclusions for the interpretation of the spices. First, some Song passages cite spices in contexts that relate to OT passages in which aromatics are associated with intimacy. Second, some Song passages indicate that spices represent the presence of God's Spirit and God's gracious favor as it wafts over His people like the incense that accompanied sacrificial atonement for the forgiveness of sins. Some passages like the fragrant Shulammitte to Israel accompanied by God, and that image is best understood in relation to the abundant use of aromatics in the divine worship of the tabernacle and temple – the locus of God's indwelling presence in Israel, prefiguring the incarnation of Jesus Christ and Christ's ongoing presence in His bride, the church, through the Word and Sacraments. (CC)

In 4:10-5:1 too the spices serve as perfumes that enhance intimacy and excite the senses (probably of the bride as well as of the groom), so that Solomon can describe the consummation thus: "I gathered my myrrh with my spice" (5:1). The Shulammitte bride wears spiced ointments along with jewelry (4:9) since she has been prepared for the wedding ceremony and consummation. Esther 2:12 describes the use of myrrh and other spices in the elaborate preparation of brides before their union with a king (Ahasuerus). Such use is more than hygienic. The marital use of the same kinds of spices employed in the liturgical rites of the tabernacle and temple would imply that the blessing of God rests upon the couple and that His favor wafts over them in the sacred context of holy matrimony. "Marriage is honorable in all respects and the marriage bed is undefiled" (Heb 13:4). Hence when Solomon goes to the aromatic mountains in 4:6 ("the mountain of myrrh and the hill of frankincense") and 8:14 ("mountains of spices"), such imagery may allude to her breast, since the Song patently refers to such intimacy purely and without sin. (CC)

Notable NT passages refer to myrrh, frankincense, incense, and/or the fragrant aroma of sacrifice that appeases God. Such passages fill out the implication of the spices in the Song. The magi brought frankincense and myrrh as offerings to the young Christ Child as tokens of their worship (Mt 2:11). The adoration of Christ (the one greater than Solomon,” Mt. 12:42) by the magi may be seen as the NT fulfillment of the pilgrimage of the Queen of Sheba, who journeyed from her land to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and who brought spices as gifts. Jesus was anointed with aromatic perfume in Luke 7:36-50. On another occasion (Mt 26:6-13; Mk 14:3-9; John 12:1-8), Jesus was anointed with expensive perfumed ointment. (CC)

After Christ’s atoning death on the cross, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus wrapped Jesus’ body with spices and placed it in the garden tomb (John 19:38-42); likewise. The spices in Song 4:10-5:1 are in the context of the garden. Early on Easter Sunday, the women came to that garden tomb with the intent of embalming Christ’s body with spices, though the risen and living Christ had no need of them (Mark 16:1; Luke 23:55-24:1). Christ’s brief repose in the garden tomb opened the eschatological garden paradise to all in Christ – the way back to the tree of life and the river of the water of life (Rev. 22:1-5) (CC)

The scent of Christ worn by Christians is smelled by others – believers and unbelievers alike – in a way that proclaims Law and Gospel evangelically (2 Cor. 2:14-16). Unbelievers consider Christians to bear the aroma from death while the fellow redeemed recognize it as the aroma from life (2 Cor 16). That is, the aroma of Christ’s atoning sacrifice imparts spiritual life already now to those in Christ, and just as a dead garden rejuvenates in spring, so Christians will be raised, body and soul, to a new and eternal life in the eschatological garden paradise. (CC)

In harmony with 2 Cor. 2:14-16, and using some of the same language as in Eph 5:2, St Paul refers to the gifts that he received from the Christians in Philippi as “a fragrant odor, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God” (Phil 4:18). Those sacrificial gifts (probably financial and perhaps material) were an expression of the Philippians’ faith and unity in Christ which supported the apostle’s ministry. The aroma of good works is pleasing to God on account of Christ, and fellow Christians too (like Paul) may savor the fragrance (cf. 2 Cor 2:16). (CC)

4:13 *Your shoots.* All the beloved’s features that delight the lover. (CSB)

Expansion of the metaphor of the Shulammitte bride as a garden. Similarly, Scripture often describes God’s people as a vineyard (Mt 20:1–16; Jn 15:5). (TLSB)

orchard. Hebrew *pardes* (from which the English word “paradise” comes), a loanword from Old Persian meaning “enclosure” or “park.” In Ne 2:8 and Ecc 2:5 it refers to royal parks and forests. (CSB)

4:14 *saffron.* A plant of the crocus family bearing purple or white flowers, parts of which, when dried, were used as a cooking spice. (CSB)

This is mentioned nowhere else in the entire OT; a single ounce of this precious spice requires over 4,000 blossoms. (PBC)

calamus. An imported (see Jer 6:20), aromatic spice cane, used also in the holy anointing oil (Ex 30:23, 25, “cane”) and in incense (Isa 43:23–24). (CSB)

The spice reed, an aromatic plant. (TLSB)

This could refer to a reed or, more likely here, to a grass from which ginger-oil is extracted. (PBC)

cinnamon. Used in the holy anointing oil (Ex 30:23, 25). (CSB)

Included with calamus and myrrh in the ingredients for anointing oil and used for consecrating the tabernacle (Ex 30:23). (TLSB)

This comes from the bark of a tree native to southeast Asia; it was used in the special anointing oil prepared by Moses (Exodus 30:22-29). (PBC)

frankincense. Specified for use in the tabernacle (Ex 30:34–38), grain offerings (Lv 2:1–2, 15–16), and the bread of the Presence (Lv 24:7). (TLSB)

This was the resin from another tree foreign to Israel; it was one of the wise men’s gifts to Jesus (Matthew 2:11). (PBC)

aloes. Aromatic aloes, used to perfume royal nuptial robes (Ps 45:8). Pr 7:17 says that the adulteress perfumed her bed “with myrrh, aloes and cinnamon.” (CSB)

This could be one of several plants; quite possibly it is the same spice with which Jesus’ body was buried (John 19:39, 40). Solomon’s naming of these rare plants shows how precious his bride is to him. (PBC)

4:15 garden fountain – A central feature of the garden paradise in Son 4:12-5:1 is the “fountain” 4:12, 15) that furnishes “living waters” (4:15). This water imagery connects this garden to Eden (Gen 2:10-14) and to the eternal paradise (Rev. 22:1-5). Song 4:15 must be the verse from “the Scripture” that Jesus quotes in John 7:38 in regard to the Holy Spirit: “Jesus has this saying in His mind when He says that streams of living water shall flow ‘out of the belly’ of the believer.” Hence the verse pertains to Holy Baptism, the Sacrament through which God promises to pour out His Holy Spirit and grant the forgiveness of sins for Christ’s sake (Acts 2:38-39). The waters of Baptism truly are the “living waters” (Song 4:15), the “washing of rebirth and renewal” (Titus 3:5), the antitype of the universal flood “that now saves you” (1 Peter 3:21). “the washing of water with the Word” that, through forensic justification and the imputation of Christ’s own righteousness, renders Christ’s virgin bride spotless, without blemish (Eph 5:26-27) (CC)

flowing. Fresh, not stagnant. (CSB)

She overflows with life and joy. It is interesting that Jesus describes believers in the same manner, “Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him (John 7:38). (PBC)

streams from Lebanon. Fresh, cool, sparkling water from the snowfields on the Lebanon mountains. (CSB)

Together in the Garden of Love

She

Let my beloved come to his garden, and eat its choicest fruits.

4:16 May the fragrance of my charms be wafted about to draw my lover to me so that we may enjoy love's intimacies. (CSB)

The right blend of the cool north wind from the mountains with the warm south wind from the desert creates a good climate for producing crops. The bride's wish is that she might be for her husband that beautiful garden he has described. Now is the time for love's fullest awakening. (PBC)

my garden. She belongs to him and she yields herself to her lover (see 6:2). (CSB)

She lovingly submits to her husband's desire. This, too, is in keeping with marriage as outline in Ephesians 5:22-33. The husband is to love his wife with a Christ-like love; she is to "submit to" and "respect" her husband. "As the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything," states St. Paul. (PBC)

These are the roles God has assigned in marriage. It is not a relationship of tyrant and menial slave, as some disparaging say. No, it is a bond of loving and giving, modeled after the tie between God and His people. (PBC)

In the union between husband and wife there is another important factor which the bride touches on with word, "Let my lover come into his garden." We belong above all to God our Creator and Savior. In marriage we also belong to our spouse. (PBC)

The north wind is a symbol of the quickening and life-giving power of the Holy Spirit. The fruitfulness of God's people depends upon the presence and life-giving power of the Holy Spirit, by whom alone they can be made meet for communion with their Redeemer. (CB)

4:1-16a Like Solomon calling the Shulammitte, our Lord calls us to come out of our worldliness and to reside in communion with Him. He calls us holy, beautiful, stainless, pure. He calls us forgiven in His Gospel. • Lord, teach us how much You love us, how beautiful we are in Your eyes, how washed, how clean, how holy and pure. Amen. (TLSB)