

(4:8) - COME WITH ME FROM LEBANON, MY SPOUSE, WITH ME FROM LEBANON: LOOK FROM THE TOP OF AMANA, FROM THE TOP OF SHENIR AND HERMON, FROM THE LIONS' DENS, FROM THE MOUNTAINS OF THE LEOPARDS. - From here on, it is clear that Christ, the Bridegroom, and His church, the bride, are now married. He addresses her now as His

"spouse," i.e. the bride to whom He is married. This is the blessed and gracious union of Christ to His church as the apostle described in *Romans 7:4-6* and *Ephesians 5:22-32*. Having been espoused to Him before the foundation of the world, Christ undertook to fulfill all the conditions required for His marriage to her. The title of this message is "The Beauty and Fruitfulness of Christ," but in these verses Christ speaks of the beauty and fruitfulness of His bride. Why, then, have I entitled it as such? It is because the beauty and fruitfulness of His people are HIS beauty and fruitfulness given and applied to them (*Jer. 23:5-6; 33:15-16*). Having her sins imputed to Him, He went to the cross, took her place, and died to pay her sin-debt. He put upon her a robe of righteousness in which there is no legal barrier to hinder His marriage to her. He sent forth His Spirit to cleanse her within with the application of His precious blood to her heart and conscience and, thereby, draw her to Himself with cords of love (*Isa. 61:10; Rev. 19:7-10*). This is a marriage union that can never be dissolved because of the power, grace, and love of Christ for His bride.

Christ calls His bride to come with Him "from Lebanon." Lebanon was highly regarded in the Bible. The name literally means "white mountain." Moses called it the "goodly mountain" (*Deut. 3:25*). It was known for the quality of its cedar trees, and the psalmist compared God's people to the cedars of Lebanon (*Psa. 92:12-14*). "Amana," "Shenir," and "Hermon," are all mountains in Syria. "Lions" and "leopards" were animals that posed a threat to travelers. So, the sense is that Christ calls His people (His spouse) in their heart to leave the world and follow Him. What could be more expressive of divine love than a call from our Lord to dwell with Him under the safety and security of His power, grace, and love? These views of Christ as our Savior, Redeemer, Protector, and Friend are the thoughts that should be the focal point of every justified saint's thoughts.

(4:9) - THOU HAST RAVISHED MY HEART, MY SISTER, MY SPOUSE; THOU HAST RAVISHED MY HEART WITH ONE OF THINE EYES, WITH ONE CHAIN OF THY NECK. - Not only is Christ the Husband of the Church (His wife), but He is also her elder brother and calls her "My sister." Christ expresses His great love for His church. She has consumed His heart because of His glory revealed in her salvation (*2 Cor. 4:6; Eph. 1:3-12*). The phrase "ONE of thine eyes" and "ONE chain of thy neck" speak of the singleness of her faith and her love for Him (*2 Cor. 11:2-3*). She has captured His heart, and He alone has captured her heart. He and His bride are joined together and cannot be torn apart.

(4:10) - HOW FAIR IS THY LOVE, MY SISTER, MY SPOUSE! HOW MUCH BETTER IS THY LOVE THAN WINE! AND THE SMELL OF THINE OINTMENTS THAN ALL SPICES! - The Lord expresses how much He cherishes His people's love for Him. When we consider our love for Christ, we know that it is very imperfect and pitiful when we compare it to HIS perfect love for us. But we must put this in perspective. Our love for Him is a gift of His grace to us, and it comes from the Holy Spirit revealing and convincing us of His great and perfect love for us in that He gave His life for us (*1 John 4:10*). And even though the remaining corruption and contamination of our flesh hinders us in the exercise of perfect love, we who are saved by God's grace DO love Him. Our love for Him glorifies and honors Him. Our love for Him binds us together in truth and causes us to love one another. Our love for Him motivates us to the obedience of grace, love, and gratitude, and it is a pleasing odor to God as He accepts us in

Christ. Our love for Him grows in knowing that it is HIS love for us that saves us and keeps us (1 John 4:16-19).

(4:11) - THY LIPS, O MY SPOUSE, DROP AS THE HONEYCOMB: HONEY AND MILK ARE UNDER THY TONGUE; AND THE SMELL OF THY GARMENTS IS LIKE THE SMELL OF LEBANON. - The lips and the tongue of His people are filled with praises and expressions of love for Him. They are filled with His truth, His Gospel, wherein He is revealed in the glory of His Person and the power of His finished work of redemption. "Honey and milk" are symbols of God's blessings to His people. The Jews would certainly see in this the land of promise which was called the land of milk and honey. But that physical land was only a type or picture of the eternal blessing of salvation by the mercy and grace of God in Christ, all based on His righteousness imputed to His people. So, her "garments" are the garments of salvation, beginning with the perfect robe of His righteousness imputed to her for her justification before God, her security in His grace, and her spiritual life and preservation (*Isa. 61:10*). The word translated "drop" literally means to prophesy and preach. So, the child of God, regenerated and converted by the Holy Spirit through the preaching of God's Gospel, will in turn begin to tell others of the glory of His grace. Read the next four verses together -

(4:12) - A GARDEN INCLOSED IS MY SISTER, MY SPOUSE; A SPRING SHUT UP, A FOUNTAIN SEALED.

(4:13) - THY PLANTS ARE AN ORCHARD OF POMEGRANATES, WITH PLEASANT FRUITS; CAMPHIRE, WITH SPIKENARD,

(4:14) - SPIKENARD AND SAFFRON; CALAMUS AND CINNAMON, WITH ALL TREES OF FRANKINCENSE; MYRRH AND ALOES, WITH ALL THE CHIEF SPICES:

(4:15) - A FOUNTAIN OF GARDENS, A WELL OF LIVING WATERS, AND STREAMS FROM LEBANON.

All these verses use poetic symbols to describe the spiritual fruitfulness of Christ's kingdom and His bride. His kingdom will increase and grow as the Gospel goes out into the world in power to save His people from their sins, to give them spiritual life, and to preserve them unto glory as He waters them with His Spirit and His Word. Each member of His bride (the church) will bear fruit unto God and the fruit of the Holy Spirit. None of them will perish. By God's power and grace, they will all come to the full fruition of eternal life and glory.

(4:16) - AWAKE, O NORTH WIND; AND COME, THOU SOUTH; BLOW UPON MY GARDEN, THAT THE SPICES THEREOF MAY FLOW OUT. LET MY BELOVED COME INTO HIS GARDEN, AND EAT HIS PLEASANT FRUITS. - The "north" in the Bible can be a symbol of God's sovereign throne of judgment. Here, the "north wind" can symbolize the Holy Spirit Who is the Spirit of judgment and truth. Christ calls Him forth to blow upon His garden. By His power He gives life to the garden. This is the new birth of God's children where He imparts the resurrection life of Christ into their souls (*John 3:3-7*). Under the Gospel, He empowers it to bring them to faith in Christ and true repentance (*John 16:7-11*). It is the garden of His truth and grace where we feed upon His Word and grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ. He is said to feed upon these when He expresses how He is well-pleased with them and accepts them in the merits of His own blood and righteousness.