

(4:1) - BEHOLD, THOU ART FAIR, MY LOVE; BEHOLD, THOU ART FAIR; THOU HAST DOVES' EYES WITHIN THY LOCKS: THY HAIR IS AS A FLOCK OF GOATS, THAT APPEAR FROM MOUNT GILEAD.

- Here, Christ, the Bridegroom, speaks to His church, the bride, and describes the reality of how He sees her because of her union with Him. She is beautiful in His sight, not because any natural beauty, for naturally speaking she is the unworthy, sinful bride. It is not by any works that she has done, is doing, or will do, for all her works are as filthy rags when compared to Christ's work for her (*Psa. 130:3; Isa. 64:6*). Her beauty is not due to any goodness or cleanness within herself, but her beauty is that which HE has freely given her by washing her clean in the blood of redemption, and by giving her a righteousness that He alone worked out on the cross - the very righteousness of God, the imputed righteousness of Christ. We who are saved must be continually reminded of this fact, lest we be lifted up in our own pride and forget that our whole salvation is by God's free and sovereign grace based upon the merits of the obedience unto death of our Savior. We must also be continually reminded of this word of assurance from Christ to be encouraged in the obedience of faith motivated by grace, love, and gratitude.

This beauty can be attributed to the bride of Christ as the church collectively and to the individuals who make up the bride of Christ. Some believe that the following phrases can be attributed to the true church as the body of Christ as the apostle Paul described the church as one body with many members (*1 Cor. 12:12-14*). But I believe that if we view these metaphors in the Gospel light, we can see how each one can be attributed to each individual member of Christ's church. Having said of all this, we also need to recognize that there is an inward beauty in the bride, which is the grace of God giving her, by the new birth, a new heart, new life, spiritual eyes and ears, faith in Christ, true repentance, and all the fruit of the Spirit (*Gal. 5:22-23*). None of these inward graces equal the righteousness of Christ which God has imputed to His people, and which is the only ground of her salvation. But they are "*the inward man*" (*Rom. 7:22*) who delights in the law of God because he sees it fulfilled for him by Christ (*Rom. 10:4*), and "*the hidden man of the heart*" (*1 Pet. 3:4*). This is beautiful in that they keep the bride looking to and clinging to Christ as her only righteousness before God.

"*Doves eyes within thy locks*" (literally, "*behind thy veil*") - This describes the brides spiritual eyes given to her by the Lord to see God's glory in Him (*Matt. 13:11-16; 2 Cor. 4:3-6; Heb. 2:9; 12:2*). Like blind Bartimaeus, she has received her sight (*Mark 10:52*). Like the blind man in *John 9:25*, she can say, "*I was blind, now I see.*" Her sight here on earth is not yet perfect, but she does see the beauty of Christ and that His beauty is her beauty. She will one day see Him perfectly (*1 Cor. 13:12; 1 John 3:1-2*).

"*Thy hair is as a flock of goats, that appear from Mount Gilead*" - The idea is not that her hair is like the hair of a goat, but it is that her hair beautifully flows down her head like a black-haired flock of goats, flowing down from Mount Gilead. Again, the Bridegroom speaks of His bride's beauty.

(4:2) - THY TEETH ARE LIKE A FLOCK OF SHEEP THAT ARE EVEN SHORN, WHICH CAME UP FROM THE WASHING;

-- I believe this is metaphor for the mouth through which the heart speaks (*Matt. 12:34*). The testimony of the bride is the pure Word of God in the Gospel. Even our words are washed clean in the blood of Christ. We are perfect legally in Christ, but we are not yet perfect within ourselves. However, our Gospel, the Word of truth, is the perfect Word of God which points sinners to our perfect Savior and the perfect way that He has made for us to come to God (*Psa. 18:30; John 14:6*). "*Even shorn*" can mean "*newly shorn*" which describes the newness and freshness of the Word of truth. It never grows old to God's people.

WHEREOF EVERY ONE BEAR TWINS, AND NONE IS BARREN AMONG THEM. - This speaks of the fruitfulness of God's Word which will always accomplish the purpose for which God sends it (*Isa. 55:10-13; Heb. 4:12-13*). Christ said that all whom the Father gave Him will come to Him, and they will all, by the power of God, hear and believe the same Gospel truth wherein Christ, as the very righteousness of God, is revealed (*John 6:37-45; Rom. 1:16-17*).

(4:3) - THY LIPS ARE LIKE A THREAD OF SCARLET, AND THY SPEECH IS COMELY: THY TEMPLES ARE LIKE A PIECE OF A POMEGRANATE WITHIN THY LOCKS. - The "lips" and "speech" continue, obviously, to describe the grace of God in Christ which pours forth from her lips. Throughout the Scriptures, the redeemed of the Lord are described as having on their lips the truth of God and praises for God. This is opposed to the lying lips of unbelievers who preach and believe false gospels and who praise and worship idols. The "temples" is a metaphor for the mind. The "pomegranate" symbolizes the fertility of God's promise of salvation and the Biblical concepts of knowledge, learning, and wisdom, qualities that come revelation of truth from the understanding of the Scriptures.

(4:4) - THY NECK IS LIKE THE TOWER OF DAVID BUILT FOR AN ARMOURY, WHEREON THERE HANG A THOUSAND BUCKLERS, ALL SHIELDS OF MIGHTY MEN. - The "neck" connects to head with the body and hold the head up. The imagery here is of the strength of God's grace in the body of Christ Who is the head of the body. God's grace in Christ connects us to Him and holds us up more than a thousand shields held by a thousand valiant warriors.

(4:5) - THY TWO BREASTS ARE LIKE TWO YOUNG ROES THAT ARE TWINS, WHICH FEED AMONG THE LILIES. - The "two breasts" of the church has been given a variety of meanings by various writers. We know that a mother's milk that is created in her by God and flows through her to feed her babies could very well be intended here. We are told to desire the sincere milk of the word that we may grow in grace and in knowledge of Christ (*1 Pet. 2:2-3; 2 Pet. 3:18*).

(4:6) - UNTIL THE DAY BREAK, AND THE SHADOWS FLEE AWAY, I WILL GET ME TO THE MOUNTAIN OF MYRRH, AND TO THE HILL OF FRANKINCENSE. - Here, Christ, the Bridegroom, speaks of His going away to do the work necessary for the salvation of His people. The "mountain of myrrh" speaks of His suffering unto death for the salvation of His people. He redeemed His bride with His own precious blood. The "hill of frankincense" speaks of the sweet aroma and satisfaction of His finished work to bring forth a righteousness that satisfies God's justice and enables God to be both a just God and a Savior. His going away to prepare a place for His bride, to watch over and care for her, and to await the day of His return to gather His bride unto Himself (*John 14:1-3; 17:1-3*).

(4:7) - THOU ART ALL FAIR, MY LOVE; THERE IS NO SPOT IN THEE. - He emphasizes that as the bride stands in union with Him, washed in His blood and clothed in His righteousness, she is beautiful and without spot or blemish (*Col. 1:19-22; 2:9-10*). And although the bride, under the weight of the remaining sinfulness of her flesh, does not see this in herself, this is the testimony and sure word of her Bridegroom. THIS IS HOW CHRIST LOOKS UPON HIS CHURCH, SINNERS SAVED BY GRACE. It is no pretense or legal fiction. It is the reality of God's grace and mercy towards His people who stand before Him in Christ (*Php. 3:8-10*).