

142. Discuss how the miracle of conversion is like a marriage.

143. Discuss, in context, I Corinthians 6:17.

### TEXT 4:1-7

#### THIRD SCENE—*The Lover's Interviews* 4:1 to 5:1

##### First Meeting (Jerusalem?): Shepherd's Monologue, 4:1-7

1. Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair.  
Thine eyes are as doves behind thy veil.  
Thy hair is as a flock of goats, that lie along  
The side of Mount Gilead.
2. Thy teeth are like a flock of ewes that are newly shorn,  
Which are come up from the washing,  
Whereof every one hath twins, and none is bereaved among  
them.
3. Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, and thy mouth is  
comely. Thy temples are like a piece of pomegranate be-  
hind thy veil.
4. Thy neck is like the tower of David builded for an armory,  
Whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all the shields  
of the mighty men.
5. Thy two breasts are like two fawns. That are twins of a  
roe, which feed among the lilies.
6. Until the day be cool, and the shadows flee away,  
I will get me to the mountain of myrrh,  
And to the hill of frankincense.
7. Thou art all fair, my love;  
And there is no spot in thee.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 4:1-7

92. How is the word "fair" used as in verse one? The terms "my love" are better translated with a less personal meaning. What is a better word?

93. The maiden looks out from behind her tresses or her veil.  
Which is it?
94. In what way would her hair be like a flock of goats on the mountains of Gilead?
95. What a strange comparison? Teeth like a flock of sheep?  
Show how this could be true?
96. Why compare her lips to a thread of scarlet?
97. Two things are said of her mouth. What is the second compliment? Which is the most important?
98. Back of the locks of her hair her cheeks are like the two halves of a pomegranate. What quality or compliment is intended here?
99. A neck like a tower? What is meant by way of a compliment? What is intended by mention of the shields of the mighty men of David?
100. What is the imagery of comparing her breasts to two young fawns?
101. The lover suggests he will leave and return—at what time will he return? Where is he going?
102. What is meant by “the mountain of myrrh” and “hill of frankincense”?
103. Who is speaking? For what purpose? At what place?

## PARAPHRASE 4:1-7

*Shepherd*

1. Lo, thou art fair, my companion, lo, thou art fair!  
Thine eyes are dove-like behind thy tresses.  
Thy hair resembles a flock of goats  
That browse along the slopes of Gilead.
2. Thy teeth are like a flock of shorn sheep  
Just come up from the dipping pool.  
Each one has its twin,  
And none among them is bereaved.
3. Thy lips are like a scarlet cord,

And thy speech well becomes them.  
Thy cheeks are like halves of a pomegranate  
Behind thy tresses.

4. Thy neck is like David's tower,  
Which he built for an armory.  
On it there hang a thousand shields—  
All shields of heroes.
5. Thy breasts are like two fawns,  
Twins of a gazelle feeding among anemones.  
Till the day cools and the shadows lengthen,  
I will make my way to the mountain of myrrh.  
And to the hill of frankincense.
7. Thou art altogether fair, O my companion!  
There is no blemish in thee.

## COMMENT 4:1-7

*Exegesis 4:1-7*

The first line in verse one is a general evaluation of "my companion"; there follows seven particulars in which the beauty of the bride can be seen. We shall list these seven descriptive phrases and comment upon them. Before we proceed we must set the scene. We recognize that we are open to criticism—but since all opinions are of equal standing we yet believe this is the expression of the shepherd. We appreciate the words of Arthur G. Clarke just here. "The shepherd now appears upon the scene. Following the abduction of his loved one (6:11, 12), he seems to have discovered her whereabouts. Concerned for her welfare amid the temptations of the Royal Court, he wends his way to Jerusalem to secure an interview with her if at all possible. This he manages to do, but how we are not told. He encourages the maiden at this critical juncture with a fresh declaration of his loving regard."

There follows the seven-fold description of the maiden:  
(1) *Thine eyes are dove-like behind thy tresses.* There is much

discussion among commentators as to whether the maiden is looking out from behind a veil or the locks of her hair. We prefer the latter. We have commented earlier of the dove-like quality of her eyes. Such a poetic figure of speech is altogether appealing in its suggestion of the alert, shy, soft person behind the eyes and the lovely hair. (2) *Thy hair resembles a flock of goats that browse along the slopes of Gilead.* This is a compliment and it was given to elicit a positive response. If we knew what a flock of goats on the slopes of Gilead looked like we would immediately appreciate the comparison. The long silk-like hair of the angora goats of Syria—especially as they reflected the sun on their long tresses could make a beautiful poetic image. (3) *Thy teeth are like a flock of shorn sheep just come up from the dipping pool. Each one has its twin, and none among them is bereaved.* This is much easier to imagine. The sheep are white—but never whiter than when they have just been shorn and washed—there are two rows of teeth—the top has a twin on the bottom row, and there is not one out of order or missing. Her teeth are as white as wool and as uniform as perfect twins. (4) *Thy lips are like a scarlet cord, and thy speech well becomes them.* The delicate form of the girl's lips is here emphasized. The natural red color suggests good health. Not only does she have a lovely mouth in form—what comes out of it in thought and words is just as beautiful. "There is gold, and a multitude of rubies; but the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel." Proverbs 20:15 (Cf. Eccl. 10:12; Psa. 63:5; 119:13, 171). (5) *Thy cheeks are like halves of a pomegranate behind thy tresses.* No cosmetics are involved in the appearance here described. The glow of good health is here apparent. The almost translucent look of a perfect complexion colored with the blush of excitement and coyly hidden behind raven black hair makes a most appealing picture. (6) *Thy neck is like David's tower, which he built for an armory. On it there hang a thousand shields—all shields of heroes.* This is more descriptive of the character of the maid than any of the other qualities, pride and strength—dignity and beauty are all here inferred. The shepherd wants his bride-to-be to

remember who she is and whose she is. She did not hesitate to identify with the shepherd when her brothers opposed him. He can still see the tilt of her head and the beautiful total commitment of her demeanor when she answered her brothers concerning him. He is reminding her to be that same strong, beautiful person here in the Court of Solomon. A thousand shields of conquest decorated David's tower—perhaps he is saying—"You are as strong as a thousand strong women." (7) *Thy breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle feeding among anemones.* We could ignore this description as some have done—or say that the breasts of women do not have erotic suggestion to the Oriental. We do believe the shepherd is saying his bride has reached maturity and is therefore capable of motherhood. But most of all he is simply open in his admiration of her physical beauty. We would say that this lover has gathered a string of beautiful pearls to present to his beloved. He concludes by promising to return at nightfall; when he comes it will be with a mountain of myrrh and a hill of frankincense. During his absence he has been to the mountain of myrrh and the hill of frankincense—he now comes again with much more to offer than Solomon. His closing words should have indeed touched her deeply. He is saying—you are pure and whole and totally lovely—keep it that way till I come again.

### *Marriage 4:1-7*

If we were married to a girl whom we could describe in the same way the Shulammite is here described, we would have no problems in marriage. Is this true? It is both true *and* false. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. If we look at our wife with grace, we will find grace. Let's check the list and see: (1) How easy it is for a mother to see alertness and intelligence in the eyes of her son or daughter when no one else can see anything unusual at all. Why? The mother *wants* to and besides that she is a part of that son or daughter and they a part

of her. Is this the kind of love we have for this one who has now become “bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh”—that one we call “woman”—or wife? Look into her eyes again—there *is* a dove of softness and love behind those eyes isn’t there? (2) Why does your wife fix her hair or have it fixed? Isn’t it for you? She *does* hope you will see it and mention it—How does it look? It is her adornment from God—but if her beloved never notices—what’s the use? (3) She *does* have a sweet mouth, doesn’t she? She does if you believe she does. We cannot always agree with all she says—but then God can’t always agree with you—but His love is yet and always warm and tender and real. (4) What a dear face, it represents the one you chose among ten thousand. Can you close your eyes and see her face? You can if you have made her a part of your inner consciousness. She loves you much more deeply than you could ever know. (5) What is the general demeanor of your wife? i.e., how would you describe her bearing? You have seen her often under so many circumstances—how does she hold her head?—literally and figuratively. Do you respect her for her abilities in many areas where you really could not do nearly as well? If we will just think and add grace and love our wife will compare very well. (6) Only you can say if your wife is physically attractive to you. She must have been for this was one of the reasons you married her. Once again a large part or percent of this attraction is in the imagination. Not all of it—but much of it. (7) How would you grade your choice of women? What a change takes place when we put on the glasses of love and grace and look at everything about our wife in the same way our heavenly groom looks at us.

#### *Communion 4:1-7*

If we were describing the groom (our Lord) instead of the bride (his church) these verses would be much easier to apply—at least we would feel nothing would be overstated or misrepresented—but as we look at ourselves in the mirror of His word

we grow less and less willing to think of ourselves as at all like the one here described. But wait!—He sees us through love and grace—This does not minimize our responsibility, but it does make possible a growth in grace unto the likeness of the bride of our Lord. How often it is true that we become what others believe we can. How does our Lord see us?

Notice: (1) He believes we can see all of life through the eyes of the Holy Dove. At the same time He has given us a covering to conceal our perception that it be not offensive—our veil or covering is humility. (2) Hair has always represented a special consecration and obedience to God—In the care of the Nazarites (Numbers 6) it is illustrated by Samson. This consecration and obedience can and should become our strength and beauty. But only as we are completely given to Him is it true. Hair with a woman was identical in meaning as with the Nazarite. It was a covering as a symbol of subjection and commitment. (I Corinthians 11:1ff) (3) Teeth are the equipment of God given us for eating. He has given us the means by which we can eat His word and be filled and strong. (4) Lips are for expression—as teeth masticate the food so lips express the strength received from it. (5) Our facial expression can present our Lord in a pleasant, beautiful manner. (6) The neck could well represent the will of man. May our total bearing be one of submission to His will in our lives. (7) The bosom is often represented as the seat of the affections. When the foregoing is true of us our emotions will be under His control. The above person is that new creation in Christ Jesus. Cf. Colossians 3:1-17; I Corinthians 5:17; It is only possible because of Him and through Him.

#### FACT QUESTIONS 4:1-7

144. List the seven particulars in which the beauty of the bride is considered.
145. Who is the speaker of verses one thru seven?
146. Why is this lovely description given? i.e., what does the

- shepherd hope to accomplish?
147. What is attractive in being "dove-like"?
  148. Show how the hair of the maiden can resemble goats on the slopes of Gilead?
  149. "Your teeth are like a flock of shorn sheep just up from the dipping pool"—is this a compliment? How so?
  150. How was the mouth or lips like a scarlet cord?
  151. A most appealing figure of speech involves a pomegranate. What is it?
  152. There is one quality or comparison that describes more of the total person than any of the others. Which one is it? Discuss.
  153. Why mention the breasts of his bride-to-be?
  154. What is meant by reference to a mountain of myrrh and a hill of frankincense?
  155. The closing words of the shepherd were especially touching. What were they? Discuss their impact. Please discuss the application of this text to present day marriage.
  156. How do you relate the application of these verses to our communion with our Lord? Discuss.

TEXT 4:8 to 5:1

*SECOND MEETING (Jerusalem); Prolepsis, 4:8 to 5:1*

(Chronologically coming between 8:4 and 8:5?)

Dialogue: Shepherd, 4:8-16a  
 Shulammitte, 4:16b  
 Shepherd, 5:1a

Comment: Remarks of Wedding Guests or Shepherd's Companions, 5:1b

- " 8. Come with me from Lebanon, my bride, with me from Lebanon; Look from the top of Amana, from the top of Senir and Hermon, From the lions dens, From the mountains of leopards.



9. Thou has ravished my heart, my sister, my bride;  
Thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes,  
With one chain of thy neck.
10. How fair is thy love, my sister, my bride!  
How much better is thy love than wine!  
And the fragrance of thine oils than all manner of  
spices!
11. Thy lips, O my bride, drop as the honeycomb:  
Honey and milk are under thy tongue;  
And the smell of thy garments is like the smell of  
Lebanon.
12. A garden shut up is my sister, my bride;  
A spring shut up, a fountain sealed.
13. Thy shoots are an orchard of pomegranates, with  
precious fruits; Henna with spikenard plants,
14. Spikenard and saffron, Calamus and cinnamon,  
with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes,  
with all the chief spices.
15. Thou art a fountain of gardens,  
A well of living waters,  
And flowing streams from Lebanon.
- 16a Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south;  
Blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow  
out.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 4:8-16a

104. What is meant by suggesting in the above outline that  
this section of scripture is a prolepsis?
105. How did the bride get so far north as the Lebanon moun-  
tains?
106. What mountains are alluded to with the names of Amana,  
Senir and Hermon?
107. Is the shepherd describing the house of the bride with his  
reference to lions and leopards? Why go there? Or is he  
asking her to leave it?

108. The poor shepherd was overcome with one look of her lovely eyes—she has caught him and held him in a chain—is this the meaning of verse nine?
109. The shepherd returns the compliment of the Shulammitte (cf. 1:2), but he adds something. What is it?
110. Why refer to her as his “sister” as well as his “bride”?
111. Cf. 1:3 with 4:10b and show the likeness and difference.
112. Is the shepherd speaking of the kisses of his bride in verse 11? Cf. 5:1.
113. If speech is intended as what comes from the lips of the maid, how shall we describe what she says?
114. There is a beautiful figure of speech in verse twelve. Discuss its meaning and application.
115. The “shoots” of verse 13a are enumerated through the fourteenth verse. List them.
116. The maiden is a “paradise” to the shepherd. Explain.
117. Pomegranates were a very special fruit to the Hebrews. Why? (Cf. Deut. 8:8; Ex. 28:33, 34; I Kings 7:18-20)
118. Define each of these words: “henna”; “spikenard”; “saffron”; “Calamus”; “cinnamon”; “frankincense”; “myrrh”; “aloes.”
119. How was she compared to a flowing spring which formed a river from Mount Lebanon?
120. Why ask for the north and south wind? Why is the meaning of the figure used here?

#### PARAPHRASE 4:8-16a

*Shepherd* (chronologically after 8:4?)

8. Come with me from Lebanon, O bride,  
With me from Lebanon come away!  
Depart from the top of Amana,  
From the top of Senir and Hermon;  
From the dens of lions,  
From the mountains of panthers.

9. Thou hast stolen my heart, O my sister-bride!  
With one glance of thine eyes, with one turn of thy neck  
Thou hast captured it.
10. How delightful are thy endearments, O my sister-bride!  
How much better than wine are thy endearments,  
And the fragrances of thy perfumes than all spices!
11. Thy lips, O bride, drip virgin honey;  
Honey and milk flow from under thy tongue.  
The odor of thy garments is like pine—scented air from  
Lebanon.
12. An enclosed garden is my sister-bride;  
A spring locked up, a fountain sealed.
13. Thy plants are a paradise of pomegranates and other  
luscious fruits.  
With henna and spikenard plants,
14. Spikenard and saffron,  
Calamus and cinnamon with all incense woods;  
Myrrh and aloes with all the chief spices.
15. The garden fountain is a well of spring waters,  
And its streams flow down from Lebanon.
16. Awake, O north wind, and come thou south!  
Blow upon my garden that the sweet odors may be wafted  
abroad.

## COMMENT 4:8-16a

*Exegesis 4:8-16a*

If we consider carefully the content of these verses we will immediately recognize they are not in chronological order or time sequence. We must conclude this paragraph relates to the end of the story—i.e., between 7:11 and 8:14. There are examples of this literary device in several books of the Bible—particularly with Revelation and Ezekiel—but even in the gospels. If this interpretation is correct, this passage contains the response of the shepherd to the maiden's request that he

take her back to her country home. The writer of the Song is anticipating the closing scenes. The purpose would seem to be to build suspense. Because of the length of this section we will indicate the verses related to our comments:

*Verse 8.* We believe "Lebanon" is used in a figurative sense. The shepherd is asking his beloved to leave the giddy heights of the court of Solomon and share true love with him. It is an invitation to escape—but also it becomes an insistent claim of the shepherd for the person of Shulammit. Perhaps it would be better to translate the phrase *look from* to "depart from." The whole passage we believe is symbolic—but the mountains used in the symbolism are real mountains—i.e., they are peaks in the Lebanon chain which carry these names. He is saying in effect—"come with me from the dangerous position you are in—leave the high dignitaries and the ravenous wild beasts of Solomon's court."

*Verse 9.* Here begins a description of the attractive qualities of his beloved. He is wounded to the heart with one look and he is enchained by one turn of her head. "A physical feature, not an ornament, is intended. All figures used in verses nine thru eleven refer to graces of gesture and speech as indicative of inward character rather than to mere outward physical attractions." (Clarke)

*Verse 10.* Berkley has translated this verse as: "How sweet is your love, my sister, my bride; How much more delicious is your love than wine; and the fragrance of your ointments than all the spices." We like very much the expression of Walter F. Adeney in the *Exposition of the Bible* (p. 532):

"His language is entirely different from that of the magnificent monarch. He does not waste his breath in formal compliments, high-flown imagery, wearisome lists of the charms of the girl he loves. That was the clumsy method of the king; clumsy, though reflecting the finished manners of the court, in comparison with the genuine outpourings of the heart of a country lad. The shepherd is eloquent with the inspiration of true love; his words throb and glow with genuine emotion; love of his bride has ravished his heart. How beautiful is her

love! He is intoxicated with it more than with wine. How sweet are her words of tender affection, like milk and honey! She is so pure, there is something sisterly in her love that she is almost like a part of himself, as his own sister. This holy and close relationship is in startling contrast to the only thing known as love in the royal harem. It is as much more lofty and noble as it is more strong and deep than the jaded emotions of the court. The sweet, pure maiden is to the shepherd like a garden the gate of which is barred against trespassers, like a spring shut off from casual access, like a sealed fountain—sealed to all but one, and, happy man, he is that one. To him she belongs, to him alone. She is a garden, yes, a most fragrant garden, an orchard of pomegranates full of rich fruit, crowded with sweet-scented plants—henna and spikenard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon and all kinds of frankincense, myrrh and aloes and the best of spices. She is a fountain in the garden, sealed to all others, but not stinted towards the one she loves. To him she is as a well of living waters, like the fullfed streams that flow from Lebanon.

The maiden is supposed to hear the song of love. She replies in fearless words of welcome, bidding the north wind awake, and the south wind too, that the fragrance of which her lover has spoken so enthusiastically may flow out more richly than ever. For his sake she would be more sweet and loving. All she possesses is for him. Let him come and take possession of his own."

Verses eleven through 16a are very well discussed in the above quotation.

### *Marriage 4:8-16a*

Surely this passage can be appreciated most by those who are married or who are engaged to be married. *Adeney* makes an interesting suggestion. He says:

"What lover could turn aside from such a rapturous invitation? The shepherd takes his bride; he enters his garden,

gathers his myrrh and spice, eats his honey and drinks his wine and milk, and calls on his friends to feast and drink with him. This seems to point to the marriage of the couple and their wedding feast; a view of the passage which interpreters who regard Solomon as the lover throughout for the most part take, but one which has this fatal objection, that it leaves the second half of the poem without a motive. On the hypothesis of the shepherd lover it is still more difficult to suppose the wedding to have occurred at the point we have now reached, for the distraction of the royal courtship still proceeds in subsequent passages of the poem. It would seem then, that we must regard this as quite an ideal scene. It may, however, be taken as a reminiscence of an earlier passage in the lives of the two lovers. It is not impossible that it refers to their wedding, and that they had been married before the action of the whole story began. In that case we should suppose that Solomon's officers had carried off a young bride to the royal harem. The intensity of the love and the bitterness of the separation apparent throughout the poem would be the more intelligible if this were the situation. It is to be remembered that Shakespeare ascribes the climax of the love and grief of Romeo and Juliet to a time after their marriage."

As interesting and instructive as is the above information we yet need application of the principles in the text to our marriages. We see two or three obvious lessons in the text; (1) The safety and comfort of our wife should be of very great concern to every husband. Surely this is how our Lord loved the church. It is not at all enough to issue verbal warnings as edicts from "the head of the house." Please note that the text suggests the groom is to accompany the wife and lead by example and companionship. It would suggest, of course, that he knows where he is going. The lover is very much aware of the dangers and also of the nature of the one in danger. This kind of solicitous attention is most welcome when the bride is in love with her spouse. (2) Communicated admiration and respect is such an important part of marriage. We might carry a deep love—admiration—respect for our wife—but if it is

not communicated to her she will not know it. If she does not know it—or is but vaguely aware of it, we are hurting her deeply. Self-image is so important—if she does not know and that real often—that we admire her greatly what difference will it make what others say about her? It could make a great deal of difference to us if we bottle-up our admiration and never verbalize it in appreciation. (3) Our wives are our gardens. These gardens or fountains are indeed closed to others—but what we want to say is that we can and should find our enjoyment in this our garden—We can and should find our refreshment from this our fountain. Gardens do respond to cultivation. Consider what a variety of good things can be continually grown here. Pomegranates and precious fruit—all manner of spice and fragrance; but only if we find ourselves often in the garden. Only if we give the careful thought and effort to develop this lovely harvest.

*Communion 4:8-16a*

The call of our Lord to His bride to leave the heights of this world is very real—but it comes from One who not only loves us but admires us. He sees in us all the beauty described and ascribed in verses nine through sixteen. It is the mercies of God that become the motive for presenting our bodies to the bridegroom. Of course, we are transformed by the renewing of our mind, but we must be moved to set our mind upon the things that are above by a knowledge that He believes we can and loves us in our attempts as much as in our accomplishments. We could delineate these verses one by one and point out each of the qualities our Lord sees in us—potential and actual; we will not develop these thoughts because of the lack of space—just a list of what He sees in me: (1) One look upward—one move of my heart toward Him is immediately met with an eager interest (verse nine). (2) My companionship and communion in prayer with Him is a high joy to Him—indeed He created me to walk and talk with Him (verse ten). (3) How

pleasing are my words to Him when I praise Him or speak of Him (verse 11). (4) I am His alone and He is mine—I want to be a garden in which He can walk with me in the cool of the day. I am a spring of living water not only because of Him but for Him (verse 12). (5) My prayers are a sweet smelling incense to Him—supplications—intercessions—thanksgivings—petitions—are all the varying fragrances of my praying (verses 13-15). (6) He bids me to spread His praises to the ends of the earth—may the wind of heaven blow to all His lovely fragrance through me (verse 16a).

## FACT QUESTIONS 4:8-16a

157. What is meant by saying that these verses are not in chronological order?
158. This passage contains a response of the shepherd to the maiden's request. What was that request?
159. How is the term "Lebanon" used? What does it mean?
160. What is meant by the reference to the three peaks mentioned in verse eight?
161. All figures used in verses nine through eleven refer to what?
162. Show how the language of the shepherd is different than that of the "magnificent monarch."
163. Describe the details of the "genuine emotion" and "fine wholesome passion" expressed by the shepherd.
164. There is a startling contrast here. What is it?
165. How does the maid reply to this song of love?
166. How does the lover respond to the "rapturous invitation"?
167. This section offers an argument in favor of the shepherd hypothesis. What is it?
168. Please discuss the three areas of application of this text to present day marriage.
169. Discuss three-at-a-time the six areas of application of this text to our communion with our Lord.



TEXT 4:16b—5:1

*Shulammite*, 4:16b

“Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his precious fruits.”

*Shepherd*, 5:1a

“I am come into my garden, my sister, my bride; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk.”

*Comment: Remarks of wedding guests or shepherd's companions*, 5:1b

“Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.”

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 4:16b—5:1

121. It would seem the marriage is consummated and the story is over—but such is not true—what has happened?
122. What is the force of addressing her as both his sister and his bride?
123. This seems to be past tense—there are no regrets—nothing but very pleasant memories and present satisfaction. Why?
124. Is the shepherd recommending his action to all? What is the import of 5:1b?

PARAPHRASE 4:16b—5:1

*Shulammite*:

16b. “Let my beloved come into his garden, and partake of its pleasant fruits.”

*Shepherd*:

5:1 “I will come into my garden, my sister-bride;  
 I will gather my myrrh with my spice;  
 I will eat my honeycomb with my honey;  
 I will drink my wine with my milk.

*Wedding Guests:*

5:1b "Eat, O friends; Drink! Drink deeply of love's endearments.

(This closes the first half of the Song, the second part beginning retrospectively.)

## COMMENT 4:16b—5:1

*Exegesis 4:16b—5:1*

Previous comments have discussed these verses but a few more remarks are needed. Readers of our comments will perhaps be inclined to think that the identity of the speakers and the emphasis we have given their words is a very clear and easy matter. It is not. We have struggled with many conflicting interpretations. We only say of our efforts that we have tried to offer a consistent pattern of understanding throughout the text.

The last two lines of chapter four we attribute to the Shulammite, she uses the same figure of speech and invites her lover to "enjoy the luscious fruits that his own loving care had produced. "This is also a rebuff to Solomon. She opens the door of her heart to her lover and in the same gesture closes it on the King.

The comments of Arthur G. Clarke are very good on verse 5:1. (*Song of Songs*, p. 71).

"Chapter 5:1. Ignore the chapter division. Here is the shepherd's immediate and eager response. The verbs are in the perfect tense and best understood in the modified sense known to grammarians as the perfect of confidence or certainty, anticipating in time the fulfillment of some purpose or cherished hope. Many examples are to be found in the Old Testament, notably in Ps. 2:6. This device gives the future tense a more expressive form. Read, "I will come . . . will gather . . . will eat . . . will drink . . ." Dr. A Harper so understands the passage. Note the eight times "my" is repeated in this one

verse. Honey was once of far greater importance than it is today since the introduction of sugar. "with milk"—Milk is said to have been sometimes mingled with wine to "cool" its taste. "Eat, O friends . . ."—These words clearly break in upon the narrative following the conversation of the two lovers and were introduced by the poet probably as a fitting close to the first half of the Song. The conversation was not necessarily overheard. Among many opinions offered by expositors the most satisfactory, we believe, is the third one suggested in the paragraph heading, namely, that they are the words of encouragement uttered by guests at the wedding celebrations. The lines could be paraphrased, "You lovers! eat and drink (to the point of intoxication) of love's caresses." For similar language see Gen. 43:34, RSV rendering.

#### *Marriage 4:16b—5:1*

It is true that women think more often about their relationship with men than men do with women—your wife is more anxious for you to share the joys of married life with her than you are. However, she must be assured with all the preparation and commitment of yourself that such a union is a continuing one. Such assurance we are glad to give. We want no other relationship. When this is true these verses can and do describe our marriage union.

#### *Communion 4:16b—5:1*

Are we as anxious for our Lord to have access to our innermost thoughts and motivations as was the maiden in her marriage? It would be easy to give an easy agreement—but it could mean no more than many superficial marriages mean to those involved. We all have a tremendous capacity for ignoring what we do not like and of avoiding the unpleasant. Since our Lord lives in the same house with us (our bodies) I wonder if He shares this same capacity?

## FACT QUESTIONS 4:16b—5:1

170. In one gesture the maiden accomplishes two things. What are they?
171. What does the verb tense have to do with our understanding of the thought of 5:1?
172. Does this text suggest that someone should get drunk? Discuss.
173. These verses can or should refer to our marriage—but conditions must be met—what are they?
174. Discuss the meaning of these verses to our fellowship with our heavenly groom.

## TEXT 5:2—8:4

*FOURTH SCENE—The King's Palace 5:2—8:4*

## Retrospect

Shulammitte: Narration to Court Ladies of another dream,  
5:2-7

## TEXT 5:2-7

2. I was asleep, but my heart waked:  
It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh,  
saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my un-  
defiled;  
For my head is filled with dew, my locks with the drops  
of the night.
3. I have put off my garment; how shall I put it on?  
I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?
4. My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door,  
And my heart was moved for him.
5. I rose up to open to my beloved;  
And my hands dropped with myrrh,  
And my fingers with liquid myrrh,