

Song of Solomon 1:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

My beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of En-gedi.

Analysis

The bride adds another metaphor: **My beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of En-gedi.** The Hebrew 'eshkol hakofer' (אֶשְׁכּוֹל הַכֹּפֶר, cluster of henna blossoms) refers to fragrant white flowers of the henna plant (*Lawsonia inermis*), used for perfume and dye. The 'vineyards of En-gedi' (karmey eyn gedi, כַּרְמֵי עֵין גֵּדִי) locates this imagery in a specific oasis on the Dead Sea's western shore—a lush, green paradise amid barren desert, famous for springs, gardens, and fragrant plants.

The beloved is like fragrant henna blooming in paradisiacal En-gedi—beautiful, rare, life-giving, refreshing amid desolation. En-gedi's contrast between desert harshness and oasis abundance intensifies the metaphor: in life's spiritual desert, the beloved is refreshing paradise. The image celebrates both the beloved's beauty (fragrant blossoms) and his refreshing presence (oasis in desert). Christ is supremely the cluster of henna in En-gedi—bringing life, beauty, refreshment, and fragrance to souls parched by sin's desert. He transforms desolation into paradise wherever He dwells.

Historical Context

En-gedi (meaning 'spring of the kid/goat') was renowned for natural springs creating lush vegetation amid the Dead Sea's desolate landscape. David hid there from Saul (1 Samuel 23:29; 24:1), finding refuge and sustenance in its caves and greenery. The site's vineyards, gardens, and aromatic plants made it proverbial for

beauty and abundance. Ancient readers would immediately appreciate the powerful contrast: barren desert versus blooming oasis. The Song employs this geography theologically: the beloved brings life to desolation. Early church fathers saw Christ as true En-gedi—bringing living water (John 4:10; 7:38) and transforming spiritual desert into garden. The Puritans emphasized that Christ's presence transforms the soul from barren wasteland into fruitful garden. Modern readers living in spiritually arid culture recognize Christ as the oasis bringing life, beauty, and refreshment—the fragrant cluster in desolate vineyards of a dying world.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How has Christ been 'a cluster of henna in En-gedi' for you—bringing life, beauty, and refreshment to your spiritual desert?
2. What 'deserts' in your life need Christ's oasis-like presence to transform barrenness into fruitful beauty?

Interlinear Text

אֲשֶׁכָּ ל	הַכַּ פָּרִן	דֹּדִי	לִי	בְּכַרְמִי	עַן
is unto me as a cluster	of camphire	My beloved	H0	in the vineyards	H0
H811	H3724	H1730		H3754	
גְּדִי:					
of Engedi					
H5872					

Additional Cross-References

Joshua 15:62: And Nibshan, and the city of Salt, and En-gedi; six cities with their villages.

Song of Solomon 1:13: A bundle of myrrh is my wellbeloved unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts.

Song of Solomon 2:3: As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.

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