

Song of Solomon 4:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon.

Analysis

A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon.

The bridegroom continues praising his bride, now using water imagery. The Hebrew *ma'yan gannim be'er mayim chayim venozelim min-Levanon* (מעיין גנים באר) employs three parallel metaphors emphasizing abundance, purity, and life-giving power. *Ma'yan* (מעיין) means spring or fountain; *be'er* (באר) means well or pit; *nozelim* (נוזלים) means flowing streams.

"A fountain of gardens" (*ma'yan gannim*) suggests the bride is not merely recipient but source—her presence brings fertility and beauty to multiple gardens (plural). Ancient Near Eastern gardens required constant irrigation in arid climate. A reliable spring meant flourishing life. "Living waters" (*mayim chayim*) distinguished fresh, flowing water from stagnant cisterns. Jesus used this exact phrase: "rivers of living water" flow from believers (John 7:38), referring to the Holy Spirit. The metaphor connects physical refreshment to spiritual vitality.

"Streams from Lebanon" (*nozelim min-Levanon*) references Lebanon's snow-capped mountains feeding perpetual streams. Lebanon's water sustained agricultural abundance, making it proverbial for fertility and beauty. Applied allegorically: Christ finds in His church spiritual refreshment and beauty; she is His garden (4:12, 16), source of joy and delight. Conversely, the church receives living water from Christ (John 4:10-14), then becomes conduit channeling His grace to others. This reciprocal imagery reflects covenant union where each delights in and refreshes the other.

Historical Context

In ancient Israel's semi-arid climate, water sources determined settlement patterns and agricultural viability. Springs and wells were precious assets, often leading to disputes (Genesis 21:25, 26:19-22). Lebanon's mountains (reaching 10,000+ feet) collected winter snow that melted throughout summer, providing year-round water. This made Lebanon exceptionally fertile compared to surrounding regions. Solomon's Song uses Lebanon repeatedly as superlative standard (4:8, 11, 15, 5:15, 7:4)—epitome of beauty, fragrance, and abundance. The bride's comparison to Lebanon's streams emphasizes her exceptional worth and the life-sustaining quality of her love.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does the imagery of living water connect the bride's beauty to Christ's gift of the Holy Spirit dwelling in His church?
2. In what ways does the church become a "fountain of gardens" bringing spiritual life and refreshment to others?
3. What does the abundance of water imagery (fountain, well, streams) teach about the inexhaustible nature of Christ's love and provision?

Interlinear Text

מַעַיִן גְּדֵלָה בָּאָרֶץ מִימָּנוּתִים חַיִּים וְנַצְּלָה
A fountain of gardens a well waters of living and streams H4480

לְבָנָן:

from Lebanon

H3844

Additional Cross-References

John 4:10: Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewst the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

John 7:38: He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

Jeremiah 2:13: For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.

John 4:14: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

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