

6188U

FLORIDA BIBLE SCHOOL - 1993

THE GARDEN OF GOD

Speaker: Bro. Barry Van Heerden

Study 5: The Garden of Love (Songs of Solomon)

Reading: Song of Solomon 4

Good morning my dear brethren and sisters in the Lord. Good morning!

Before we start on our class this morning, we'll do a summary of what we did yesterday, in the garden of ecstasy. Of course, I've been reminded 16 times that I'm not made of glass, I'll move to about here, my sister, can you see? wonderful! good! Point 1, to appreciate the whole picture, we looked at a gospel parallel of what had happened in the garden of Joseph of Arimathea, and as we looked at the pictures there, we saw that the glory of the LORD was seen in **the rock** in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. All His mercy, all His grace, all His longsuffering, all His goodness and all His truth, all His forgiveness here in the mercy seat, as we focussed our attention as those two angels looked down on that flat slab of stone which reminded us of the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies.

We then focussed our attention on Mary Magdalene alone at the tomb, her name you'll recall was '**tower or greatness**', and we drew from that the exhortation that perhaps she was in fact, a tower of strength in times of trouble. Indeed she had been there for the Lord Jesus in His last week before the crucifixion. We also watched as she wept in confusion as she stood outside the tomb, and we remember that God would lay no more upon her than that which she was able to bear, but with the temptation was to provide a way out. We went with her into the Holy of Holies as I mentioned, the angels, one at the head and one at the foot, of where the body of Jesus had lain. As we shared with her emotions, we felt anguish as she spoke to the gardener. She shared her joy as Jesus called her by name, and we saw with our own eyes a vision of paradise restored, as the man and the woman stand before their God in the garden of ecstasy.

We come now to our 5<sup>th</sup> study and that is, a study on the Song of Solomon and the garden of love. As we read the apostle John, we read these words, 'In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God'. Then in verse 14 of John chapter 1, we discover that 'the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us; and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth'. Of course, the Word that is referred to here is **the whole of scripture, the whole Old Testament**, from the very first utterance in Genesis 1 verse 1 to the very last words of Malachi. All that was now manifested in God's Son; the way the apostle Paul puts it

in Hebrews 1 verse 1 he says, 'That God who at sundry times in divers manners spake in times past unto our fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son'. The whole Old Testament, whatever happened in the Old Testament was now manifested in flesh, in body, in the person of Jesus Christ.

Now you might be thinking, what does this have to do with the Songs of Solomon? Well, it has everything to do with the Songs of Solomon, particularly when we remember that the Songs of Solomon are **part of that Word**; they are part of the canon of scripture which made up the Word made flesh. You see, b&s, when we come to read the Songs of Solomon, to be quite frank, we are often bewildered and we are embarrassed by the language that we find in that book. We find it difficult to relate to the book as part of the canon of scripture, that made up the Word made flesh; we find it difficult to accept that this book is a part of the canon of scripture which Jesus used; it is part of the canon that Jesus was and is!

There's never been any doubt at all, b&s, that the Songs of Solomon belong to the scriptures of truth. From the earliest times the Jews have always attributed the Songs of Solomon to Solomon himself, there's never been any doubt as to its divine inspiration, which is perhaps a lot more than we can say for all of the critics today. The Jews always revered the Songs of Solomon as being the holiest of all books; they equated a number of books to the construction of the tabernacle and Solomon's temple. They looked at Ecclesiastes for all those that dwell under the sun, as being related to the outer court. They looked at Proverbs, those who are heir to be sons of God, those that were related to the sanctuary, to the Holy Place. But the Jews have always looked at the Holy of Holies in relationship to the Songs of Solomon; this was the holiest of all books.

Now the oldest Jewish commentary on the Songs of Solomon, which is called The Chaldee Targum, titles the book in the following way, and I quote: 'The songs and hymns which Solomon the prophet, king of Israel delivered by the spirit of prophecy before Jehovah, the LORD of the whole earth'. The Songs of Solomon therefore, form the very centre, the very kernel, the very pith of Jewish worship. It was central to their understanding of the mind of the Spirit, and it brought them into the innermost sanctuary of God.

So what went wrong? Why is it that we in our day and age find the language so distasteful? Why is it that we find the language of the Songs of Solomon so embarrassing? What has the passionate love that a man has for a woman, to do with worship and holiness? I think the root of the problem lies in the culture that we have inherited. We find ourselves in a sense, caught between the rock and the hard place; we have inherited two different types of culture. On the one hand we have inherited the Victorian culture which tells us that sexual intimacy was to be seen as a duty and a right, but it was never spoken about in public, it was never spoken about in groups. On the other hand, we have the 20<sup>th</sup> century culture which we see every day and we live with it, with our television and the media which surrounds us, and the 20<sup>th</sup> century

culture looks at sexual intimacy in relationship to Freudian philosophy, 'sex makes the world go round' and we as the people of God, who are conservative by nature, are appalled by what the world has done with sex. So we recoil and we are shocked! and in a sense we are driven into the area of Victorian thinking, and I believe, that here we find the prime root of the problem in our community. We spend tireless effort, we spend a lot of money, teaching the truth to our children; we bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the LORD, we tell them Sunday School stories. We send them to youth groups, to youth camps, and by God's grace, God calls them and they respond and they give their lives to the Lord, and in their naivety almost, they put on the saving Name of Jesus and we pray for them that God will lead them. We pray that by God's grace, they will meet somebody else in the truth, and God answers our prayers and they get married in the truth. We've educated them and looked after them and we've cared for them and we bring them to this point in their lives, and come the honeymoon night, we close the door on them, and we turn our backs and walk away. The rate of marriage failure in the truth will continue to climb, and unhappy marriages in the truth will excel until we realize that there is a better way, and that way's to be found right here, in the pages that we have open on our laps at the moment, the Songs of Solomon.

I bring you to Song 4. Now dear brethren and sisters, this is not an easy thing to talk about from the platform and I'm not going to insult your intelligence by pretending that I know a lot about the Songs of Solomon. I don't! neither will I try and pretend that I know a lot about love, I'm only learning after 20 years of marriage, all I know is that, by God's grace, I have been given a wife who knows me and loves me for what I am. In South Africa we say, 'warts and all', I've been given a companion that talks to me, and understands me, I've been given a friend that cares for me, and it's by God's grace and because of our relationship that I **dare** to stand before you today and speak to you about love, this garden of love!

Song 4 verse 12, reading from the RV, 'A garden enclosed is my sister my bride; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed'. In the Septuagint the word 'garden' there is the word 'paradise', 'a paradise shut up or enclosed is my sister my bride', and of course, the allusion here takes us back to the garden in Eden. God planted a garden eastward in Eden. It was a place enclosed, it was a holy place, a Holy of Holies, because the parcel of ground was set apart, it was a garden shut up, enclosed, a garden called paradise where peace and tranquillity prevailed. Of course, the key note to the book that is before us, is in fact, **peace**, and of course, that's what we want to look at now. Three Hebrew words which relate to the husband and the wife and the location where the husband and wife find themselves; the husband's name is Solomon and in Hebrew we find the root '**shalom**' (7965) and that is masculine for '**peace**'; the wife here or the lover is the Shulamite and in Hebrew and it's Shuwiammyth (7759) it is feminine for **peace**, and of course the location is Jerusalem (3389) Yeruwashalaim, **a vision of peace**. I have three references there for you, Song 1 verse 1, 'The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's', and that's where we find that little Hebrew word 'shalom'; then in chapter 6 verse 13, 'Return, return, O Shulamite', the root again feminine for peace;

then in chapter 6 verse 4, 'Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem'. So we see here that as we look at this garden, this paradise, the theme is **peace**. These three primary words present the basis for our graphic picture of a husband and wife living in perfect harmony, in perfect peace.

It's ever so easy, b&s, to become intellectual about the Songs of Solomon and about our appreciation of the book and to miss the point completely; we can indulge ourselves in long heated debates as to the exact identity of the lovers in the book. Was it Abishag? was it the Shulamite? was it the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31? or her counterpart in Psalm 45? Was it Eve, Rebekah, Leah? was it Rahab, Ruth, Abigail, Hephzibah? and we can go on and on and on, and we can debate these points and it's very interesting, but we can miss the point completely. I'm going to suggest to you that there's another way! a better way! and that is to put ourselves into the equation. Instead of the book being there, let us bring the book into our relationships, right into our marriages. You'll recall the time when David had sinned, you'll recall too, how the prophet Nathan was sent to him, and he gave him that little parable about the rich man and the poor man and how the traveller when he came through, the rich man took the poor man's little ewe lamb. You'll recall the parable well, but remember how the parable ends, 'thou art the man', **thou art the man; I am the man, I am guilty!** it's so easy to put this book over there, b&s, and we have these fantastic studies, and we can have a whole bible school on the Songs of Solomon, and we come away, and we're just as cruel to our wives as we were before, and we speak just as harshly as we did before, without taking something of the tenderness and something of the meaning and the spirit of this book. We're a long way from the garden of love because we as men find it so difficult to love!

I said something earlier about how I love women, and the reason I think I love women so much is because of their capacity **to love**, perhaps it's the way that God has designed them that when they give birth to a child, the child comes from them and there is this unique relationship between mother and child. I've never understood in own being what 'agape' means! (and I don't want to get into pronunciations, let's not miss the point and argue about how it's pronounced), but that **sacrificial love**, until I saw it with my wife when our children were born. Then night after night after night when the children cried, there I was nudging her in the back, to make sure that she was the one that went to the child and I could get my night's sleep; men do that, you see, they kind of roll over and just nudge, nudge, nudge! Never any complaints, never, ever a complaint, night after night; women have a tenderness and an understanding of sacrificial love that we as brethren have to learn from them. I've been learning for 20 years and I'm still in Sunday School!

All marriages, b&s, start off with two types of love, and I'm not trying to be clever here, I'm going to share this with you, simply because it's worth sharing with you. We have different types of love that are spoken of, this first one here which is 'eros' which is erotic, sensual love, which is **face to face love**, is not a biblical word, it's not found in the bible per se, but in the Songs of Solomon clearly that is the language that is used.

We have the 'phileo' which is the friendship, companionship love, which is the **side by side love**, and then we have 'agape' which is this sacrificial, self-denial, this is the **spiritual love**, which God has for us, because 'God so loved the world' (that's the sacrificial love that is spoken of there). Now all marriages start off with the first two of those loves, there is the 'eros' the erotic love, there's what I call 'the electricity' when I'm dealing with young people in youth camps and things like that! I always talk about all these 'electricity vibes', that you see, arcs shooting across between a couple, just the way she walks or moves or talks, the way she is, I can just see him looking at her and she's totally unaware at this point in time, finally he makes the connection and he talks to her and they start up with the little finger, and then they start holding hands and it's very lovely and it's very beautiful; and that's how that '**eros**' love starts, and that's by God's design, and there's nothing wrong with it and we're very thankful for it. Of course, hopefully they'll learn also about 'the friendship and the companionship' love, but all marriages start with a flame, the secret is to keep the flame alive! Now I know I might be carrying coals to Newcastle here, I know I might be preaching to the converted, but the whole idea, b&s, is that we develop from those two forms of love in the beginning, **that spiritual love, that sacrificial love**, that love which denies self, which is so evident in the love that a mother has for her child.

I'd like you now to go back to the Songs of Solomon chapter 1, because as we look at these opening words, we see here in the eternal Song, we see here burns the eternal flame of love; here in the Song of all Songs is the **passion**, the passion that God has for His wife, Israel, for His people; the passion that Christ has for the ecclesia, the passion the brother has for his sister wife. Here we are dealing with a covenant in the flesh, we are dealing here with the consummation of marriage, we're dealing here with the strongest emotions known to man. We enter here into the Holy of Holies, into the sanctuary itself where they twain become one flesh. So the book opens in verse 2 with the words, 'Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine', and oh it is ever so easy to talk about the kiss of fellowship and the kiss of betrayal and all the different kisses in the bible; these are passionate kisses, where the flame comes from within the very soul. They are sensual, they are sexual!

As we approach the garden of love, if we go back to chapter 4, let us notice how carefully the husband who is her King, who is her Saviour likens the different parts of her body to the garden eastward in Eden. Before we do this, I'm going to just share with you a poem that I wrote and the poem is based on different parts of the Song of Solomon. As we read this poem of paradise together, all those are words which you find in italics are taken directly from the Songs of Solomon, and as we share them together in a moment, you'll notice that these different elements are likened unto the different parts of her body, my sister, my bride, a garden enclosed. So we have here a poem of paradise:

Doves on a perch behind the locks  
 Use newly shorn choicest of flocks,  
 A pair of fawns, twins of a roe,

Feed among the lilies without a foe.

Day breaks and shadows flee away,  
A land of milk and honey forever and a day  
Rolling hills of wheat,  
And not for all to eat.

Pools of living waters flow  
Up, up Mount Carmel and lo,  
Palm trees righteous and upright,  
Through Christ the way, the truth and the light.

I'm going to leave that up as we look at Song 4 together. Song 4 verse 1 from the RV, and you'll pick out some of the words that I've used there in that little poem. Speaking of His bride and to His bride, 'Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thine eyes are as doves behind the locks; thy hair as a flock of goats, that lie amongst the sides of Mount Gilead. Verse 2, 'Thy teeth are like a flock of ewes that are newly shorn, which cometh from the washing'. Verse 5, 'Thy two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a roe which feed among the lilies until the day break and the shadows flee away'. Verse 11, 'Thy lips, oh my bride, dropped as the honeycomb; honey and milk are under thy tongue and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon'.

Move now to Song 7 towards the end of the book, Song 7 and verse 2, notice again, notice again how her body is related to different parts of the garden. Verse 2, 'Thy navel is like a round goblet wherein no mingled wine is wanting; thy belly is like a heap of wheat, set out amongst the lilies'. Verse 4, 'Thy neck is like a tower of ivory; thine eyes as the pools of Heshbon'. Verse 5, 'Thine head upon thee is like Mount Carmel'; Verse 7, 'Thy stature is like a palm tree'. All these similes allude to the peace and tranquillity of God's creation, is it any wonder then that we find in verse 12 of chapter 4, **a garden enclosed**, is my sister, my bride. My sister, my bride is my garden, she is enclosed, she belongs to me. She is my Holy of Holies, she is my sanctuary. But notice here that she is **first**, my sister and then my bride. Wherever we look in scripture the principles are always the same! **marriage out of the truth in God's eyes is not acceptable**. Here we find this beautiful picture by obeying God's way! She is first my sister in Christ, she is first espoused to Christ and then she is my bride!

Verse 12, 'She is a spring shut up, a fountain sealed. Her shoots are an orchard of pomegranates, with precious fruits'. So whilst my sister my bride is my garden, she, in verse 12, is also a spring and a fountain to bring forth life; when we go and have lunch together, look at that fountain, and think of life coming out. There it is, she's a fountain bringing forth life, but she is **sealed** as with the royal signet of the king. No one but the king may touch her. But notice at the end of verse 13, 'her shoots are as an orchard of pomegranates with precious fruits', and these precious fruits are either the fruits of the womb or the fruits of the Spirit, or both. Children you'll remember are an heritage of the LORD, they are the fruit of the womb; her children here are to be like a orchard of

pomegranates, and when we look at an orchard, they are well organized, they are in rows, they are well cared for, they are cultivated. Of course, when we look at the pomegranate we see a seed within a seed, and so we see within the pomegranate, her children and her children's children unto many generations. That's the type of allusion we have in the pomegranate!

Look at the end of verse 13, 'Henna and spikenard plants; verse 14, 'spikenard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices. Thou art a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and flowing streams from Lebanon'. Now bearing in mind that spikenard plants are like pot-pourri, they are dry, they are for the aroma in the home. Spikenard is the spikenard ointment in verse 14, if you look at them carefully, you will see that there are, in fact, 9 precious fruits (if you're making notes you need to put in your margin Galatians 5 verse 22) I have a candy bar in my pocket here, what's Galatians 5 verse 22 all about? fruits of the Spirit, there you go and there are 9 of them; that's right! we have 9 precious fruits here and we have 9 fruits of the Spirit as well as the individual spices and fragrances. Perhaps it's worth mentioning one or two of them: spikenard - this is the second time we find spikenard, you'll find it in verse 14 there and the first time you find it is in chapter 1 verse 22, and the only other occurrence where you'll find spikenard in the bible is that woman, Mary of Bethany, that woman of the street who came and anointed Jesus' feet with ointment of spikenard. In both gospels we're told that the ointment was very precious and very costly, no doubt she gave everything that she had for her Lord. Is it any wonder that Jesus said unto her, 'verily, I say unto you, wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in all the world; this also which she has done shall be spoken of her for a memorial of her'. And we are making a memorial of her today, this very day as we read those words, she is still remembered in that costly ointment of spikenard which she anointed the Lord with. If you don't have it in your margin, it's in Mark 14 verse 3 and John 12 verse 3..

Notice also that we've got **calamus, cinnamon, frankincense, myrrh** here in verse 14. Calamus, cinnamon and myrrh comprise three of the four chief spices used to make the holy anointing oil. They're called 'chief' spices because they were for the head, 'chief' here I think is the word 'rosh' (7218), the head spices. Frankincense, of course, was one of the spices used to make up incense, the conclusion and the exhortation, obviously here, is that all these spices that we see here, have spiritual significance.

Verse 15, My sister, my bride 'is a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and flowing streams from Lebanon'. The language here is very poetic, it is vividly descriptive, while she herself is a garden enclosed. She is also a fountain of gardens, in other words, other gardens will come forth from her, just as beautiful! I can you if I look at my three daughters, just as beautiful! and hopefully by God's grace, just as peaceful and tranquil, gardens that will bring praise and honour and glory to Almighty God. Notice too in verse 15, that she is a **well of living waters**, she is deep and from the depths of her very soul, she contains living water. Where does that living water come from? it comes from her association with the Lord Jesus Christ. It is He who has given

her living waters to drink. Guess where I'm going? to the well! yes, I've only got one piece of candy left, in fact, they're peanuts; they say if you pay peanuts you get monkeys!

John 4, but keep your place in the Songs of Solomon because we're going to return there. John 4 we recall, that Jesus was on His way to Galilee, He had to pass through Samaria at Sychar or Shechem, and He stopped at Jacob's well and you'll recall that the Samaritan woman came down to draw water. We need to picture the scene: it was perhaps midday, the sun was beating down upon the land and Jesus is left by the well, the disciples have gone into the village to go and buy refreshments and perhaps a little bit of something to eat and it's at this point in time that the woman comes down. At the end of verse 7, they're there alone and Jesus asks her, 'give Me to drink'. She's absolutely confused in verse 9, and she says, 'How is it that Thou being a Jew asketh a drink of me which am a Samaritan woman? because the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans!' Verse 10, Jesus answered and said unto her, 'If thou knewest 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'. Now I'm going to read verse 14 in the feminine gender, 'Because the water that I shall give her shall become in her a well of water springing up unto eternal life', those are the same words in the Septuagint that we find here in the Songs of Solomon 4, if we could return there.

Songs of Solomon 4, a well of water springing up unto eternal life, and so my sister my bride is a well of living waters because of her relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Because, first of all, she's my sister in Christ and she's drunk of the living waters given to her personally by the Lord. It's because of her relationship with Jesus that the water that He has given her becomes **in her, a well of water springing up unto eternal life**. Verse 16, so my sister my bride responds, 'Awake, O north wind; and come, thou O south; blow upon my garden that the spices thereof may flow out'. So we see the picture of the wind scattering the seeds and the seeds going with the wind and settling down. But now comes a time that she desires to fulfil her role as a woman and she wants to give herself so that the spices or the precious fruits of verses 13 and 14 may flow out of her. Verse 16, 'Let my beloved come into his garden and eat his precious fruits'; and so the moment of intimacy arrives, the moment when two become one, two become one flesh, when in the sanctuary of peace and tranquillity he enters into his garden, knowing that it is the gift of God that a man might enjoy the fruit of his labour.

He responds in chapter 5 verse 1, here is the response, '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 wine with my milk. Eat, O friends, drink yea, drink abundantly, O beloved'. As he satisfies her desires, and she satisfies his, we draw ourselves away from this garden of love and we need to be alone and consider and meditate. We need to ask ourselves, was I part of this experience or was I just a bystander? Was I just a person who knows the mechanics of the truth? but has never learnt the spirit of the truth. How can I know how God, this passionate God, feels about His wife, Israel, who committed adultery and fornication with the nations? you can read



about it in Ezekiel 16, there's a whole chapter on it, how God found her as a small young child in the desert with her navel still uncut, and she was still in her blood. How He took her and cleansed her and cleaned her from the blood in which He found her. Then He clothed her and she grew to become a beautiful woman and her breasts were fair and a time for love drew near, and He spread His coat about her and decked her with silver and gold and with precious stones. But then came the time when she trusted in her own beauty, and she started to commit fornication with the nations. How do we understand how God feels about His bride, His wife? the passion that a man has for a woman, if we cannot enter into the spirit of the Song of Solomon, how do we understand how Christ feels about us? as His bride? as His ecclesia? as His woman? when we go astray and we set up other gods for ourselves and do the same things as Israel of the flesh did. How do I understand, if I don't put myself into the equation?

There's a home-grown proverb back home which says, 'If your Christianity does not work at home, then don't export it!' There's a lot of truth in that, we need to spend a lot more time tending to our garden, brethren. We need to spend a lot more time learning about tenderness and love and compassion. Our marriages should be examples of what we stand for, living parables of what we believe; they should reflect in some small way, the glories of the kingdom to come, because when we see the peace and tranquillity of the home, where the garden is tended for, where the husband is paying due respect and giving the wife her due time. Instead of preaching here and there and spending time on the computer knocking out notes and we're ever so busy in the truth, brethren, that we can neglect our wives and miss the point completely. We should be bringing glory to God in our marriages, and they should bring glory and honour to our heavenly Father and our heavenly Bridegroom.

If there are any married couples that are here now or if you know of any brethren and sisters that have lost the way, then we will share together now some signposts back to the garden of love, the garden that we pray for, the garden that we treasure!

These are signposts that by God's grace, we'll find helpful, and afterwards we'll conclude by sharing Paul's words in Ephesians 5.

1. The first big signpost that we need to acknowledge is that the Songs of Solomon are part of our canon of scripture, they were also part of Jesus' canon, the Word made flesh. We cannot separate this book from the other books in the bible and we should not be embarrassed by the language which we find therein.

2. The second point is that the book is about the sanctity and the joy of love making.

3. The third point is that the lovers in the book are husband and wife; they refer to God and Israel (Ezekiel 16) Jesus and the ecclesia (Ephesians 5 which we'll share together in a moment), a brother and sister in Christ. She is first of all, my sister, then she is my bride.

4. The 4<sup>th</sup> signpost is that God intended love-making in the bonds of marriage for enjoyment as well as for procreation. The whole of the Song of Solomon tells us about that!

5. The 5<sup>th</sup> point is that marriage is a covenant in the flesh and in some small measure here we can practice the at-one-ment. Baptism is a covenant in Christ and there we preach the at-one-ment; one needs to be as the reflection of the other. If your Christianity or your marriage does not work at home, then don't export it, we need to get our marriages working in the truth so that they become examples of peace and tranquillity.

6. The 6<sup>th</sup> point is, my beloved is mine and I am his; her body belongs to her husband, it is his garden enclosed, set apart, holy; it is therefore, not to be desired by strangers and not at any time to be put on display for their arousal. Especially here, brethren should be very careful to ensure that their sister wives and their daughters are attired in a way that would please our heavenly Father.

7. The loving union in the true sense of the Word, can only occur when there is peace in the home. Where the husband's name is peace, where the wife's name is peace and the home has a vision of peace because that's what the name **Jerusalem** means, 'a vision of peace'.

I bring you now to Ephesians 5 and we'll conclude. Ephesians 5 starting at verse 21, I know that we normally start reading here at verse 22, 'wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands', we love that; I always say let's start at verse 21, 'Submit yourselves **one to another** in the fear of God'. Here is the mark of a Christian, **submission** in the fear of God. If you're taking notes, next to verse 22 I'd like you to make a little note, Isaiah 62 verse 5, and I'm going to read it to you; 'As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee', and with those thoughts in mind, we enter into verse 22. 'Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the ecclesia: and He is the Saviour of the body. Verse 24, 'Therefore as the ecclesia is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be unto their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the ecclesia, and gave Himself for her; (and I'm reading this now in the feminine gender). That He might sanctify and cleanse her, with the washing of water by the Word. That He might present her to Himself a glorious ecclesia, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that she should be **holy, set apart, a sanctuary** (we're back in Eden), **a garden enclosed is my sister, my bride.**' She is to be holy, set apart, and **without blemish**'. Verse 28, 'So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own body, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the ecclesia.' **Here is to dress and to keep!** Verse 30, 'For we are members of His body, of His flesh, of His bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother (we're back to the garden, eastward in Eden) and shall be joined unto his wife,

and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: because I speak of Christ and the ecclesia'.