



“Arise My Love...”

*Song of Songs 2:10-13 &
Revelation 19:10-13*

This last year has felt like a long winter. Much that has happened in our world has been discouraging. It is easy to give into the despair of a world that seems hopeless. But these last few weeks I have felt like there is a change in the world, the sense of spring in the air.

The writer of the book of Song of Songs [I believe it is Solomon] places this song in the early part of May. The events he describes in this chapter take place in Israel during late April into early May.

May 1, 2022



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It is easy to believe that nothing will get better but for the Christian hope in Christ gives us an optimistic view of the future. Either there will be a renewal of faith in in Christ in the culture or Christ will come, either way the Christian wins. May 1st has ancient celebrations surrounding it. It was a time of hope and new beginnings.

May 1, 2022

Song Of Songs 2:10-13 [*Song of Solomon*] [ESV]

10 My beloved speaks and says to me: "Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come away, 11 for behold, the winter is past; the rain is over and gone. 12 The flowers appear on the earth, the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. 13 The fig tree ripens its figs, and the vines are in blossom; they give forth fragrance. Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come away.

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Song of Songs 2:10-13 & Revelation 19:10-13



The earliest celebrations we have record of is the “Floralia” a minor Roman celebration or flower festival from April 27-May 3. It celebrated the flowering of the earth.

Flowers are among the most notable aspects of May in the Northern Hemisphere. Spring actually begins with the March Equinox [Mar. 20th, 2022] but it really does not begin to feel like spring until around May 1 which is half way between the Equinox and the Summer Solstice. Solomon in his love song portrays the marriage and first few weeks of a young couple as they work their way through the spring of their marriage.

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The Song of Songs was a deeply troubling portion of Scripture for the Rabbis and the Early Christian Fathers. The Early Christian Fathers became so uncomfortable with the imagery that they “allegorized” it into a reflection of the relationship of Christ with the Church. They used Ephesians 5:24-33. They particularly focused on verse 32. This interpretation had the advantage of spiritualizing the Song but is not accurate to the meaning. It would work better as at points an illustration of Ephesians 5.

Ephesians 5:24-33[ESV] note: vv. 25-27 & 32

24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

28 In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, 30 because we are members of his body. 31 "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."

32 This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. 33 However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

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The Turtle Dove is a migratory dove that winters in Africa but returns to Israel around May 1st

This portion of the Song of Songs reflects the hope and new adventure that this young married couple is entering into. Just as our relationships go through phases of excitement, struggle, waning and renewal so our spiritual experience goes through such periods.

Turtle Doves mate for life returning to the same area to nest each year. They like mourning doves raise several squabs over a summer. Their appearance was a sign of life and spring and hope.

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In Ephesians Paul indicates to Husbands and wives that the central principles that keep a marriage relationship solid is the self-sacrificial love of a committed husband and the respect and honor of a loving wife for that husband. Paul tells us that such a relationship reflects the relationship of Christ and His Church.

Such a relationship can remain strong through phases of doubt, fear, despair, joy and exhilaration with confidence. Revelation 3:11-12

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Revelation 3:11-12 *[Written to the Church of Philadelphia]*

11 I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown.

12 **The one who conquers**, I will make him a **pillar** in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and **I will write on him the name** of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name.

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Figs set in early April and begin filling out in May. They are one of the oldest crops in human history. Grapes flower in Israel in late April early May. The flowers are small and delicate but give off a strong pungent aroma. It speaks to us of anticipation. For the Christian the vagaries of life in this world often wear on us. In Matthew 25, Jesus tells the parable of a wedding feast. As we saw in Psalm 45, the wedding feast is attended by young unmarried women of the community as a kind of retinue of honor for the bride.



Ripening figs and flowering grapes.

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In the time of Christ wedding feast were elaborate events that often took place in the spring of the year. The wedding party would join the procession in route to the banquet hall. The 10 virgins that Jesus describes are waiting for the procession to arrive so that they may attend the wedding as honored bridesmaids. Only 5 are adequately prepared for the long wait and the vagaries of delays. IN our Christian walk we often are discouraged by the seeming lack of movement in the world spiritually.



Ripening figs and
flowering grapes.

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Matthew 25:1-7 [ESV]

1 "Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. 2 Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. 3 For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, 4 but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. 5 As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. 6 But at midnight there was a cry, 'Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' 7 Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps.

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We don't know what began the Maypole dance. There is a lot of speculation. Some believe that it goes back to pagan rituals. But there is no real record or mention of celebrations like this before the 1300s. It is first mentioned in England in 1350 associated with churches. It seems to have spread quickly across Europe because by the 1500s it had become a town celebration throughout Europe. It is interesting that this celebration developed during the time of the Black Plagues that rocked Europe for nearly 2 centuries. Perhaps these Maypole celebrations with their interweaving dance and flowered wreathes gave hope in the darkness.



Maypole Dance in
England

Isaiah 52:1-6

1 Awake, awake, put on your strength, O Zion; put on your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city; for there shall no more come into you the uncircumcised and the unclean. 2 Shake yourself from the dust and arise; be seated, O Jerusalem; loose the bonds from your neck, O captive daughter of Zion.

3 For thus says the LORD: "You were sold for nothing, and you shall be redeemed without money." 4 For thus says the Lord GOD: "My people went down at the first into Egypt to sojourn there, and the Assyrian oppressed them for nothing. 5 Now therefore what have I here," declares the LORD, "seeing that my people are taken away for nothing? Their rulers wail," declares the LORD, "and continually all the day my name is despised.

6 Therefore my people shall know my name. Therefore in that day they shall know that it is I who speak; here I am."

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God has not forsaken us no matter how dark the world seems. We celebrate because God is faithful. Throughout history when the darkness of circumstances seemed to overwhelm God’s kingdom he has provided deliverance or renewal. We should not despair for spring is near and the darkness is fleeing away. The Bride of Christ in Revelation is the “New Jerusalem”. The description of the new Jerusalem in Revelation 21 indicates that it is the New Covenant Community built on the foundation of the Church. Paul in Romans prefigures this as the grafting in of the wild olive branches with the cultivated olive branches.



Maypole Dance in
England

Revelation 21:1-7 [ESV]

1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "**Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.**" 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." 5 And he who was seated on the throne said, "**Behold, I am making all things new.**" Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." 6 And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. 7 The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son."



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We do not know when or why the tradition of giving May Day baskets on May first developed. But its first mention is in the late 1700s in association with Maypole celebrations. It probably was inspired by the “Romantic Movement” that began around the same time in Western culture. It was a reflection of deep affection for a person. One of the most beloved 1st Ladies in US history is Grace Coolidge [1923-1929].

First Lady Grace Coolidge being given a May Day Basket in 1927, The giving of May Day Baskets was popular in English and American culture well into the 20th century.

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She avoided political hot buttons devoting herself to her family and personal causes. She had graduated as a special needs school teacher and continued in that role. When she graduated college she taught at a deaf school teaching deaf children to communicate by reading lips and integrating into society. This is where she met her husband Calvin. During his long political career she avoided political conflicts devoting herself to humanitarian causes.

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In 1924, their eldest son Calvin died. Most 1st Ladies at the death of a child went into deep mourning that lasted many months to years. Grace returned to her public duties after a month of mourning. This photo was taken in 1929 and reflects the joy she approached life with. She continued devoting herself to humanitarian causes until her death in 1956. A remarkable lady. Who reflected the concept of continual spring in her life.

First Lady Grace Coolidge being given a May Day Basket in 1927, The giving of May Day Baskets was popular in English and American culture well into the 20th century.

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Revelation 19:6-10 [ESV]

5 And from the throne came a voice saying, "Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great."

6 Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. 7 Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; 8 it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure" — for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. 9 And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are the true words of God."



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We can only face the struggles of life when we have confidence in Christ and his purpose in us. We may at times feel defeated, but we get back up and the spring of God’s grace rekindles within us fresh purpose and joy for the day. After all we are invited to the wedding banquet. And God has hung on our hearts his May Day basket, the guarantee of the Holy Spirit. John the Baptist celebrated this adventure in John 3:29.

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John 3:29 [ESV]

26 And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, he who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you bore witness — look, he is baptizing, and all are going to him."

27 John answered, "A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven.

28 You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.'

29 The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete.

30 He must increase, but I must decrease."



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Christ says “Arise my love...” The Church as His Bride will see victory either through renewal or deliverance. Thus, we have every reason to be confident.

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