

Song of Solomon 2:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land;

Analysis

The beloved continues describing spring's arrival: **The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.** The Hebrew 'hanitsanim nir'u va'arets' (הַנִּצָּנִים נִרְאוּ בָאָרֶץ, the blossoms have appeared on the earth) celebrates visible transformation—color, beauty, life bursting forth. **The time of the singing of birds** (et hazamir, הַזָּמִיר) could mean 'time of pruning/singing'—wordplay suggesting both agricultural activity and bird song. **The voice of the turtle** (qol hator, קוֹל הַתּוֹר, voice of the turtledove) specifies the cooing of turtledoves, migratory birds whose spring return signaled winter's end.

This verse engages multiple senses: sight (flowers), sound (singing, cooing), suggesting comprehensive renewal. Creation itself celebrates—flowers adorning the earth, birds filling the air with music. The beloved invites the bride into this symphonic, colorful world transformed by spring. Spiritually, this prefigures new creation in Christ—visible transformation, joyful celebration, beauty replacing barrenness. When Christ renews hearts, life 'appears,' and spiritual 'singing' replaces mourning (Isaiah 61:3). The Spirit's presence brings forth fruit (Galatians 5:22-23) as certainly as spring brings flowers.

Historical Context

Ancient Palestinian spring brought dramatic transformation after winter's brown landscape. Wildflowers carpeted hillsides (anemones, cyclamens, poppies),

creating breathtaking beauty. Turtledoves (*Streptopelia turtur*) migrated from Africa in spring, their cooing a distinctive seasonal sound. Agricultural 'pruning time' (zmir, זמיר) coincided with spring, connecting cultivation and natural renewal. Ancient Israelites, deeply connected to agricultural rhythms, would feel spring's invitation viscerally—time to work, celebrate, enjoy creation. Early church tradition saw Christ's resurrection as ultimate spring—death's winter defeated, eternal spring beginning. Gregory of Nazianzus wrote that Christ's rising brought cosmic springtime. The Reformers emphasized that the gospel brings spring to winter-dead souls—flowers of grace, song of justification. The Puritans celebrated God's 'common grace' in creation's beauty while seeing deeper spiritual realities prefigured. Modern readers, often disconnected from seasonal rhythms, can recover wonder at creation's cycles and their spiritual significance.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What 'flowers' and 'singing' has Christ brought to your previously barren spiritual landscape—visible evidence of His transforming work?
2. How does creation's seasonal renewal testify to God's faithfulness and the certainty of spiritual spring following spiritual winter?

Interlinear Text

הַנְּצָנִים	וְנֹרָא	בְּאַרְצֵנוּ:	עַתָּה	הַזֶּמֶר יֵר	הֵג יֵע
The flowers	appear	in our land	the time	of the singing	of birds is come
H5339	H7200	H776	H6256	H2158	H5060
וְקוֹל	הַתּוֹר	נִשְׁמָע	בְּאַרְצֵנוּ:		
and the voice	of the turtle	is heard	in our land		
H6963	H8449	H8085	H776		

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 55:12: For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

Colossians 3:16: Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

Jeremiah 8:7: Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the LORD.

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