

25 Ways Pentecost Foreshadows the Rapture

By T.W. Tramm

A POPULAR VIEW is that the Bible's "Feast of Weeks," better known as Pentecost, foreshadows the Rapture.

The following is a list of 25 scriptural reasons why.

1. PENTECOST IS A HARVEST FESTIVAL

Pentecost is one of three designated harvest festivals during which every Israelite male was required to appear before the Lord in Jerusalem: "Three times a year you are to celebrate a festival to me. Celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread [at Passover] the Festival of Harvest [Pentecost] ... [and] the Festival of Ingathering [Tabernacles] ... Three times a year all your males are to appear before the Lord GOD" (Ex. 23:14-17). In Scripture, a harvest and a gathering before God denote a resurrection/rapture (Rev. 7:9-14; 14:15; 1 Cor. 15:20; 2 Thess. 2:1).

2. A GREAT MULTITUDE

Of the three harvest festivals, Pentecost is said to have drawn the largest crowds. This is because Passover and Tabernacles occurred in early spring and fall when adverse weather was more likely to interfere with travel from distant lands. A large crowd gathered in Jerusalem on Pentecost corresponds to Revelation's depiction of a great multitude gathered before God's throne after the Rapture (7:9).

3. PENTECOST IS A FIRSTFRUITS FESTIVAL

The harvest at Pentecost celebrates the "firstfruits of the wheat" (Ex. 34:22). In Scripture, wheat represents believers (Matt. 13). The first major harvest of believers (wheat) occurs at the Rapture.

4. A GATHERING FROM EVERY NATION

At the Church's first Pentecost, devout people from every nation, tribe, and language were gathered in Jerusalem (Acts 2:5, 6). At the Rapture, devout people from every nation, tribe, and language will be gathered in "heavenly Jerusalem" (Rev. 7:9).

5. GATHERED IN ONE PLACE

It was on the Church's first Pentecost that the believers found themselves gathered in one place (Acts 2:1). The next time all believers will find themselves gathered in one place is at the Rapture (Rev. 7:9).

6. A TIME OF REJOICING

Pentecost is a time to rejoice before the Lord: “Celebrate the Festival of Weeks [Pentecost] ... and rejoice before the LORD your God” (Deut. 16: 10, 11.) The ultimate time of rejoicing before the Lord will be immediately after the Rapture (Rev. 7:9-12; 1 Thess. 2:19).

7. THE ORDER OF THE RESURRECTIONS

The multiple orders of resurrection spoken of by Paul are believed to correspond to the three harvest festivals (1 Cor. 15:23; Deut. 16:16). In this scenario, the first harvest at Passover is fulfilled by Jesus’ resurrection (1 Cor. 15:20). The last harvest at Tabernacles is fulfilled by a resurrection at the Second Coming (Rev. 20:4-6). This leaves the middle harvest, Pentecost, to be fulfilled by the Church’s resurrection/rapture.

8. THE WAVE OFFERING

The wave offering of the grain sheaf during Passover (Firstfruits) is a picture of Jesus’ resurrection. Applying the same template (wave offering = resurrection) to the next harvest, the offering of baked loaves on Pentecost is a picture of the Church’s resurrection/rapture. The ripening of the grain during the seven-weeks between Passover and Pentecost symbolizes the growth and maturation of the Body of Christ throughout the Church Age. The grain transformed into bread represents the Church in its final/completed state.

9. A TIME OF ACCOUNTABILITY

On Pentecost, when the Israelites appeared before the Lord, they were required to bring an offering proportionate to the blessings God had bestowed upon them (Deut. 16:16, 17). This requirement reminds us of Jesus’ admonition concerning the judgment of one’s fruits at the end of the age: “From everyone who has been given much, much will be required” (Matt. 25:14-30; Luke 12:48).

10. COUNTING THE WEEKS

Of all the biblical festivals, Pentecost is the only one preceded by a countdown of seven weeks (Lev. 23:15, 16). The only other instance of a seven-weeks countdown in Scripture is in Daniel 9 where “seven weeks” precede the coming of Messiah the Prince: “From the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of Messiah the Prince there shall be seven weeks” (9:25).

11. PAYDAY FOR REDEMPTION

The sending of the Holy Spirit on the Church’s first Pentecost is called the “down payment” on our redemption (Eph. 1:14). Since the down payment on our redemption occurred on Pentecost, it would seem logical for the final payment—the redemption of our bodies at the Rapture (Rom. 8:23)—to occur on the same day.

12. A TIME OF SEALING

Pentecost is when the first Church members were sealed by the Holy Spirit (Acts 2). At the Rapture, 144,000 of the children of Israel will be sealed by the Holy Spirit (Rev. 7:3, 4). Is it possible the latter sealing will occur on the anniversary of the first, namely Pentecost?

13. THE THIRD DAY

It was on the morning of the third day, corresponding to Pentecost, that Moses ascended Sinai to receive the Commandments from God (Ex. 19). In John chapter 2 Jesus attends a wedding on the third day and alludes to the fact that He will be resurrected on the third day (vv. 1, 19-21). Thus Pentecost is symbolically a “third day” in the Old Testament while the third day is a wedding and resurrection day in the New Testament.

14. THE 50TH DAY

Pentecost, a word derived from the Greek Pentēkostē, meaning “fiftieth,” is observed on the 50th day. Fifty is the number of Jubilee, the year of redemption or release. Additionally, wherever the number 50 is used in Scripture it denotes fullness and completion (Num. 4:23; Deut. 22:29; 2 Sam. 15:1; 24:24; Kings 1:5). The themes “redemption,” “release,” “fullness,” and “completion” describe the end of the Church Age, or fullness of the Gentiles, when the body of Christ will be released from the bonds of mortality.

15. A WEDDING FESTIVAL:

- Pentecost is a wedding day in Exodus 19 as the marriage covenant between God and the children of Israel was sealed on this day at Mount Sinai.
- Pentecost is a day of betrothal in Acts 2 as the giving of the Holy Spirit is the guarantee of the Church’s future wedding to the Lord. This is significant because in Jewish tradition the bridegroom typically comes to retrieve the bride around the anniversary of the betrothal, in this case Pentecost.
- Pentecost is a time of marriage in the Book of Ruth where a Gentile bride, a type of the Church, marries a Jewish redeemer, a type of Christ, around the wheat harvest.
- Pentecost/spring is a time of coupling in the Song of Solomon where a shepherd, a type of Christ, comes to retrieve his beloved, a Shulammite/Gentile maid, a type of the Church (2:8-10).

16. A TIME TO EXIT THE WORLD:

- The Children of Israel exited Egypt, a type of the world, on the same day the Lord promised Abraham to redeem His people from bondage four centuries earlier (Ex. 12:41; Gen. 15:13-16). Is it possible the Church will leave the world on the same day God promised its redemption via the sealing of the Holy Spirit, namely Pentecost?
- According to tradition, Pentecost is when Enoch, a prophetic type of the Church, was born and also taken up, or “raptured,” to be with the Lord.
- According to tradition, King David was born and also died on Pentecost.

17. POSITIONALLY, PENTECOST DENOTES THE CHURCH AGE

Pentecost’s parenthetical placement between the spring festivals, linked to the First Coming, and the fall festivals, linked to the Second Coming, is suggestive of the Church Age.

18. INFERENCE VIA FESTIVAL ATTENDANCE

Scripture mentions Jesus going to Jerusalem for the harvest festivals of Passover and Tabernacles but not Pentecost (John 2:23; 5:1; 7; Luke 2:41-43). Conversely, Scripture mentions Paul, the Apostle to the Gentile Church, going to Jerusalem for Pentecost but not Passover or Tabernacles (Acts 20:1-6). Assuming a typological significance to the festival appearances, Jesus’ attendance at Passover and Tabernacles may be indicative of His being on earth to fulfill the first and last harvests (First and Second Coming), though absent (only appearing in the clouds) at the fulfillment of the Pentecost harvest. Likewise, Paul’s attendance of the Pentecost harvest may be indicative of the Church’s “pilgrimage to heavenly Jerusalem” at the Rapture.

19. THE SHORT AND ABRUPT HARVEST

The first and last harvest festivals, Passover and Tabernacles, last for an extended period of time, seven and eight days, respectively (Lev. 23). In contrast, Pentecost is a one-day harvest festival, comparatively short and abrupt, just like the Rapture of the Church.

20. THE FEAST WITH NO SET DATE

Pentecost is the only festival with no assigned or fixed date in Scripture. Thus “no one knows the day” (Lev. 23; Matt. 24:36).

21. THE FESTIVAL OF GOD'S TRUMP

The only time the trumpet of God is sounded in the Old Testament is when the Lord descends in a cloud on Sinai and calls Moses up—a foreshadowing of the Rapture—on Pentecost (Ex. 19). Might the next sounding of the “trump of God” at the Rapture occur on the anniversary of the first?

22. PETER PROCLAIMS THE DAY OF THE LORD ON PENTECOST

Peter, the Apostle to first bring the Gospel to Gentiles, prophesied about the Day of the Lord on Pentecost. Referencing a prophecy from Joel, he stood up and addressed the crowd gathered in Jerusalem that day: “Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you ... this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ‘In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people’ ... The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord” (Acts 2). It makes sense that Peter would reference the part of Joel’s prophecy about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as this is what was occurring on that first day of the Church Age. But why would Peter go on to cite the portion of Joel’s prophecy about the Day of the Lord marking the end of the Church Age? Might Pentecost be significant to both?

23. THE FESTIVAL PRECEDING SUMMER

Pentecost is the harvest festival that occurs just before summer begins. In Matthew 24, “summer” is a metaphor for the end of the age.

24. THE FESTIVAL PRECEDING THE GRAPE HARVEST

In Scripture, the harvesting and crushing of grapes symbolizes the judgment of nonbelievers during the Day of the Lord (Rev. 14:14:20). In ancient Israel, grapes were the first major crop to ripen after the wheat at Pentecost.

25. THE FESTIVAL OF NEW BEGINNINGS

Counting seven weeks “from the morrow after the Sabbath” as prescribed in Leviticus, Pentecost is the only festival that always occurs on a Sunday. Biblically, Sunday is the first day of the week; it is also the “eighth day,” relative to the seventh (Saturday), and is Jesus’ resurrection day. Typologically, “resurrection,” the first day of the week, and the number eight denote a new beginning. Given that Pentecost historically marks new beginnings in Scripture—namely the start of the Age of Law and the Church Age (Ex. 19; Acts 2)—it would make sense for this festival to mark the beginning of the final dispensation or Day of the Lord.

Citing the above reasons and others, many believe the Rapture will occur on or around Pentecost.

This year’s harvest festival is garnering extra attention because—

- It's the Pentecost following the conclusion of Israel's prophetic 70th year (Matt. 24:32, 34; Ps. 90:10; Jer. 29:10).
- It's the Pentecost following the conclusion of the 49th year since Jerusalem began to be restored in 1969 (Dan. 9:25).
- Owing to the Trump Administration's much anticipated peace Deal of the Century, "peace and security," is the talk of the Middle East (1 Thess. 5:3).
- Counting the omer from the regular weekly Sabbath following Passover, Pentecost lands on June 16 this year. June 16 marks the last Sunday of spring and the last full moon before summer begins. This is interesting because the moon is said to be symbolic of the Church. A full moon, therefore, might be seen as signifying the Church in its full or completed state.

Having highlighted the typological links between Pentecost and the Rapture, and how 2019 is an auspicious year, it goes without saying that one has to be extremely careful about expectations. Jesus wasn't speaking only of a select group at a certain time when He said, "Of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven or the Son himself" (Matt. 24:36).

That even the angels and the Son Himself don't know the day should give pause to the date-setter.

Later, addressing the goodman or ruler of the house, those charged with watching for the Lord's return, Jesus says, "You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect" (Matt. 24:44).

This statement should give pause to those convinced the Rapture can only occur on a feast day.

This isn't to say that the Church, as the "firstfruits of the wheat," cannot be harvested at Pentecost. A Pentecost rapture would make sense in many ways. Due to uncertainty around the reckoning of the omer and the biblical calendar in general, however, it may not turn out to be the day marked Pentecost on our calendars.

Therefore, keep watch!

Whether it's the day we reckon Pentecost or another day, a once-in-history convergence of signs and timelines tells us He is "at the door" and soon to step through.

. . .

NOTES:

1. Pentecost reckoning: The modern (rabbinic) Jewish calendar, which counts the omer from the day after Passover, reckons Pentecost June 9. Those who count the omer from the regular weekly Sabbath after Passover will observe Pentecost on June 16. <https://www.nehemiaswall.com/counting-omer>

2. Jewish betrothal ritual: <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/3229-betrothal>

3. The Moon as a symbol of the Church: In Song of Solomon the Gentile/Shulamite maid (symbolizing the Church) is compared to the moon: "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon thee" (Song 6:10, 13). The spiritual parallel between the Church and the moon is that the full moon, as bright and beautiful as it is, has no brilliance of its own. It relies entirely upon the sun, which is a picture of Christ (Ps. 84:11; 19:4, 5), for its light. Without the sun, the moon has no light. Likewise, man has no light of his own. We were created in the image of God to reflect His brilliance and glory (Gen. 1:27). When we turn to face the majesty of God, when we surrender to Him and seek Him with all our hearts, we reflect His glory (Matt. 5:14).