

Counting The Omer—2019

By T.W. Tramm

SUNDAY, April 28, marks the first day of the seven-week countdown to Pentecost known as the Omer.

In ancient Israel, the first day of the Omer was the day on which the firstfruits of the grain harvest were cut and brought to the Temple to be waved before the Lord (Lev. 23:9-11).

Seven weeks later, on Pentecost, a second and related offering was brought to the Temple to be raised up before the Lord: two loaves baked from the harvested grain (Lev. 23:15-17).

According to Jewish tradition, when the Children of Israel left Egypt they were told by Moses that after 49 days, on the day corresponding to Pentecost, they would receive the Torah, or teachings of God. The people were so excited at the prospect of a “spiritual liberation” after centuries of bondage in Egypt, they counted each day leading up to the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai.

Today, the 49-day countdown is a time of excitement for Christians anticipating the ultimate liberation due to the fact that the 50th day—Pentecost—points typologically to the Rapture at the end of the Church Age:

- Pentecost is one of three main harvest festivals during which all Israelites were required to appear before the Lord in Jerusalem (Deut. 16:16). In Scripture, a harvest and gathering before the Lord denote a resurrection (Rev. 7:9-14; 2 Thess. 2:1).
- Sandwiched between the harvest festivals associated with Jesus’ first and second coming, Passover and Tabernacles, Pentecost corresponds to the Church Age.
- The two baked loaves raised up at the Temple on Pentecost are believed to picture the Church in its full or completed state.
- Pentecost is linked thematically to the Church, birth, weddings, resurrection, and redemption.
- Historically, changes in dispensation occur on Pentecost. The Age of Law began on Pentecost, as did the Church Age (Ex. 19; Acts 2). For this reason some speculate that the final dispensation known as Jacob’s Trouble, or the Day of the Lord, may begin on Pentecost as well.
- Pentecost is the only festival with no fixed or assigned date in Scripture (Lev. 23). Thus, “no man knows the day.”

(For Scripture references see: Does Scripture Support a Pentecost Rapture? in the notes section.)

This year's countdown to Pentecost is a time of heightened anticipation as a Middle East peace plan is about to be unveiled. Following a series of delays over the last 18 months, the leader of President Trump's peace team, Jared Kushner, has announced that the much anticipated "deal of the century" will be unveiled after the Muslim month of Ramadan ends June 4.

The modern (rabbinic) Jewish calendar, which counts the Omer from the day after Passover, reckons Pentecost June 9. Those who follow the biblical edict to count the Omer from the regular weekly Sabbath after Passover will observe Pentecost on June 16.

That a plan to achieve peace and security will be trumpeted around Pentecost, the festival that embodies the types and themes we associate with the Rapture, is significant because the Apostle Paul wrote to the Church: "While they are saying, 'peace and safety' destruction will come upon them suddenly ... and they shall not escape" (1 Thess. 5:3). The "escape" Paul refers to is the removal, or rapture, of believers at the onset of the Day of the Lord (1 Thess. 4, 5; Luke 21:36).

It's additionally noteworthy that the Trump peace plan will be announced—

- As summer is nigh (Matt. 24:32).
- One generation after the fig tree, Israel, came back to life and began putting forth leaves in 1948-49 (Matt. 24:32-34; Ps. 90:10).
- On the heels of Israel's 70th year (Jer. 29:10).
- An "Omer of years" (49 + 1) after the Jews began to rebuild Jerusalem in the spring of 1969 (Dan. 9:25).

Having highlighted the above facts, understand these do not constitute a rapture prediction. It is this researcher's belief that the "last trump" can sound on any day. Some suggest that Pentecost's lack of an assigned date insinuates this.

On the other hand, the harvest of the Church could indeed occur on Pentecost. 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.

The confusion around the calendar likely underlies Jesus' warning to the watchman of the house that "the Son of man will come at an hour you do not expect" and to "keep watch at all times" (Matt. 24:44; Luke 21:36).

Nonetheless, it's difficult to imagine a more compelling convergence of signs and timelines than the one immediately before us: a peace deal announced around Pentecost, one generation after the budding of the fig tree and 50 years after Jerusalem began to be rebuilt!

The Lord said we would see the day approaching (Heb. 10:25).

So let us be excited as we count the Omer. Whether the Church is to be raised up at this year's harvest or at another time, it's a reminder that the days are numbered and the time is short.

NOTES:

Counting the Omer:

<https://www.nehemiaswall.com/counting-omer>

<https://www.nehemiaswall.com/truth-shavuot>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Counting_of_the_Omer

Study: Israel's 70th Year – Why It's Significant:

[http://www.theseasonofreturn.com/ISRAELS_70TH_YEAR - WHY ITS SIGNIFICANT_rev a.pdf](http://www.theseasonofreturn.com/ISRAELS_70TH_YEAR_-_WHY_ITS_SIGNIFICANT_rev_a.pdf)

Study: Does Scripture Support a Pentecost Rapture?:

http://www.theseasonofreturn.com/DOES_SCRIPTURE_SUPPORT_A_PENTECOST_RAPTURE_VER_1.docx.pdf

Headline April 23, 2019—Kushner Says Trump Middle East Plan To Be Unveiled In June:

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trump-mideast/kushner-says-trump-middle-east-plan-to-be-unveiled-in-june-idUSKCN1RZ1UR>