

Counting the Omer 2020

By T.W. Tramm

IN Leviticus, God instructs Israel:

“From the day after the Sabbath, the day you brought the sheaf of the wave offering, count off seven full weeks. Count off fifty days up to the day after the seventh Sabbath, and then present an offering of new grain to the LORD” (Lev. 23:15, 16).

From this biblical statute emanates the tradition of counting each of the 49 days leading up to Pentecost, known as “counting the Omer.”

Traditionally, counting the Omer consists of several steps.

First, a special blessing is recited:

“Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us concerning the counting of the Omer.”

Next, the day and week of the count is stated; for example:

“Today is the first day of the second week of the Omer.”

Finally, Psalm 67 is read:

“May God be gracious to us and bless us
and make his face shine on us—
so that your ways may be known on earth,
your salvation among all nations.
May the peoples praise you, God;
may all the peoples praise you.
May the nations be glad and sing for joy,
for you rule the peoples with equity
and guide the nations of the earth.
May the peoples praise you, God;
may all the peoples praise you.
The land yields its harvest;
God, our God, blesses us.
May God bless us still,
so that all the ends of the earth will fear him.”

According to the rabbis, Psalm 67 was chosen for reading during the Omer because it's composed of exactly seven verses and 49 Hebrew words, corresponding to the seven weeks and 49 days of the countdown.

However, understanding that God is sovereign over the smallest details, it's uncanny that of the 150 Psalms in Scripture, the one appointed in ancient times for reading during the Omer is Psalm 67. It was during the 67th year of the twentieth century, 1967, that Jerusalem came under Jewish control for the first time in 2,500 years, fulfilling Jesus' prophecy about the end of Gentile rule over the Holy City:

"Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled" (Luke 21:24). A return to Jerusalem and a countdown of "seven sevens" recalls a verse in Daniel's Seventy Weeks Prophecy:

"From the time the word goes out to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince comes, there will be seven 'sevens'..." (Dan. 9:25).

The Hebrew word translated "restore" in verse 25 (shub), means "to return." Thus, according to Daniel, a seven-sevens countdown to Messiah begins when the word goes out to "return to and rebuild" Jerusalem.

Again, the Jews returned to Jerusalem in 1967. However, documentation from the time suggests that the word to rebuild the Old City went out several years later, when a master plan to renovate was approved by the Jerusalem District Town Planning Committee and publicly communicated in 1970. Counting Daniel's "omer of years" from August 1970, we arrive at August 2019-2020, a time of unparalleled prophetic convergence:

- It's been 70-plus years since the "fig-tree," Israel, was replanted and began to "put forth leaves" (Matt. 24:32-33; Ps. 90:10).
- It's been 6,000 years, equivalent to 120 jubilees, since biblical creation (Gen. 6:3).
- Israel is eager to implement a peace plan that divides Jerusalem (1 Thess. 5:3; Joel 3:2)
- Unprecedented locust swarms are ravaging crops from Africa to China (Joel 2).
- A pandemic like none in modern history is ramping up fear, division, lawlessness, and has set the stage for a global economic collapse (Rev. 6:6; 13:17).
- Unusual and record-breaking earthquakes, floods, storms, and food shortages continue to make headlines worldwide (Matt. 24:7).

With all of the above in view, it's interesting that of the seven verses comprising Psalm 67, verse six states:

"The land yields its harvest." (Ps. 67:6).

Biblically, six is the number associated with the end of the Church age at the close of the sixth millennial day (2 Pet. 3:8). A prophetic "harvest" is what is set to occur at this time.

Scripture says no one knows the day and hour of Jesus' return (Matt. 24:36). However, many types, patterns, and prophecies point to it being soon.

"When the LORD rebuilds Jerusalem, he will appear in his glory" (Ps. 102:16 NLT).

NOTES:

1. An "Omer" is a measure of grain equivalent to that offered at the Temple on the day of firstfruits.

2. Redemption and Pentecost: Why Counting the Omer Is Important for Christians

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=21Cu3m0Jmes&fbclid=IwAR30rQWI1-NFyyRX7Ed-828hnNtzoOyxBpxr0aYQ5OqBMvBhkllG5R_bFL0

3. Most interpreters limit the predictive scope of Daniel's Seventy Weeks prophecy to Jesus' first coming. For instance, when we add the "seven sevens" and "sixty-two sevens" we get 69 sevens, or 483 years. Counting 483 years from the 457 BC Artaxerxes decree allowing the Jews to return to and rebuild Jerusalem, we arrive at Jesus' anointing as Messiah in 27 AD. Thus the prophecy accurately predicts the year of Jesus' first coming. However, since the prophesied final restoration of Jerusalem was such a principal expectation among the Jews, it would make little sense for said restoration to be excluded from Daniel's prophecy. This explains the two sets of sevens (seven and sixty-two). Together and independently they identify the years of Messiah's first and second coming following two historical restorations of Jerusalem. When we count the seven sevens from the rebuilding of the Holy City in 1970, we arrive at the timeframe spanning August 2019-2020. Only time will tell if this interpretation is correct.

4. Quote from a UN document confirming August 18-19 1970 as the time when a press report made public the plan to rebuild Jerusalem:

"A press report, which appeared in the 19 August 1970 issue of the Jerusalem Post, contained information that 'The Jerusalem District Town Planning Committee yesterday [18 August 1970] approved a master plan for a 10,000-dunam area within and outside the Old City walls'. The press report indicated, among other things, that the plan was to take effect in four months [i.e. on 18 December 1970]..."

https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/eed216406b50bf6485256ce10072f637/cad07c91cf05ebf985256437005be684?OpenDocument&fbclid=IwAR2gg_xmU9dFahVmpMLESUG1XxHwINRHZ-9BZhEFoO4Uxz_GMZdT-GSHz8o

August 1970 New York Times article about the newly approved and announced plan to rebuild Jerusalem:

<https://www.nytimes.com/1970/08/22/archives/jerusalem-is-hewing-to-rebuilding-plans.html?fbclid=IwAR2JbgqHHxkuJ7cK-BeNiy52ZUF-4goX-PGDU8xaB0HXJGy1UkaRibBhs1w>

From the above sources and others, one gathers that the planning and clearing of rubble in preparation for the rebuilding of Jerusalem began soon after the Israeli takeover in 1967. However, the plan to rebuild the Holy City, composed by a team of architects, engineers, and administrators, was not approved and publicly communicated until the third week of August, 1970.

Interestingly, if August, 1970, marks the prophetic command to rebuild Jerusalem in Daniel 9, there would be exactly 1,900 years between the destruction of the Holy City in August 70 AD and its rebuilding in August 1970. According to E.W Bullinger in His Book Numbers in Scripture, the number 19 denotes the perfection of Divine order connected with judgment.