

# December High Watch

By T.W. Tramm

DECEMBER 31 is a doubly significant date in 2018. In addition to marking the end of the Gregorian year, the last day of December also corresponds to the biblical date Kislev 24, or Hanukkah Eve.<sup>1,2</sup>

It's interesting that Hanukkah, also called the Feast of Dedication, corresponds to the 365<sup>th</sup> day of the Gregorian calendar because Enoch, whose name in Hebrew means "dedication," was supernaturally taken up to be with God at the age of 365 (Gen. 5:23, 24). Enoch is considered to be a type of the Church, and his age at the time of his "rapture" is thought to be an allusion to the 365-day solar year upon which the Gregorian calendar is based.

Central to the Hanukkah festival is the "miracle of the oil" in which a small amount of oil, enough to keep the menorah lit for only one night, miraculously lasts for eight days. The theme of having enough oil to keep the flame lit is echoed in Matthew's Parable of the Virgins in which ten virgins, five foolish and five wise, need oil for their lamps in order to go out to meet the bridegroom. The parable begins with all of the virgins going out to meet the groom. When he doesn't appear immediately, however, they become drowsy and fall asleep. Then, at midnight, a cry rings out: 'Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!' The virgins awake to light their lamps but only five of them, the wise, have enough oil to keep the flame lit. While the foolish virgins rush out to find some oil, the bridegroom appears and ushers the wise into the wedding, leaving the others behind (Matt. 25).

That midnight is the time of the bridegroom's coming is noteworthy because New Year's Eve, coinciding with Hanukkah Eve in 2018, is the one day of the year on which virtually every person, be they foolish or wise, is focused on midnight. Additionally, both holidays occur within days of the winter solstice (December 21). When we divide the year into halves at the spring and autumn equinoxes, December 21 marks the exact center point, i.e. "midnight" of the dark half, or nighttime portion, of the year. Jesus says: "It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the middle of the night..." (Luke 12:38 NIV).

When we divide the year into four "watches" at the point of the equinoxes and solstices, December 21 marks the end of the third or fourth watch, depending on whether one begins the year in January (Gregorian) or spring (biblical): "And if he shall come in ... the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants" (Luke 12:38 KJV); "And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them ..." (Matt. 14:25 KJV).<sup>3</sup>

Interestingly, this year's winter solstice marks exactly 70 years, 7 months, and 7 days since the May 14, 1948 rebirth of Israel.

Coincidence?

As the rabbis like to say, there is no Hebrew word for coincidence.

Yet another noteworthy Kislev/Hanukkah correlation is found in Haggai chapter 2 where the Lord implores us to give careful thought to the 24<sup>th</sup> day of the ninth month (Hanukkah Eve) and associates this date with a shaking of the heavens and the earth:

“From this day on, from this twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, give careful thought to the day when the foundation of the LORD’s temple was laid. Give careful thought .... The word of the LORD came to Haggai a second time on the twenty-fourth day of the month: ‘Tell Zerubbabel governor of Judah that I am going to shake the heavens and the earth. I will overturn royal thrones and shatter the power of the foreign kingdoms. I will overthrow chariots and their drivers; horses and their riders will fall, each by the sword of his brother. ‘On that day,’ declares the LORD Almighty, ‘I will take you, my servant Zerubbabel ... ‘and I will make you like my signet ring, for I have chosen you ...’” (Hagg. 2:18, 20-23).<sup>4</sup>

John chapter 10 places Jesus at the Temple on Hanukkah:

“Then came the Festival of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was in the temple courts walking in Solomon’s Colonnade” (John 10:22, 23).

In John chapter 4 it’s during the month of Kislev/December that the Lord surveys the “spiritual field,” representing humanity, and determines that it’s ripe for harvest:

“You have a saying, ‘Four more months [until spring] and then the harvest.’ But I tell you, take a good look at the fields; the crops are now ripe and ready to be harvested!” (John 4:35).

Kislev/December is associated with milestone events related to the Jews’ possession of the Holy Land and Jerusalem.<sup>5</sup> In Daniel 9 it is the Jews’ return to Jerusalem that sets in motion the prophetic clock, or countdown of “weeks” to Messiah:

“From the time the word goes out to restore [return to] and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Ruler comes, there will be seven ‘sevens,’ and sixty-two ‘sevens’” (Dan. 9:25).

Finally, Jesus says that at the time of His coming people will be “eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, building, and marrying” (Luke 17:27, 28). The New Year’s/Hanukkah season, occurring in the midst of winter, is when people worldwide are partying (eating and drinking) and giving gifts (buying and selling) as at no other time of year. At the same time, it’s the height of summer in the southern hemisphere—prime time for planting, building, and marrying.

Could the month of Kislev, corresponding to the end of the year on the calendar observed by most Christians, mark the end of the Church Age? With so many signs and timelines converging one would have to be a “foolish virgin” to dismiss the possibility. On the other hand, a Kislev Rapture is not a

certainty because date alignments and typologies do not necessarily equate to rapture-timing revelation.

No man knows the day.

So keep watch!

#### NOTES:

1. Most modern Jewish calendars have Kislev beginning November 9, 2018. Reckoning the first new moon after the vernal equinox Nisan 1 as we believe is correct, however, puts the first day of Kislev on December 8-9 and Hanukkah Eve (Kislev 24) on December 31. For calendar reckoning explanation see NOTES section here:

[http://www.theseasonofreturn.com/THE\\_SEVENTH\\_MONTH - KEEP WATCH rev a.pdf](http://www.theseasonofreturn.com/THE_SEVENTH_MONTH_-_KEEP_WATCH_rev_a.pdf)

2. The Gregorian calendar is also commonly referred to as the “Western” or “Christian” calendar:

<https://www.timeanddate.com/calendar/gregorian-calendar.html>

3. The Jews traditionally divided the night into three military watches. They later adopted the Roman practice of dividing the night into four watches.

<https://www.christianity.com/bible/dictionary.php?dict=sbd&id=4446>

4. Haggai chapter 2 implies that Kislev 24 (Hanukkah Eve) is when the foundation of the Temple was laid. It’s believed that this day was kept as a day of gathering in the temple, commemorating its foundation, which is why the Greeks chose it as a day of defilement, and why the Hasmoneans chose it as a day of dedication.

<https://thetorah.com/identifying-the-building-blocks-of-chanukah/>

5. Milestone events in Kislev/December related to the Jews’ possession of the Holy Land and Jerusalem:

[http://www.theseasonofreturn.com/THE\\_NINTH\\_MONTH - KEEP WATCH.pdf](http://www.theseasonofreturn.com/THE_NINTH_MONTH_-_KEEP_WATCH.pdf)