

Psalm 50 and the Gathering of the Saints

By T.W. Tramm

A POPULAR SAYING is that “with God, there are no coincidences.” What appears random or chance to us is, in fact, overseen by a sovereign Creator who knows the number of hairs on every head (Prov. 16:33; 19:21; Luke 12:7).

The Lord’s attention to detail is evident throughout the Scriptures, where nothing is random or insignificant. Even the numbering of chapters and verses can hold meaning.¹

With this in mind, it’s interesting to note that of the 150 psalms in the Bible, psalm number 50 contains a command by God to gather His saints for judgment:²

“Our God shall come, and shall not keep silent; a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous all around Him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people: ‘Gather My saints together to Me, those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice’” (Ps. 50:3-5 NKJV).

That psalm 50 describes the gathering and judgment of the saints is noteworthy because 50 is the number of Jubilee. A jubilee year is regarded as a likely time for the Rapture and judgment to occur because...

- The Jubilee is the year of redemption (Lev. 25; Isa. 63:4). Redemption is the term Paul uses to describe the change (from mortal to immortal) our bodies will undergo at the Rapture (Rom. 8:23; Eph. 1:13, 14).
- The Jubilee is a year of liberty and freedom, during which hired servants depart and return to the home of their fathers (Lev. 25: 39-41). A departure of hired servants³ alludes to the Rapture, at which time true Christians will depart the earth to go to the Father’s home (John 14:2, 3).
- The Jubilee is when land is returned to its original owner (Lev. 25). Land going back to its original owner is what will occur when the Lord takes back the earth from its present ruler, Satan, and begins to execute judgment (Lev. 25:23; John 12:31).
- The Jubilee is linked to the Day of Judgment in Isaiah (61:1, 2; 63:4).

In addition to the various jubilee themes, “redemption,” “freedom,” “homecoming,” and “judgment,” pointing to the end of the age, the number 50, wherever it is used in Scripture, signifies what is full or complete.⁴ Fullness and completion *also* describes the end of the Church Age, when the full number of

Gentiles will be reached and the Church's task of spreading the gospel will be complete (Rom. 11:25; Matt. 24:14).

How is all of this relevant to us today?

All signs point to 2017 being a jubilee year.

The first indication we're in a Jubilee is the occurrence of jubilee-themed events at a 50-year interval: The Balfour Declaration, considered the first official step in restoring the Jewish people to the Land, was issued in 1917. Fifty years later, in 1967, the Jews' returned to Jerusalem, as prophesied.⁵ Knowing that God's eyes are continually on Jerusalem (2 Chron. 7:16) and that there are no coincidences, we can be certain the 50-year gap between these jubilee-themed events is not accidental. Assuming that 1917 and 1967 were jubilee years, 2017 becomes the next Jubilee.

The second indication we're in a Jubilee relates to Daniel's Seventy Weeks Prophecy (9:24-27) in which the *only* jubilee cycle mentioned in Scripture is linked to the Jews' return to Jerusalem and Messiah's coming: "From the issuing of a decree to return to and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks [49 years]..." (v. 25). Reckoning Daniel's jubilee cycle from 1967 (49 + 1), we arrive at 2017.

Other factors point to a 2017 Jubilee as well:

- The calculations of respected Bible chronologists put us at or about the year 6,000 from biblical creation.⁶ Six thousand years divide equally into 120 jubilees ($6,000 \div 50 = 120$). In Genesis "120" marks the time God will bring judgment upon corrupt humanity (6:3).
- An unprecedented convergence of "signs in the sun, moon, and stars" is occurring over the years 2015-17.⁷ Assuming a 1967 Jubilee, this roughly three-year span represents the window of possibility as regards the next Jubilee. (See my article, [Calculating Daniel's Jubilee](#) for details.)
- Rabbi Judah ben Samuel's "Prophecy of Ten Jubilees" points to a 2017 Jubilee.⁸

2017 also appears to be an endpoint for other prophetically significant years in modern history:

- 1897 - 2017 = 120 years since the First Zionist Congress, during which a Jewish state was envisioned and planned. "120" marks the time God will bring judgment upon corrupt humanity in Genesis 6:3.
- 1947 - 2017 = 70 years since the United Nations mandated the establishment of a Jewish state. Also, 1948 - 2017 = 70 *prophetic* (360-day) years since the Jewish State actually came into being. The number 70 is eschatologically significant for multiple reasons: the length of a typical generation (see Matthew's "fig-tree" prophecy) is 70 years (Ps. 90:10); the Jews were held

captive in Babylon for 70 years (Dan. 9: 2); also, Daniel's "Seventy Weeks Prophecy" links the number 70 to the culmination of God's Plan of Redemption (Dan. 9:24).

- 1977 - 2017 = 40 years since the modern peace process began in which world leaders began seeking to divide the land. "40" represents a probationary period, or a time of trial and testing in Scripture.⁹

Do you think the Lord may be trying to tell us something with all these convergences?

Obviously, no one can say for certain that Jesus will return in 2017. What *is* certain, however, is that God has given us a calendar of appointed times, of which the Jubilee is a main component, and has said we would know the general time of His coming (1 Thess. 5:1-4). Never in history have all the time references and events given in Scripture pointed so specifically to a given year, and never have so many believers been in agreement about what this suggests: from seasoned pastors and teachers to everyday Christians who have assumed the mantle of "watchman" for the Lord, there is an unparalleled air of anticipation about this year.

Unless we're misinterpreting the signs and calendar, it would appear Jesus is returning very soon.

How soon?

A popular belief is that the Rapture will occur at the Feast of Trumpets. This is a possibility. However, that so many are looking for a feast-of-trumpets rapture raises the question of whether this expectancy, doubtlessly anticipated by God, may be the reason for Jesus' many admonitions to "keep watch" because He is coming in "an hour we don't expect" (Matt. 24, 25; Mark 13; Luke 12, 21).

Think about it. Why would the Lord issue these warnings to a final generation of believers, even *previously awake and watching* believers (Matt 24:48-51; 25:1-13), if He can only return during the Feast of Trumpets? Moreover, if it's a given that Trumpets is the appointed time of the Rapture, how is it that even the *angels*, super-intelligent and scripturally informed, don't know the day? (Matt. 24:36). Is it that the angels simply don't know which of the two likely days the Feast of Trumpets will be declared via the sighting of the new moon's crescent? Or, is the Lord telling us plainly that the appointed time of the Rapture has *truly* been concealed, i.e., by more than just a matter of hours, to keep Satan and others from exploiting this knowledge.

Speaking of not knowing the day, it's interesting that Pentecost, the feast associated with the Church, a Gentile-Jewish wedding, and the grain harvest, has no set date in Scripture. Could this be God's way of communicating symbolically that we cannot know the day of this feast's ultimate fulfillment? Pentecost is uniquely suited for this type of fulfillment because the sending of the Holy Spirit in 33 AD was merely the *beginning* of an action (indwelling of believers), which has continued for 2,000 years. No one can predict the day on which the final believer will be indwelt by the Spirit and the "harvest" gathered into the barn.

In the “pentecostal rapture” scenario, the notion of an imminent Rapture doesn’t conflict with that of an appointed time, it actually agrees with it. It’s just that the fulfillment-day of this particular appointed time, hinted at by the lack of an assigned date, is kept a mystery other than to associate it with the grain harvest. The grain harvest begins in the spring and can extend well into the summer, which ends in September.

Keep watching!

“He who testifies to these things says, ‘Yes, I am coming soon.’ Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!” (Rev. 22:20)

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NOTES:

1. The chapters and verses assigned to Scripture were not part of the original manuscripts. One exception is the Book of Psalms, which is divided into 150 chapters, each of which contains a different psalm. These divisions are original, because this was the hymnbook for the Jewish Temple, and the different psalms constituted different hymns.

2. More on psalm 50:

- “Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice” (Ps. 50:5). It can be argued that this verse addresses Israel, as they are the nation joined to God via the covenant of the Law (Ex. 19:5, 6), but the Church is also entered into a covenant with the Lord via the blood of the Redeemer who was offered in sacrifice. Matthew Henry’s commentary on psalm 50:1-6 states: “This psalm is a psalm of instruction. It tells of the coming of Christ and the Day of Judgment, in which God will call men to account; and the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of judgment In the great day, our God shall come, and make those hear his judgment who would not hearken to his law. Happy are those who come into the covenant of grace, by faith in the Redeemer’s atoning sacrifice...” Thus, psalm 50 applies to both Israel and the Church. <http://www.christianity.com/bible/commentary.php?com=mhc&b=19&c=50>
<https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/psalm-50/>
- It’s interesting that verse number 5 describes the actual gathering of the saints. In E.W. Bullinger’s book *Number in Scripture* he explains that five is the number of man’s redemption and represents grace. The gathering of the saints represents man’s physical redemption and the end of the Age of Grace. <http://www.biblebelievers.org.au/number09.htm>

- While other psalms speak of God's people being gathered from the nations, or for war (107:3; 106:47; 140:2), psalm 50 is the only psalm in which God Himself orders the gathering of His people for judgment.

3. Christians are referred to as hired servants in Matthew (18, 22, 24, 25).

4. Examples of the number 50 denoting fullness or completion:

- The maximum age for the Levite priests charged with performing the rituals at the Temple was fifty, denoting the full discharge of one's priestly duties (Num. 4:23).
- A man who lies with a virgin not pledged in marriage must give the damsel's father fifty pieces of silver as full restitution (Deut. 22:29).
- David paid fifty shekels of silver for the threshing-floor, where he built the altar to God, denoting a full price and purchase (2 Sam. 24:24).
- Absalom provided for himself a chariot and horses with fifty men to run ahead of them, denoting full excellence and greatness (2 Sam. 15:1; 1 Kings 1:5).
- Fifty shekels of silver is the price of an "omer," a full measure of barley seed (Lev. 27:16).

5. Prophecies of the Jews' return to Jerusalem: Zech. 8:4, 5, 7, 8; Ps. 102:16; 147:2.

6. D. Petavius calculated that creation occurred in 3983 BC, making the earth, as of 2017, 6,000 years old.

7. Signs in the heavens include a one-of-a-kind series of solar and lunar eclipses (blood moons and darkened suns) on God's feast days (2015), the reappearance of the Bethlehem Star, the same planetary conjunction witnessed by the magi at Jesus' first coming (2015/16), and, many propose, the sign of the woman clothed in the sun" mentioned in Revelation 12 (2017). There have also been many notable super moons, solar flares, meteors, and asteroids during this time.

8. <http://www.alamongordo.com/12th-century-rabbi-predicted-israels-future/>

9. <http://www.biblebelievers.org.au/number17.htm#40>