

# Spring Is Near

By T.W. Tramm

MARCH 20 marks the vernal equinox and the beginning of spring in the Northern Hemisphere.

From this day forward, the longer and warmer days will have a transforming effect on Nature: Grass will sprout and thicken. Trees and shrubs will bud and send forth new growth. Birds will lay their eggs, and mammals will give birth. Animals will shed winter coats, and Caterpillars will transform into butterflies. The world around us, which had seemed “dead” during the long cold winter, will come to life!

Knowing that God, the Author of Nature, is consistent and works to patterns, it’s not surprising that spring is a time of new beginnings in Scripture as well.

Biblically, spring is when—

- The New Year begins (Ex. 12: 1, 2).
- The harvest season begins (Lev. 23:9-14).
- Principal figures such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and King David are born.<sup>1</sup>
- God’s people are liberated from captivity (Ex. 12; Ez. 7; Neh. 2).
- God’s people are married or betrothed (Ex. 19; Ruth; Acts 2).
- Decrees are issued (Ez. 7; Neh. 2).
- Kings go forth to battle (2 Sam. 11:1).
- The fig tree puts forth leaves (Matt. 24:32).<sup>2</sup>
- The Nation of Israel is born and reborn (Exodus/1948).
- The trumpet of God is sounded (Ex. 19: 16, 19, 20).
- Resurrection and ascension occur (Matt. 27:51-53).
- Dispensational change (Law/Grace) occurs (Ex. 20; Acts 2).

Last but not least, spring is when the shepherd comes to gather and spirit away his beloved Shulammite (Gentile) maid in the Song of Solomon:

*“The winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come ... Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away!”* (Song 2:11-13).

And so, in both Nature and Scripture, spring is a time of new beginnings, birth, rebirth, marriage, redemption, and transformation.

What do these themes have in common?

They each describe the awesome and much anticipated event we call the Rapture:

- The Rapture is a “new beginning” as we will acquire new incorruptible bodies (1 Cor. 15:53).
- The Rapture is like a “birth” as we will be born into the Kingdom of Heaven (1 John 3:2).
- The Rapture is a “wedding” between the Church and God (Matt. 25).
- The Rapture is a time of “redemption” for our physical bodies (Rom. 8:23; Eph. 1:13, 14).
- The Rapture is a “transformation” that occurs in the twinkling of an eye (1 Cor. 15:52).

Some believe that the catching away can only occur around the Feast of Trumpets in late summer/early fall.<sup>3</sup> Pentecost in the spring, however, better typifies the harvest of the Church. One reason has to do with the order of resurrections described by Paul:

*“Each one will be raised in proper order: Christ, first of all; then, at the time of his coming, those who belong to him”* (1 Cor. 15:20-23).

Paul teaches that each group, Christ and later those who follow Him, will be resurrected in a particular order. In Scripture, resurrections are portrayed as gatherings before the Lord (Rev. 7:9-14; 14:15; 2 Thess. 2:1). There are three harvest gatherings before the Lord in the Bible (Deut. 16:16) and three main resurrections, suggesting the following chronology:

- 1) Passover/Firstfruits harvest: Jesus and many saints resurrected (Matt. 27:51-53).
- 2) Pentecost harvest: Church resurrected.
- 3) Tabernacles harvest: Tribulation saints resurrected (Rev. 20:4-6).

Trumpets is not a harvest-gathering festival. This is not to say that the gathering of the Church cannot happen on the Feast of Trumpets; it's only to say that, as far as feasts are concerned, Pentecost in the spring makes more sense.

(For more on Pentecost see note<sup>4</sup> below.)

Needless to say, spring is a time of expectancy for those looking for the Lord's return. Spring 2019 brings a heightened sense of hope and expectancy, however, for one major reason.

## CONVERGENCE

A common misconception is that it's impossible to know with any degree of specificity the time of Jesus' return. The reality, though, is that the year is inferred in at least three places in Scripture.

The first instance is in Genesis, during the days of Noah, where God says He will contend with mortal/fallen man no longer than 120 years (Gen. 6:3). Because the Lord is *still* contending with mortal man, we understand He was referring to jubilee years. The 120<sup>th</sup> Jubilee corresponds to the 6,000<sup>th</sup> year of biblical history, which can be closely calculated by studying the genealogies in Genesis.<sup>5</sup>

The second instance in which the time of Jesus' return is inferred is the fig-tree prophecy which states that the generation who sees Israel reborn will see the Lord's coming (Matt. 24:32-34). Because a typical generation is 70 years, modern-day Israel's 70<sup>th</sup> year is inferred.<sup>6</sup>

A third instance in which the time of Jesus' return is inferred is in Daniel's weeks prophecy: "*From the going forth of the word to restore and to build Jerusalem unto one anointed [Messiah], a prince, shall be seven weeks [49 years]*" (Dan. 9:25 JPS). Assuming that verse 25 pertains to the Second Advent, as Isaac Newton did, we should expect Messiah the Prince to make an appearance 49 years after the latter-days return to and rebuilding of Jerusalem.

Thus, we have three distinct starting points—Creation, Israel's rebirth, and Jerusalem's restoration—and a set number of years to count from each. What is remarkable, and what has prophecy watchers presently excited, is that all three countdowns seemingly converge on the biblical year spanning 2018-19:

- 2018-19 marks the calculated 6,000<sup>th</sup> year since biblical Creation.<sup>7</sup>
- 2018-19 marks 70 years since Israel was reborn as a nation.
- 2018-19 marks 49 years since the Jews began to rebuild Jerusalem in spring 1969.<sup>8</sup>

To appreciate the off-the-charts improbability of the above convergence, consider that it depends on the two most significant prophetic events in modern history—the rebirth of Israel and the restoration of

its capital, Jerusalem—occurring exactly 70 and 49 years before the calculated 6,000<sup>th</sup> year since Creation.

Take a moment and let that sink in.

## THE SIGN OF HIS COMING

In addition to the timeline convergence, a Middle East peace plan dubbed the “Deal of the Century” is set to be unveiled after Israeli elections on April 9. This is crucial because the fundamental sign given by Paul to the Church to identify the season of the Rapture is people saying “peace and safety”:

“Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, ‘Peace and safety,’ destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape” (1 Thess. 5:1-3).

While a number of peace plans have been proposed over the decades, the Deal of the Century is the only one to coincide with a convergence of key eschatological timelines. What’s more, this peace plan has a limited shelf life: Because the Trump Administration cannot risk alienating Christian voters in election year 2020 with a plan that divides the Holy Land, there is only a narrow window of time in 2019 in which the Deal of the Century can be unveiled. Because there is no guarantee of a second term for Trump, it’s now or never to pursue what the President has called the “ultimate deal.”

With the above convergence in view, it’s tempting to set a latest-possible-date for the Lord’s return. This would be imprudent, however, due to potential gaps in our understanding. Scripture says we see only in part, as through a “dark piece of glass,” and that “God’s thoughts are not our thoughts” (1 Cor. 13:13; Isa. 55:8, 9). Additionally, questions about calendar-reckoning and the exact start points of prophetic timelines lend some ambiguity.

All this is to say that no one knows the day.

But you already knew that.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In both Nature and in the Bible, spring is associated with birth, weddings, redemption, and transformation.

Spring is also the season of Pentecost, the festival that better than any other typifies the harvest of the Church. A significant parallel is that, Pentecost, termed the “feast of weeks” in Scripture, is the only

festival observed after a countdown of seven weeks, echoing Daniel's seven-weeks countdown to Messiah (Lev. 23:15, 16; Deut. 16:10; Dan. 9:25).

Finally and most importantly, spring 2019 marks a once-in-history convergence of three major prophetic timelines and the unveiling of a Middle East peace plan.

Will spring 2019 see the Rapture of the Church and the beginning of a new biblical dispensation?

Only God knows.

As the season associated with hope and new beginnings approaches, however, let us be encouraged that our "blessed hope," namely the Lord's appearing, is near indeed.

#### NOTES:

1. Some propose that Jesus was born in the spring: <http://www.wnd.com/2014/11/clue-to-christs-birth-date-revealed/>

2. Fig trees typically put forth leaves around the end of March/beginning of April: <https://www.bible-history.com/isbe/F/FIG%2C+FIG-TREE/>

3. The feast-of-trumpets-rapture theory is based in part on the tradition that Tishrei 1 (the first day of the seventh month) marks the New Year. According to the Bible, however, the New Year begins on Nisan 1 in the spring (Ex. 12:1, 2). It's important to understand that most traditions related to the Feast of Trumpets do not derive directly from Scripture but from rabbinic beliefs and customs developed over the centuries. The Bible actually says very little about the first day of the seventh month, describing it merely as a Sabbath day of rest and a time for a "memorial [reminder] blowing of trumpets" (Lev. 23:24, 25). The only event that the Feast of Trumpets is directly linked to in Scripture is the rebuilding of the Temple altar and reinstatement of sacrifice that occurred upon the Jews' return from Babylonian exile (Ezra 3:1-6).

4. Study: Does Scripture Support a Pentecost Rapture?

[http://www.theseasonofreturn.com/DOES\\_SCRIPTURE\\_SUPPORT\\_A\\_PENTECOST\\_RAPTURE\\_VER\\_1.docx.pdf](http://www.theseasonofreturn.com/DOES_SCRIPTURE_SUPPORT_A_PENTECOST_RAPTURE_VER_1.docx.pdf)

5. The 6,000-year timeline is inferred in 2 Peter 3:8, Job 5:19, Matt. 17:2-3, Ezek. 46:1, and Gen. 6:3. The early Church fathers also taught that the end of the age would correspond to the 6,000<sup>th</sup> year. See: Barnabas (AD 100), Epistle of Barnabas 15:7-9: "Therefore, children, in six days, or in six thousand years, all the prophecies will be

fulfilled"; Irenaeus (AD 180), Against Heresies 5.28; Hippolytus (AD 205), Fragment 2; Commentary on Daniel 2.4; Commodianus (AD 240), Against the Gods of the Heathens 80; Lactantius (AD 304), Divine Institutes 7.14, and others.

6. Study: Israel's 70<sup>th</sup> 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)

7. Based on the genealogies in Genesis, D. Petavius determined that Adam was created in 3,983 BC. Subtracting 3982-83 BC from 6,000 we arrive at 2018-19.

8. "From the going forth of the word to restore and to build Jerusalem unto one anointed [Messiah], a prince, shall be seven weeks [49 years]" (Dan. 9:25 JPS). In 1969, the Jewish Quarter Development Company was established under the auspices of the Construction and Housing Ministry to rebuild the desolate Old City of Jerusalem:

<https://www.rova-yehudi.org.il/company-profile/>

May 9, 1969 headline about the rebuilding of Jerusalem from the St. Petersburg Times:

"Jerusalem Restoration On High Priority List"

"JERUSALEM -- One of the most dramatic restoration projects in the history of cities is forging ahead in the ancient walled city of Jerusalem. The reconstruction of the Jewish quarter of the Old city, lost to the Jews in the 1948 war after centuries of occupancy, is one of the high priority projects of the Israeli government."