

Tu B'Av and the Summer Harvest 2020

By T.W. Tramm

THE 5th of August marks Tu B'Av, or Av 15, on the biblical calendar this year.

In ancient Israel, Tu B'Av commemorated the lifting of the ban on inter-tribal marriage and was celebrated as a "matchmaking day" for unmarried women. On the full moon of Av, virgins would dress in white and go out and dance in the vineyards to attract husbands.

Some speculate that Ruth's wedding to Boaz, a picture of the Church's wedding to Messiah, occurred on Tu B'Av: Scripture records that Ruth lived with her mother-in-law, Naomi, until all of the wheat harvest was complete (Ruth 2:21-23). Tu B'Av traditionally marks the beginning of the grape harvest and, therefore, an unofficial conclusion to the wheat harvest. This is presumably when Ruth would have stopped living with her mother-in-law to take up residence with her new husband/redeemer, Boaz.

Pertaining to the grape harvest, a rapture-typology in Song of Solomon associates ripened grapes with the coming of the shepherd to gather and spirit away his beloved Shulammitte maid:

"For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away" (Song 2:11-13).

Notice that tender grapes are the final agricultural sign mentioned before the shepherd, a type of Christ, says, "Rise up, my love ... and come away."

The grape harvest is when new wine is made. Peter associates new wine with the end of the age when he quotes Joel's prophecy about the coming Day of the Lord in Acts 2.

Related to the Day of the Lord, Tu B'Av coincides with the full moon. Scripture links the full moon to the return of the "goodman" of the house, a picture of Jesus returning to settle accounts at the end of the age:

"The goodman is not at home, he is gone a long journey: He has taken a bag of money with him; He will come home at the full moon" (Prov. 7:19, 20).

It stands to reason that the goodman would return at the full moon as the moon is symbolic of the congregation of God, or Church, which will be harvested after reaching a state of "fullness" (Rom. 11:25).

Finally, Tu B'Av is a summer holiday.

In Matthew, summer is a metaphor for the end of the age:

“Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near” (Matt. 24:32).

In Proverbs, summer is when the wise son gathers the harvest and the foolish sleep:

“He who gathers in summer is a wise son, but he who sleeps during harvest is a disgraceful son” (Prov. 10:5).

Sleeping at the harvest reminds us of the parable of the virgins in which the foolish virgins fall asleep without filling their lamps with oil. When the bridegroom appears suddenly, they are not ready to join him at the wedding celebration and find themselves locked out (Matt. 25).

In Amos, summer is when judgment comes upon Israel:

“This is what the Sovereign LORD showed me: a basket of summer fruit ... Then the LORD said to me, ‘The time is ripe for my people Israel; I will spare them no longer’” (Amos 8:1, 2).

In Jeremiah, the Jews lament not being saved at the passing of the summer harvest:

“The harvest is past, the summer has ended, and we are not saved” (Jer. 8:20).

While the context is an ancient judgment, Jeremiah also likely alludes to a future time when Israel will see the Church saved from God's wrath via the Rapture as they, themselves, are left behind.

In Micah, summer is when the upright people have been swept from the land:

“What misery is mine! I am like one who gathers summer fruit at the gleaning of the vineyard; there is no cluster of grapes to eat, none of the early figs that I crave. The faithful have been swept from the land; not one upright person remains. Everyone lies in wait to shed blood; they hunt each other with nets” (Mic. 7:1-2).

The empty/harvested vineyard is indicative of summer's end. A post-rapture world is typified as the only people who remain on the earth are the wicked, looking to shed blood.

In recent months, we've seen glimpses of how people can turn ruthless with no “upright” individuals or authority present to act as a restrainer. However, the lawlessness on display today is but a foretaste of the evil and mayhem that will ensue after the godly are caught up into the clouds at the Rapture.

Could the event that will turn the world upside down—the catching away of believers—occur on or around Israel’s “matchmaking day,” the festival of Tu B’Av?

It could.

It could also happen on a day no one would suspect. This is why Jesus tells even His closest followers, those familiar with the biblical calendar and appointed times, to keep watch always (Luke 12:35-46; Mark 13:34-37).

NOTES:

1. Tu B’Av (Av 15) is when the tribe of Benjamin, which had been excommunicated for its behavior in the incident of the “Concubine at Givah,” was readmitted into the community of Israel and allowed to intermarry with other tribes (Judges 19-21).

More on Tu B’Av:

https://www.aish.com/tp/i/moha/48908722.html?fbclid=IwAR3XAReLiR_TJZb8OqkMC3H4WXYEf23a6Q7fG3TASFNI0Cj82pgDV36gF3w

https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/717167/jewish/7-Joyous-Events-That-Happened-on-the-15th-of-Av.htm/fbclid/IwAR1hppX31D6o8B7QhT_dvEKYPKra2AdmnQSf0rvczf4xicFp9i29M6jeRlg

2. The moon as a symbol of the Church: In Song of Solomon the Gentile/Shulamite maid, symbolic of the Church, is compared to the moon: “Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon thee” (Song 6:10, 13). The spiritual parallel between the Church and the moon is that the full moon, as bright and beautiful as it is, has no brilliance of its own. It relies entirely upon the sun, which is a picture of Christ (Ps. 84:11; 19:4, 5), for its light. Without the sun, the moon has no light. Likewise, man has no light of his own. We were created in the image of God to reflect His brilliance and glory (Gen. 1:27). When we turn to face the majesty of God, when we surrender to Him and seek Him with all our hearts, we reflect His glory (Matt. 5:14).

3. Jesus is the goodman of the house in Matthew (20; 25: 14).