

# When Will the Harvest Be Reaped?

By T.W. Tramm

GOD'S calendar and signs are declaring it: the season of the Rapture is upon us.

The question is: How soon?

No one knows for certain, but many watchmen are focused on the time we are in *now*—the summer—as a possibility.

There is ample scriptural support for a summer rapture.<sup>1</sup> For instance, in Matthew Jesus uses the “summer” season as a metaphor for the end of the age: “Learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its branches become tender and sprout leaves, you know that *summer* is near” (24:32).

In Jeremiah, an interestingly timed cry of anguish goes up from Israel: “The harvest is past, the *summer* is ended, and we are not saved!” (Jer. 8:20).

Another seeming hint at a summer rapture is the biblical story of Ruth in which the marriage of a Gentile bride to a Jewish “redeemer” happens around the end of the wheat harvest.

Perhaps the most fundamental indication of a possible summer rapture is the arrangement of the harvest festivals on God's calendar. According to Scripture, there are three main harvest festivals during which all Israelite men were required to gather before the Lord in Jerusalem:<sup>2</sup>

- The Feast of Unleavened Bread/Firstfruits (spring harvest).
- The Feast of Pentecost (summer harvest).
- The Feast of Tabernacles (fall harvest).

Eschatologically speaking, a harvest and a gathering before God denote a resurrection.<sup>3</sup> With this in mind, it's instructive to note that the *spring* harvest (Firstfruits) has been fulfilled by Jesus' resurrection. The *fall* harvest (Tabernacles) will, according to many scholars, be fulfilled via the resurrection of the Old Testament and Tribulation saints at the Second Coming.<sup>4</sup> This leaves the *summer* (Pentecost) harvest, parenthetically situated between the spring and fall harvests, as a probable time for the resurrection, or rapture, of the Church.

Based on the fact that Pentecost has already come and gone, many reason that a “summer harvest” of the Church is out of the question this year.

But is this a correct assumption?

Not according to those who propose that Pentecost, uniquely situated on the feast calendar, is slated to have a *unique* fulfillment.

Allow me to explain.

Christians who study God's calendar understand that the first three appointed times (Passover, Unleavened Bread, and Firstfruits) were fulfilled by events that are, by their nature, *one-time-only* happenings. For instance, Jesus' resurrection on the Day of Firstfruits occurred in a single moment on a single day.

Firstfruits fulfilled.

When it comes to the fulfilling event of Pentecost, however (the sending of the Holy Spirit to indwell believers), one might reason there is no single-day fulfillment. The sending of the Spirit is something that occurred not only on Pentecost 33 AD but on the day *after* as well—and the day after *that* . . .

The fact is that the Lord has been sending the Holy Spirit to indwell new believers every day for the past 2,000 years. It could therefore be said that Pentecost is experiencing an extended, or long-range, fulfillment: the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in 33 AD marked merely the *beginning* of a harvest of believers that will conclude when the full number of souls have been indwelt by the Spirit and God calls His Church home at the Rapture.<sup>5</sup>

And so instead of "Pentecost fulfilled" (period, end of story), it's more like:

Pentecost fulfilled . . .

Accepting this scenario, the question that remains is: WHEN will this extended period of "harvest" conclude, thereby *completely* fulfilling Pentecost?

One could reason it will NOT be on Pentecost.

The logic is that Pentecost, as a celebration of the "firstfruits" of the wheat harvest, marks the time, agriculturally, when the harvest *begins*. If one is looking for the *culminating* event of the wheat harvest (Rapture), it makes more sense to seek it around the time the actual harvest concludes, which can be late summer or early fall.<sup>6</sup> It is around this time that the wheat harvest finally wraps up and the gathering of the grapes and other fruits begins.<sup>7</sup>

With the above in mind, it's interesting to note that there is no feast, or appointed time, on God's calendar marking the conclusion of the wheat harvest—it simply ends when it ends, on a "day and hour" no one can predict.

That vital point noted, there are some significant Jewish observances falling around this time. One is the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av, or Tisha B'Av, which occurs on August 13<sup>th</sup> on the Gregorian calendar this year.

Tisha B'Av, is an annual day of mourning and fasting commemorating the anniversary of a number of disasters in Jewish history, including the destruction of both the first and second Temples in Jerusalem.

According to rabbinic tradition, it is the sin of the ten spies that produced the annual fast on Tisha B'Av: When all but two of the spies Moses sent to scout the Promised Land returned with a discouraging report, the Israelites lost trust in God. For this lack of faith, the Lord punished everyone over the age of twenty by not allowing them to enter the Promised Land (Num. 13, 14). According to the same tradition, God also decreed that the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av, or Tisha B'Av, would become a day of crying and misfortune for all generations of Jews.

And indeed it would.

In addition to the destruction of both Jewish Temples on this date, numerous other disastrous events in Jewish history have occurred on Tisha B'Av.

For instance:

- The Jews were forced out of England in 1290 on Tisha B'Av.
- The Jews were forced out of France in 1306 on Tisha B'Av.
- The Jews were forced out of Spain in 1492 on Tisha B'Av.
- Germany entered World War I on Tisha B'Av, causing massive upheaval in Europe, including a rise in anti-Semitism that would culminate in the Holocaust.
- Hitler's proclamation to exterminate the Jews came on Tisha B'Av.
- The disastrous evacuation of the Gaza strip in 2005 occurred at sundown on Tisha B'Av.

Owing to these calamities, Tisha B'Av is regarded as the saddest day on the Jewish calendar and a date destined for tragedy, leading some to speculate about a yet *future* calamity that may befall Israel on this date.

(As an interesting aside, the peak of the annual Perseid meteor shower coincides with Tisha B'Av this year.) <http://www.natureworldnews.com/articles/25797/20160726/annual-perseid-meteor-shower-expected-to-double-normal-rate-to-150-200-shooting-stars-per-hour.htm>

Another notable Jewish observance occurring in the summer, just six days after Tisha B'Av, is the 15<sup>th</sup> of Av, or *Tu B'Av*.<sup>8</sup>

In contrast to the day of mourning that is Tisha B'Av, Tu B'Av is said to be "the greatest day on the Jewish calendar," second only in importance to Yom Kippur, or the Day of Atonement.

Why is Tu B'Av seen as so important?

Opinions vary, but one reason is that, like Yom Kippur, it is connected to the forgiveness of sin, namely the aforementioned "sin of the ten spies" that caused the Lord to place a curse on Tisha B'Av: According to tradition, every year on the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av, Moses would command the people to dig graves and sleep in them as punishment for believing the discouraging report about the Land. The Israelites would awaken each year to find that all those who had reached the age of sixty had died during the night.

When the final (fortieth) year of Israel's sentence of wandering the wilderness came, however, the last 15,000 of that generation did *not* die on Tisha B'Av. Assuming they had erred in calculation, the Israelites waited another day, and then another, for the impending judgment. When the full moon appeared on Tu B'Av, they realized that God had forgiven the sin of the spies.

After the Israelites entered the Land, Tu B'Av began to be celebrated as the day that they had been freed from the curse of the grave and allowed to enter the Promised Land under the leadership of Joshua, who is a prophetic type of Christ.

There are other traditions linked to Tu B'Av. For instance, it is taught that this day commemorates the readmission of the Tribe of Benjamin into the tribal community and also the lifting of a ban on tribal intermarriage through the daughters of Zelophehad. Thus, Tu B'Av is the day in ancient Israel that virgins would dress in white and dance in the vineyards to attract husbands. It is said that "whoever did not have a wife would go there" to find himself a bride.

Interestingly, some speculate that the marriage of Ruth and Boaz may have 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). Tu B'Av marks the beginning of the grape harvest and therefore, some suggest, an unofficial conclusion to the wheat harvest, which is when Ruth would have stopped living with her mother-in-law to take up residence with her new husband, Boaz (v. 23).

A few other interesting Tu B'Av facts:

- It is believed that Tu B'Av will somehow be instrumental in the rebuilding process of the third Temple in Jerusalem.
- Since Tu B'Av falls on the full moon of what is an otherwise dark and tragic month (Av), it is thought to hint at Israel's future redemption.
- The rabbis associate Tu B'Av with the coming of Messiah, "like a groom to His bride," to redeem Israel from her state of exile.

Needless to say, Tu B'Av's association with marriage, redemption, and the triumph over the curse of death to enter the Promised Land has some watchmen considering it a worthy watch date for the Rapture.

My position is that, while anything is possible, the wisest approach at this point is to view *every day* as a worthy watch date for the Rapture. Only God knows when the last member of the Church will be added by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the harvest reaped. This is why He warns His servants in Matthew that they, also, must *keep* watching, because He is coming at an hour they *do not expect* (Matt. 24:44).

The Lord's command to keep watching is telling because if we knew the feast or holiday on which the Rapture is going to occur, as is commonly taught, there would be *no reason* to watch. We could simply mark our calendars and bide our time.

Might the harvest of the Church occur sometime this summer or early fall in conjunction with the wrap-up of the wheat harvest?

No one can say for certain. But if there was ever a time in which a sense of expectation was warranted, *now* is it: We are less than two months away from the end of the jubilee year. It has been "seven sevens," or forty-nine years, since the Jews' prophetic (1967) return to Jerusalem (Dan. 9:25). The current year was heralded by a one-of-a-kind series of solar and lunar eclipses (blood moons) on feast days,<sup>9</sup> as well as a host of other celestial and earthly signs too numerous to list.

It's fair to say that the warning blast of the trumpet has been sounded.

While we do not know the "day or hour" of the Lord's return—whether it will be tomorrow, the last day of summer, or the eve of the Jewish New year—we do know it's *close*.

The harvest of an age is about to be brought in.

Are you ready?

. . .

#### NOTES:

1. For a comprehensive look at the scriptural clues pointing to the summer as a potential time for the Rapture, please see my 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)

2. (Ex. 23:17; Deut. 16: 11-12; 16, 17).

3. (Rev. 7:9-14).

4. (Rev. 20:4-6; Dan. 12:1-3; 9-13; John 11:24).

5. This scenario is detailed in Jack Langford's book, *The Pentecostal Rapture of the Church of Jesus Christ*. Langford writes: "Since the Church was born on Pentecost [expositors] have merely understood or assumed that the Feast was only prophetic of the birth of the Church, or as some would say, of the coming of the Holy Spirit. In reality, this is only the beginning of the story, but not its *prime feature*....[Pentecost] by its unique parenthetical position on the calendar, is actually prophetic of this whole present [Church] age, which is also parenthetical in nature [situated between the law and Kingdom Ages]..." p. 126.

6. There are actually two wheat plantings in Israel, one in the winter and one in the spring. The wheat planted in the spring is harvested about four months later, in the late summer or early fall.

7. It's interesting to note that in Revelation the ripened *grapes*, which begin to be harvested around Tu B'Av, are said to be cast into the "great winepress of the wrath of God," i.e., Tribulation: "*And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs*" (Rev 14:17-20).

8. <http://free.messianicbible.com/holiday/tu-bav-celebration-love-coming-messiah/>  
<https://www.projectinspire.com/articles/1269/the-mystical-roots-of-tu-bav/>

9. Joel 2:31, 3:13, 14; Isa. 13:9-10; Acts 2:20, 21; Luke 21:25-27 Matt. 24:29-31.