

Ten Reasons Late Summer Could Be the Season of the Rapture

T.W. Tramm – (08/17/23)

THE BIBLE TEACHES that there is an appointed season for everything (Ecc. 3).

Here are 10 reasons late summer could be the season of the Rapture:

1. THE WHEAT HARVEST

Scripture associates the Rapture with the wheat harvest:

“At the coming of the Son of Man ... two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left” (Matt. 24:39–41).

In the Northern Hemisphere, the wheat harvest typically begins with the reaping, or cutting, in June. The subsequent steps of drying, threshing, winnowing and sifting the wheat continue throughout summer, overlapping the grape harvest (Lev. 26:5 NLT). Finally, around summer’s end, the processed wheat is gathered into the barn (Matt. 13:30; Deut. 16:13).

The gathering of wheat into the barn pictures the gathering of believers to the Lord:

“Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our *gathering* together to Him” (2 Thess. 2:1).

“His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and *gather* His wheat into the barn” (Matt. 3:12).

And so late summer, when the processed wheat is gathered into the barn, is a plausible time for the Rapture.

2. RUTH AND BOAZ’S WEDDING

The wedding of the Gentile Ruth to the Jewish redeemer, Boaz, is a picture of the Rapture.

While Ruth and Boaz were betrothed, or legally married, around Pentecost, Scripture records that Ruth continued to live with her mother-in-law until the end of the wheat harvest (Ruth 4:9, 10; 2:21–23). Some translations specify, “till all the barley and the wheat were laid up in the barns” (v. 23 DRB).

There are two reasons Ruth may have continued to live with her mother-in-law until the very end of the harvest.

First, as the owner of the field, Boaz would have been busy overseeing the harvest. It was normal practice in those days for landowners to supervise the harvest, even sleeping on the threshing floor, as a deterrent to theft. This is why Boaz was found sleeping on the threshing floor the night Ruth approached him about being her redeemer (Ruth 3:9–11).

Boaz’s supervisory duties would not have ended at the threshing floor. After winnowing and sifting, the grain had to be measured and portions meted out as various payments or tithes, before the rest could be stored. Thus, Boaz could have easily been occupied with the harvest until summer’s end.

Another reason Ruth may have lived with her mother-in-law until late summer is a Jewish custom that requires certain brides to observe a three-month separation period before the wedding. *Havchana* is a rabbinic law that requires a divorcee, widow, or new convert to Judaism to allow three months between the betrothal and consummation. The purpose of the law is to ensure that the bride is not already pregnant before marrying, thereby avoiding any confusion regarding the lineage of the child. Since Ruth was *both* a widow *and* a convert to Judaism, it is possible that in accordance with the law of *Havchana*, the wedding (rapture type) was not held until three months after the betrothal, around summer’s end.

3. GRAPES

In Song of Songs, tender grapes are the last agricultural sign mentioned before the Gentile maid is ‘raptured’ by her beloved shepherd-king:

“The voice of my beloved! Behold, he comes 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 turtledove is heard in our land; the fig tree puts forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grapes give a good smell. Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away” (Song 2:8, 11–13).

Grapevines produce fragrant blossoms in late spring or early summer, and yield grapes from August through October. And so according to the Song of Songs, the Rapture could occur any time during this spring-to-autumn window.

4. FIGS

Figs represent Jews in Scripture (Amos 8:1, 2).

There are two main fig crops in Israel, one in summer and another in autumn. Figs that ripen early, in summer, are said to be very good, or desirable, and are therefore quickly “snatched up” (Hos. 9:10; Isa. 28:4 NLT; Mic. 7:1, 2 NLT). Figs that ripen late, or are overripe, in autumn, face a shaking or judgment (Rev. 6:13 AMP; Amos 8:1, 2 AMP).

With the biblical symbolism in view, summer figs may represent believing Jews snatched up at the Rapture, whereas the autumn figs represent non-believers left behind to face judgment.

5. PENTECOST AND THE JUBILEE

A popular view is that Pentecost, the harvest festival in late spring, is when the Rapture will occur.

Another plausible scenario, however, is that Pentecost, the 50th day, is a picture of the Bible’s other 50th—the Jubilee, or year of redemption (Lev. 25). In this scenario, since Pentecost is considered “fully come” around the midpoint of the 24-hour day (Acts 2:15), the Jubilee may be considered fully come around the midpoint of the 12-month year—late summer. Thus, the wave offering of baked loaves on Pentecost morning (Lev. 23:16, 17) is a picture of the rapture–harvest of the Church around summer’s end, during a Year of Jubilee.

6. TRUMPETS

The first day of the seventh month, around summer’s end, is when God commands a memorial blowing of trumpets:

“On the first day of the seventh month, you shall have a sabbath-rest, a memorial of blowing of trumpets” (Lev. 23:24).

While Scripture does not specify what the trumpet blasts memorialize, they are believed to commemorate the historic trumpet blast at Sinai, when the Lord descended in a cloud and entered into a wedding agreement with Israel (Ex. 19). The trumpet blasts at the start of the seventh month are thus a reminder of Israel’s wedding at Sinai and, by association, the Church’s betrothal that occurred on the same day, centuries later (Acts 2).

Since summer’s end is a time to remember past weddings and betrothals, it is an apt time for the ultimate wedding, the Rapture.

7. TRADITIONS OF ELUL

The last full month of summer on the biblical calendar is called Elul.

According to Jewish tradition:

- Elul is the “month of the bride.” The bridal theme derives from the fact that the name Elul is an acronym for the Hebrew phrase translated “I am my Beloved’s, and my Beloved is mine” in Song of Songs (Song 6:3).
- Elul 1 marks the beginning of a 40-day period of repentance, leading up to the Day of Atonement. Accordingly, every day during the month of Elul, a trumpet is sounded as a warning that Judgment Day is near and fast approaching.
- Elul is when one’s fate is sealed for the following year. The notion of being “sealed” recalls the passage in Revelation where, after the Rapture, 144,000 Jews are sealed by the Holy Spirit (Rev. 7).

The biblical month of Elul begins August 17 this year.

8. PEACE AND SAFETY

The last full day of summer, September 21, marks the UN’s annual “International Day of Peace.”

Speaking of the Rapture and end of the Church Age, Paul says, “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. 5:3).

Significantly, the UN assigned a permanent date to the International Day of Peace on September 11, 2001, the day of the 9/11 terror attacks, during a Sabbatical year. Three Sabbatical cycles later, in 2023, one wonders if the destruction that rained down on 9/11—just blocks from the UN Headquarters—may have been a foreshadowing of the post-Rapture destruction mentioned by Paul.

9. JUDGMENT

Israel will face the time of judgment called “Jacob’s Trouble” after the Rapture (Jer. 30:7; 1 Thess. 4:16, 17; 5:1–9). According to Scripture, Israel’s judgment begins in late summer or fall:

- In Amos, a basket of ripened summer fruit is a sign that Israel is ripe for judgment (8:1, 2).
- In Micah, late summer is when the godly people have “vanished” from the land, and the wicked are left behind (7:1, 2 CSB).
- In Jeremiah, the Jews lament not being “rescued,” or “delivered,” at the passing of the summer harvest (8:20 NET CEV).

10. DELAY

The Rapture is analogously depicted as happening late, or being delayed:

“My master is delaying his coming” (Matt. 24:48).

“The bridegroom was delayed, and they all became drowsy and slept” (Matt. 25).

Since the Bride (Church) was betrothed to God at Pentecost in late spring (Acts 2), the Groom would, according to the Jewish wedding tradition, be expected to return around the same time—late spring. His appearance several months later, in late summer, would thus fulfill the element of delay.

A delay of the Rapture and judgment until the end of the appointed season is consistent with God’s propensity to allow the maximum time for repentance.

SUMMARY

In the Bible, late summer is a time of . . .

- Wheat being gathered into the barn.
- Weddings and wedding reminders.
- Grapes and figs ripening.
- Trumpets sounding.
- Repentance and preparation.
- Peace and safety.
- Judgment.
- Lateness or delay.

All of these themes point to the Rapture. While only God knows the day and hour, late summer is an apt season for this awesome event to occur.

NOTES:

1. The gathering of the elect in Matthew refers to the Rapture, not the later Second Coming, as people are engaged in regular activities: “eating, drinking, marrying, buying, selling, planting, and building” (Matt. 24:37–41; Luke 17:26–29). By the time of the Second Coming, the earth and its population will have been decimated due to the wars and divine judgments described in Revelation chapters 8 and 9.

2. Wheat threshing overlaps the grape harvest: “Your threshing season will overlap with the grape harvest, and your grape harvest will overlap with the season of planting grain. You will eat your fill and live securely in your own land” (Lev. 26:5 NLT). Israel’s grape harvest begins in July–August.

3. Wheat is gathered into the barn by the Feast of Tabernacles:

<https://www.bible.com/bible/compare/DEU.16.13>

https://www.chabad.org/kids/article_cdo/aid/4603/jewish/Festival-Of-Ingathering.htm

<https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/rosh-hashanah-and-the-mystery-of-the-gezer-calendar/>

4. Wheat harvest (general):

<https://science.howstuffworks.com/life/botany/wheat2.htm>

<https://www.ancient-hebrew.org/manners/growing-and-harvesting-grain.htm>

<https://www.historyonthenet.com/medieval-farming-the-farming-year?fbclid=IwAR2Eq1900sfwijiePKsQsRBJPIIW-aNcoWYcYd4v4YWj5-FXBztr3aLelI>

5. Jewish weddings occur in two stages. At the betrothal, the couple is considered legally married. However, they typically do not share a home, or consummate the marriage, until a year has passed.

<https://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/3229-betrothal>

6. Concerning the timing of Boaz’s wheat harvest, another factor to consider is that his field was located near Bethlehem, situated on the Judean Mountains. At higher elevations, wheat ripens considerably later and is thus harvested later.

7. Ruth and the three-month separation period before marriage:

https://www.sefaria.org/Megillat_Ruth%3B_From_Chaos_to_Kingship%2C_Perek_2.16.2?lang=bi&with=all&lang2=en

<https://www.etzion.org.il/en/halakha/yoreh-deah/topics-yoreh-deah/tevilat-ha-ger-%E2%80%93-when-couple-converts>

<https://shulchanaruchharav.com/halacha/how-long-must-a-widow-or-divorcee-wait-to-remarry/>

8. Ruth and Boaz’s wedding in late summer, around the end of the sixth month, would be analogous to the Church’s wedding to Messiah after 6,000 years. It would also explain the symbolism of the six measures of grain Boaz gave to Ruth the night before their betrothal (Ruth 3:15).

9. Grapes, which are harvested mainly between August and October, are also associated with the judgment of nonbelievers: “Another angel ... came from the altar and called in a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle,

'Take your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of grapes from the earth's vine, because its grapes are ripe.' The angel swung his sickle on the earth, gathered its grapes and threw them into the great winepress of God's wrath" (Rev. 14:18, 19).

10. The biblical 24-hour day begins at nightfall, the time of which varies depending on the season. At the time of Pentecost in Jerusalem, the twilight period is between roughly 8:00–9:00pm. The time of the morning offering–sacrifice on Pentecost morning, when the day was said to have "fully come" (Acts 2), was during the third hour, sometime between 8:00–9:00 am.

11. The International Day of Peace was established in 1981 as the third Tuesday in September. However, on September 11, 2001, the UN assigned the annual observance its permanent date of September 21 and declared it to be "a day of global ceasefire and non-violence."

<https://web.archive.org/web/20180819071631/http://www.unis.unvienna.org/unis/pressrels/2001/sgsm7945.html>

https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/55/282

12. God counts years in seven-year increments called Sabbatical weeks (Lev. 25:1–7; Dan. 9:24–27). Concerning the reckoning of Sabbatical weeks, it is important to note that there are two accepted chronologies, which differ by a single year. The first chronology, associated with Benedict Zuckermann, has the most recent Sabbatical year ending in 2022. The second chronology, associated with Ben Zion Wacholder, has the most recent Sabbatical year ending in 2023. <https://www.pickle-publishing.com/papers/sabbatical-years-table.htm>

For reasons noted in previous studies, I believe that Wacholder's chronology is likely correct.