

Seven Reasons Late Summer Could Be the Season of the Rapture

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THE BIBLE TEACHES that there is an appointed season for every activity under the sun (Ecc. 3).

Here are seven reasons late summer could be the appointed 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 cutting, or reaping, in June.

The subsequent steps of drying, threshing, winnowing, sifting, and grinding the wheat continue through the summer, overlapping the grape harvest (Lev. 26:5 NLT).

Finally, by summer’s end, before the Feast of Tabernacles, the processed wheat is gathered into the barn (Matt. 13:30; Deut. 16:13).

The gathering of the wheat into the barn corresponds to 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).

Thus, 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 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, despite being legally married to Boaz, until the grain was stored in barns.

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 work 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 summer's end is a Jewish custom that requires certain brides to observe a three-month period of separation before the wedding. *Havchana* is a rabbinic law that requires a divorcee, widow, or new convert to Judaism to allow at least 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 concerning 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 prophetic wedding was not held until three months after the betrothal, in late summer or early autumn.

3. GRAPES

In Song of Solomon, tender grapes are the last agricultural sign mentioned before the Gentile maid is 'raptured' by her beloved:

“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 blossom in early summer, and yield grapes from August through October. Thus, according to Song of Solomon, the Rapture could occur any time during this summer–autumn 'window.'

4. FIGS

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

Additionally, figs that ripen early are said to be very good, or desirable, and are thus quickly “snatched up,” or “disappear” (Hos. 9:10; Isa. 28:4 NLT; Mic. 7:1, 2 NLT). Figs that ripen late, or are overripe, face a shaking or judgment (Rev. 6:13; Amos 8:1 AMP).

There are two main fig crops in Israel, one in summer and another in autumn. With the above fig-typologies in view, the early figs may represent believing Jews who are raptured during or around summer. The late figs may represent non-believing Jews who are left behind to face judgment in the autumn.

5. 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 say what the trumpet blasts memorialize, they are believed to commemorate the momentous trumpet blast at Sinai when God descended in a cloud and entered into a ‘wedding agreement’ with Israel (Ex. 19). The trumpet blasts that commence 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).

As summer’s end is a time to remember past weddings and betrothals, it is possible that the Rapture could occur around this time.

6. TRADITIONS OF ELUL

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

According to the rabbis . . .

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 Solomon (Song 6:3).

Elul is when the “King is in the field.” The notion that the King is in the field, observing His subjects as they work, is meant to inspire upright behavior and intimacy with the Lord while He is near and approachable. As it is written, “Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near” (Isa. 55:6).

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 an alert 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 144,000 Jews are sealed by the Holy Spirit before judgment is poured out on the earth.

The biblical month of Elul begins August 28 this year.

7. PEACE AND SAFETY

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

With the prophetic connotation of summer in view, it is striking that the last day of the season is observed as a day of “peace, non-violence, and ceasefire” by the nations. Speaking of the timing of the Rapture, 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 attacks, and the start of a new seven-year Sabbatical cycle.

As a new Sabbatical cycle begins in 2022—the third one since 9/11—one wonders if the sudden destruction that rained down in September 2001, only blocks from the UN Headquarters in New York, was a foreshadowing of some future or imminent calamity.

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.

All of these themes point to the Rapture and Judgment Day. While only God knows the day and hour, late summer into autumn is a season 'ripe' with possibility.

NOTES:

1. We understand the gathering of the elect in Matthew to refer 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 inhabitants will be in a state of utter devastation 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 August:

<https://brill.com/view/book/edcoll/9789004369825/B9789004369825-s007.xml#:~:text=a.&text=The%20grape%20harvest%20in%20modem,their%20growth%20in%20the%20spring.&text=Presses%20and%20Cup%2DMarks%2C%22,%2C%20%22Wine%2C%22%20850.>

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-FXBztr3aLeltl>

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

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

6. Concerning Boaz's 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 around summer's end, or the end of the sixth month, would parallel the wedding of the Church to Messiah after 6,000 years, and explain the symbolism of the six measures of grain Boaz gave to Ruth the night before their betrothal (Ruth 3:15).

9. Grapes, harvested in August–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. Fig season in Israel: <https://jacanswers.com/when-is-a-fig-tree-in-season-israel/>

11. Late-summer Rapture and Judgment in Scripture:

- 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 saved at the passing of the summer harvest (8:20).
- In Amos, a basket of ripened summer fruit signals that Israel is ripe for judgment (8:1, 2).

12. 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

13. A UN tradition is to ring the "Peace Bell" twice a year: once on the first day of spring and again on September 21 to celebrate the International Day of Peace.

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/international-day-peace#:~:text=Background,%2Dviolence%20and%20cease%2Dfire.>

14. God reckons time in seven-year increments called the Sabbatical cycle, or “weeks” (Lev. 25:1–7; Dan. 9:24–27). According to the Jewish reckoning dating back to the Second-Temple period, 2022 marks the beginning of a new Sabbatical cycle:

<http://www.pickle-publishing.com/papers/sabbatical-years.htm>

<http://www.pickle-publishing.com/papers/sabbatical-years-more.htm>

<http://www.pickle-publishing.com/papers/sabbatical-years-table.htm>

15. Also supporting a late-summer rapture are allusions to Jesus tarrying, or delaying: “The bridegroom was delayed, and they all became drowsy and slept” (Matt. 25). Since the Church—bride was betrothed at Pentecost (Acts 2), the groom would, in accordance with the Jewish wedding tradition, be expected to return around the same time. The groom’s arrival several months after Pentecost, toward the end of summer, would thus fulfill the element of delay. Delaying the Rapture and Judgment until the end of the appointed season corresponds to God’s longsuffering nature, and His propensity to take action in the “eleventh hour” (Matt. 20:6–9).