

From Pentecost to Trumpets: The Summer Harvest Season and the Rapture

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A POPULAR VIEW in prophecy circles is that the Rapture will occur on the Day of Pentecost.

In this study I will outline an alternate scenario in which Pentecost is not the appointed day of the Rapture but, rather, points ultimately to a time of completion symbolized by the number 50—a Jubilee year.

The rationale for this scenario is as follows:

First, Pentecost is unique among the three harvest festivals. The first and last harvest festivals, Unleavened Bread and Tabernacles, both have assigned dates, last for seven days, and are named according to the respective rituals: removal of leaven and dwelling in temporary shelters (Lev. 23:6–8, 34; Ex. 23:14–17). In contrast, the middle harvest, Pentecost, is a one-day festival, has no date assigned to it, and is named after a number. The Greek word for Pentecost, *pentekoste*, means “50th.”

Second, Pentecost is a type, or picture, of the Jubilee. Consider the parallels:

- Both are a “50th” observed after a count of “seven sevens” (Lev. 23:15; 25:8).
- Both occur after a Sabbath (Lev. 23:15; 25:8).
- Both have themes suggestive of the Rapture, e.g. harvest, redemption.
- Both have a climax or key events at the midpoint: The midpoint of the Day of Pentecost is the morning. This is when God descended upon Sinai, the Holy Spirit descended upon the Church, and the firstfruits of the wheat were offered up to the Lord (Ex. 19; Acts 2; Lev. 23:15–21). The midpoint of the Year of Jubilee is the end of the sixth month. This is when the fall festival season begins and the Jubilee is declared on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 25:9).

The third way Pentecost is equatable to the Jubilee year is the biblical principle that a day represents and actual year of time (Ezek. 4:5-6; Num. 14:34; Dan. 9:24–27). Thus, the 50th day symbolizes a 50th year.

SCENARIO

With the above rationale in view, it is conceivable that Pentecost is not the appointed day of the Rapture but, rather, a marker that points ultimately to the Year of Jubilee. In this scenario, the events associated with the midpoint of the 50th day, Pentecost morning, foreshadow an event that will actually occur around the midpoint of the 50th year, when God commands a blowing of trumpets:

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

What is fascinating to consider is that the memorial blowing of trumpets is believed to commemorate the original trumpet blast on the Day of Pentecost when God descended upon Sinai and entered into a wedding agreement with Israel (Ex. 19). Thus, the trumpet blasts at the midpoint of the year are a remembrance of Israel’s ‘wedding’ at Pentecost and, by association, a remembrance of the Church’s betrothal that also occurred at Pentecost (Acts 2).

In the Pentecost scenario described above, the initial outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost marked the beginning of a prolonged summer harvest, a period of threshing, winnowing, and sifting of humanity that has been ongoing for 2,000 years. No one knows exactly when the last believer will be sealed by the Holy Spirit and the wheat, processed and refined, gathered into the barn. However, viewing Pentecost as the template, it could be around the midpoint of a Jubilee year, the end of the summer harvest season.

From a wide-angle, or long-term, perspective, the Pentecost season is illustrative of the Church Age, the 2,000-year harvest period that began with the sending of the Holy Spirit and concludes at the Rapture.

From a nearer, or short-term, perspective, the Pentecost season pictures the time of tarrying, or delay, detailed in the parables about Jesus’ return (Matt. 24:45–51, 25:1–13). A bride betrothed at Pentecost would, per the Jewish wedding tradition, expect the groom’s return around the same date. Thus, his arrival several months later, toward the end of summer, would be perceived as late.

KEEP WATCH

Having outlined one of a number of plausible rapture scenarios, we understand there is only One who knows the day of the Bridegroom’s return (Matt. 24:36–51). This is why Jesus cautions even His closest followers to “stay awake,” as He may appear at any time during the watch: “in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning” (Mark 13:35–37).

Scripture offers clues as to the season:

“Two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left” (Matt. 24:40, 41).

However, there is no way to know the exact time.

“Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.” (v. 42).

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NOTES:

1. The Holy Spirit was sent on Pentecost morning, when the day was said to have “fully come” (Acts 2). This was during the third hour, sometime between 8:00–9:00 am, when roughly 50 percent of the biblical 24-hour day had passed.

50 percent of the current (354-day) biblical year amounts to 177 days. Counting 177 days from Nisan 1 (April 2), we arrive at September 26, the Feast of Trumpets.

2. The biblical 24-hour day begins at sunset, the time of which varies depending on the season. At the time of Pentecost (mid-June) in Jerusalem, the day begins around 7:45pm. From the start of the day (sunset) until 8:45 am (the approximate time of the sending of the Holy Spirit) represents 54 percent of a 24-hour day.

54 percent of a solar (365-day) year amounts to 197 days. Counting 197 days from the spring equinox, the astronomical marker for the start of the biblical year, we arrive at October 5, the Day of Atonement.

54 percent of the current (354-day) biblical year amounts to 191 days. Counting 191 days from Nisan 1 (April 2), we arrive at October 10, the Feast of Tabernacles.

*Numbers will vary depending on variables like the date of Pentecost and the type of year used in the reckoning (equinoctial/standard Gregorian/biblical, etc.) Generally speaking, however, the third hour of the day on Pentecost translates to the midpoint of the biblical year.

*Reckoning biblical hours/days: https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/526872/jewish/Hours.htm

3. The similarities between the 50th day and 50th year, Pentecost and Jubilee, may be compared to a fractal in nature. Fractals, described as self-similar repeating patterns, are observed throughout creation: in snowflakes, animal coloration patterns, plants, trees, and even pulmonary vessels. A defining characteristic of a fractal is that the pattern looks the same from near as from far. Thus, whether one is viewing the object through a microscope or from a great distance, the same shape, configuration, or pattern, is observed.

4. John's declaration of Messiah's earthly mission corresponds to the 'Pentecost season' scenario:

"He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matt. 3:11, 12).

Notice the sequence of events:

1. Baptism with the Holy Spirit and fire (Pentecost—firstfruits).
2. Threshing and winnowing (ensuing weeks or months).
3. Gathering the wheat into the barn (Rapture—ultimate harvest).
4. Burning up of the chaff (Tribulation—Judgment).

While John was speaking in terms of the entire Church Era—from the baptism in Acts 2 to Judgment Day—the chronology also speaks to the immediate season and the period of processing and refinement that happens after Pentecost and before the gathering of the wheat into the barn.

5. Before the advent of modern machinery, the wheat harvest was a laborious process that encompassed more time: <https://www.historyonthenet.com/medieval-farming-the-farming-year>

6. A traditional Jewish betrothal lasted 12 months. Thus, a bride betrothed on Pentecost would expect the "home-taking," or coming of the bridegroom, around the same date. With this tradition in view, it is interesting that in Matthew 25 the virgins go out to meet the bridegroom at a time of expectation, possibly the betrothal anniversary, yet the bridegroom is delayed for an unspecified period, finally appearing at "midnight," the midpoint.
<https://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/3229-betrothal>
<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=matt+25%3A1-13&version=NKJV>

7. 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.