Why Did the Shemitah Come and Go Without Drama?

While many eyes were watching the U.S. financial markets on Friday, Sept. 11, and Monday, Sept. 14—the two open market days that surrounded the last day of the Shemitah year that ended Sunday—the markets were quiet. Markets then rose through mid-week before losing those gains to end the week unchanged.

Exactly 14 years ago in 2001, on the last day of the Shemitah year—Elul 29—and just after the 9/11 attacks, the markets dropped precipitously albeit briefly. Then exactly seven years ago in 2008, a significant drop occurred on the last day of the Shemitah year, which signaled the start of the 2008-2009 recession.

So why did "nothing happen" this time?

Actually, something did happen, but before we reveal what, let us set the stage.

God has multiple purposes for everything He does, and whatever He allows to happen is always a fascinating confluence of all those purposes. We are not Him, of course. His ways are above ours. But since He wants to be known, He encourages us to try to be those who have eyes to see. It is this encouragement that prompts this very article, even knowing that whatever we might see, to the extent it is correct, will not be the whole story.

Why Was the Shemitah Quiet?

First, while God is a God of pattern, He is not a God of formula. Had Elul 29 happened again to the very day, for the third time in a row with a large financial drop, would we not be tempted to see Elul 29 as a proven formula? Would we not go to our calendars and circle that date of Elul 29 seven years from now? Is that an outcome God wants?

Second, the Bible states that God invented the Shemitah Himself, so clearly God's reputation is more in play than our own.

It seems that God has decided to introduce the Shemitah to the larger world. On that basis, I will make the first two predictions of this article: Whatever happens in the days, weeks and months ahead will not result in a large scale mockery of God and the Shemitah cycle He invented. Furthermore, God will not put to shame the very people who have stuck their necks out saying "This Shemitah is from God."

Jonathan Cahn's book was already partially vindicated by the drops of the market in August, although looking back it seems that a fairest interpretation of August in the context of Shemitah is more of a first-step or a warning, than as a complete fulfillment.

Third, in the new book that Gidon Ariel and I have just released called *Israel First! Your Key to Understanding the Blood Moons, Shemitah, Promises to Israel, and the Coming Jubilee*, we assert that Christians have been overly focused on the United States as the centerpiece of God's purposes, and that the Shemitah cycle is one means by which God is encouraging us all to look for biblical anchors rather than cultural ones.

The fact that the August drops were driven from China, rather than the USA, has been a wake-up call to U.S. economists who have previously used U.S. economic numbers alone in predicting worldwide economics. No more.

Ultimately, we see that Americans are being offered a wake-up call to repent from our inner belief that we created our own success, and that we can therefore fix our current problems apart from obedience to God.

Fourth, in *Israel First!*, we propose a newly discovered scriptural model that may predict God's actions in the next seven years, because it fits so well the escalation of events in the last 14 years. A key result of this model suggests that God's actions towards us in the next seven years will not be as financially centered as they were in the past—because those financial warnings did not bring about enough repentance, and that what we will see ahead is going to get a lot more personal, and will necessarily cost the lives of many more innocent people. In fact, the verses even allude to a changing way of life.

But let us hasten to say that the news is not all bad—because we are looking for a great spiritual awakening as well! When evils rise, so does God's grace! Financially, while our model predicts an impact less financially centered than in 2008, it does predict financial impact, perhaps spread over a longer period of time, maybe even in multiple waves.

What Did Happen on Elul 29?

With that background, it is time to tell what interesting things did happen on Elul 29 of this year!

When we look at the events of Elul 29, having taken off our "financially focused lenses" and our "USA-centric lenses," several important things occurred.

First, on Elul 29, the leader of al-Qaida, Ayman al-Zawahri, released an audiotape that included an all-points, worldwide bulletin to young Muslim men everywhere to begin carrying out jihadi attacks in the West. Analysts say that al-Zawahri is even more persuasive among jihadis than ISIS, who had just released a video two days earlier on 9/11 called "We Are Back in America."

Second, the Supreme Leader of Iran, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, also released a video taunting America for ever saying it could defeat Iran, and promising our humiliation if we ever tried.

Third, after a disturbance at the Al Aqsa Mosque on Elul 29, about 500 people visited the Temple Mount on Tishri 1. That situation is ripe for escalation. If these were to become big stories in the coming months—a large increase of Islamic lone-wolf attacks in the West, a whole new level of contemptuousness from Iran now that the nuclear deal is certain and worldwide conflict over Israel's handling of the Temple Mount—then we might just look back at Elul 29 as a key turning point indeed.

Finally, in a surprising twist, on Elul 29 Iran President Hassan Rouhani, tweeted "Shana Tovah" to the Jews, just like he did once before in 2013. What that means I would rather not even attempt to guess.

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