

THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS

Objectives:

- To identify some of the main components of the Feast of Trumpets.
- To gain an understanding of how this feast was observed during the time of Christ.
- To gain an understanding of how this feast applies to believers today.

(approach) portion of Zola Levitt video " The Seven Feast of Israel" that show the blowing of the shofar

The holy day that we will look at this morning features the blowing of the shofar. This trumpet is quite different from what we are accustomed to but has played an important part in Biblical history and as we shall see during today's lesson, will play an important part in future events.



I. GOD'S INSTRUCTIONS CONCERNING THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS

A. **This is the fifth feast in the seven-feast cycle.** It occurs in the fall of the year. It is significant that there are no feasts or holy days during the summer. The feasts that occur in the Spring are called the "Feasts of the Former Rain" and the feasts that occur in the Fall are called the "Feasts of the Latter Rain". The period of time between the Spring and Fall feasts is the church age. We are living in that time period.

1. The three feasts that complete God's calendar occur within a twenty-one day period of time.
2. Trumpets is celebrated on Tishri 1; Yom Kippur falls on Tishri 10; and the Feast of Tabernacles is celebrated for seven days, beginning on Tishri 15.
3. The period of time between the Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) are the most holy days of the Jewish

calendar. They are called the "High Holy days" or the "days of Awe".

B. According to Lev. 23:23-25, there were 3 instructions concerning Trumpets:

1. It was to be a day of rest, a sacred convocation. No regular work was to be done.
2. It was to be a day for the blowing of the shofar.
3. An offering was to be made to the Lord by fire. Numbers 29:2-6 specifies the various animals that were to be offered as a burnt offering to the Lord.

C. This is the only feast that was not given a name by God. All of the other holidays were named by God, this one was simply referred to as the "Yom Teruah" or "the day of the sounding of the shofar"--hence the name "Feast of Trumpets"

1. This holy day commemorates no season or historical event, as the Spring holy days do.
2. This holy day portrays future events for the nation of Israel, as well as for the church.

D. The Feast of Trumpets was to be celebrated on the first day of the seventh month--the month of Tishri. The number "seven" is important in Scripture as it is the number of completion. God sanctified the seventh day as a day of rest; the seventh year was to be a year of rest for the land (according to Lev. 25:1-7); and the seventh month was declared to be holy.

II. JEWISH OBSERVANCE OF THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS

A. Preparations for the Fall holidays begin one month in advance.

On Elul 1 a forty-day period of introspection begins. This time of examination of one's life ends on the Day of Atonement.

1. The Hebrew word for this period of time, "Teshuvah" means "to return or repent."
2. During the 30 days prior to Tishri 1, the shofar is blown each morning in the synagogue to remind the people that the holy days are approaching and that they should prepare themselves.

B. Although God only ordained that this feast be celebrated for one day, a second day was added due to the uncertainty of the Jewish calendar.

1. "The beginning of each Hebrew month was originally dependent upon the sighting of the New Moon. The precise timing of the new

Moon was not always easily determined due to clouds or a lack of witnesses."¹

2. The Feast of Trumpets greatly compounded this problem since it is the only feast that occurs on the first day of the month, according to the Hebrew calendar. This made it difficult to notify communities that the holiday had actually begun.

3. To decrease the chance for error, a second day was added to the celebration.

C. The Feast of Trumpets is usually called Rosh Hashanah which literally means "Head of the Year." This name was not applied to the feast until at least the second century A.D.

1. After the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D. the observance of the Feast of Trumpets was drastically changed.

2. The timing for this feast coincided with the beginning of Israel's civil New Year. Passover is the beginning of the Biblical year and Trumpets is the beginning of the civil New Year. (similar to calendar versus fiscal versus academic years)

3. Thus the name gradually came to be changed to Rosh Hashanah.

D. The sum and substance of this holy day is solely dependent upon a musical instrument called a shofar or a ram's horn.

1. Several types of trumpets are mentioned in the Old Testament. Our English Bibles rarely distinguish between the different types of Hebrew trumpets.

a. The hatzotzerah was a straight metal trumpet that was flared at the end. It was typically made of silver. In Solomon's day the number of trumpets in the Temple had grown to 120. This trumpet was sounded over the sacrifices and from the southwest corner of the Temple wall to announce the beginning and end of each Sabbath

b. The shofar was a curved trumpet fashioned from a ram's horn. This particular trumpet was not to be fashioned from the horn of a cow because of Israel's worship of the golden calf.

2. There are three types of blasts that are sounded with a shofar: a long, unwavering blast (Tekiah); three short, broken blasts (shevarim); and a nine-part staccato blast (teruah).

3. There were several specific uses for the shofar in Scripture:

a. It was sounded to bring Moses to the top of Mt. Sinai (Ex. 19:19-20)

b. It was sounded during a time of war--as a battle alarm (Numb. 10:9; Judges 3:27, Amos 3:6)

¹ Howard, p. 104.

- c. It gathered an assembly before the Lord (Numbers 10:2-4)
- d. It announced the coronation of a new king (I Kings 1:34, 39).
- e. It was blown at the start of the year of Jubilee (Lev. 25:9)
- f. "In June, 1967, the haunting sound of the shofar again echoed on Jerusalem's Temple Mount after almost 1,900 years. It was sounded by Chief Rabbi Shlomo Goren after Israeli soldiers restored Jewish sovereignty over East Jerusalem and reunited Israel's eternal capital."²



Corner of Temple Mount

4. Ancient rabbis suggested that the purpose for the blowing of the shofar on the Feast of Trumpets is to confound and confuse the Adversary--Satan. "They believed that the many blasts of the shofar on Rosh Hashanah would confuse Satan, leading him to believe that the Messiah had arrived and his authority had ended. Based upon this tradition, it is customary to sound a total of 100 shofar blasts on each day of the Rosh Hashanah synagogue services."³

E. For two thousand years the liturgy of Rosh Hashanah has revolved around three specific themes and they dominate the worship in synagogues during this holiday:

1. **God's Kingship and sovereignty**--His authority over creation (Rosh Hashanah is thought to commemorate the creation of the world or the birthday of the world). The Malkhiyot, a benediction honoring God's Kingship says, in part, "May all the inhabitants of the world realize and know that to thee every knee must bend, every tongue must vow allegiance. . . The Lord shall be King forever and ever."⁴

² Howard, p. 107.

³ Ibid, p. 110.

⁴ Ibid, p. 111.

2. **Remembrances--of God's covenant.** The Zikhronot (benediction) pleads "Remember in our behalf, Lord our God, the covenant, the kindness, and the solemn promise which thou didst make to our father Abraham on Mount Moriah." ⁵

3. "The Shofarot **focuses upon the key role of the shofar** in the history of the nation. It speaks of Mt. Sinai where the Lord first revealed Himself with the sound of the shofar: 'The whole world trembled at thy presence, creation shook in awe before thee, when thou, our King, didst reveal thyself on Mount Sinai. . . amid the blasting of the shofar didst thou appear to them.'"⁶

F. According to Jewish tradition, God opens three books on Rosh Hashanah: the Book of Life for the wicked, the Book of Life for the righteous and the Book of Life for the in-between. God, as Judge, reviews each person's deeds during the past year.

1. Those who are judged to be righteous are granted another year of life and prosperity;
2. those whose deeds are judged to be wicked are inscribed in the Book of Life for the wicked and it is believed that their life will be cut short during the coming year.
3. For the remainder, the sealing of their fate hangs in the balance until the Day of Atonement. If they repent and change their ways during this ten day period, God will relent and inscribe their name in the Book of Life for the Righteous.
4. It is customary to greet one another with the words, "May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year."
5. Ps. 69:28 *"May they be blotted out of the book of life and not be listed with the righteous."* Exodus 32:32-33 *"But now, please forgive their sin--but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written."*



Family Tashlikh Service

⁵ Howard, p. 111.

⁶ Ibid.

G. **"The Rosh Hashanah ceremony known as Tashlikh 'cast off' symbolizes self-purification and the shedding of one's sins. It arose during the Middle Ages and is still widely observed today."**⁷

1. On the afternoon of Rosh Hashanah families gather near a body of fresh water.

2. Bread crumbs, pebbles or lint are taken from one's pockets and tossed into the water as Micah 7:18-20 is recited

"Who is God like You, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy. You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea. You will be true to Jacob, and show mercy to Abraham, as you pledged on oath to our fathers in days long ago."



Family Tashlikh Service

III. JESUS AND THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS

A. **Evidence suggests that Jesus was born in the fall**, possibly during the time of the Feast of Tabernacles. It is also believed that He was baptized by John the Baptist in the fall of the year. After His baptism, He spent 40 days in the wilderness being tested.

1. His baptism correlates to a special mikveh or water immersion that many orthodox men take during this feast. (Matt. 3:13-17)

⁷ Ibid, p. 109.

2. His 40-day period of testing by the Adversary correlates to the 40-day period of preparation and introspection of these Fall holidays.



Ancient Mikveh in Jerusalem

3. When Jesus began His ministry at the end of His temptation He declared "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt 4:17)

B. It is possible that Rosh Hashanah will be fulfilled when Jesus comes in the clouds for His bride--the church. In order to fully understand this concept, we must understand the Jewish wedding ceremony.

1. *"When a man in ancient Israel married, he went to the bride's house with a 'bride price' and made a contract (covenant) with the girl's father. If the father accepted the man and his bride price, the man would pour a glass of wine. If the girl drank it, it would indicate that she accepted the man's proposal and they were betrothed. The man would go away and prepare a wedding chamber for his bride. When the man's father deemed that the wedding chamber was ready, usually one to two years later, the man would return to the bride's house and 'steal' her away 'like a thief in the night' at an hour when no one would suspect. He would take her to the wedding chamber for seven days. During this time, the groom's father would hold a party to announce the marriage. At the end of the seventh day, the married couple would emerge from the chamber and partake of the marriage supper."*⁸

2. The contract or covenant for our marriage to the Lamb of God was sealed at the Last Supper when Jesus shared the covenant cup with His disciples and told them "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many." (Mark 14:24)

⁸ Scarlata, pp 295-296.



Jewish wedding covenant or Ketubah

3. After that last supper, Jesus told His disciples what any Jewish man would tell his betrothed: "In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am." (John 14:2-3)
4. Jesus paid the "bride price" with His life.
5. One day, our bridegroom will come "like a thief in the night" and take us to His father's house for our marriage supper.

C. Several Psalms are dedicated to the Feast of Trumpets:

1. Psalm 81 is called the Feast of Trumpets Psalm.
2. It is believed that Psalms 93-100 were written for this particular feast.

IV. THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS FULFILLED

A. Regardless of one's eschatological views, it is hard to argue with the evidence that supports the view that **God's next great act in redemption history will occur during the Feast of Trumpets.**

1. I Cor. 15:51-52 says: *Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed--in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.*"
2. I Thess. 4:16-18 Complete Jewish Bible: *"For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a rousing cry, with a call from one of the ruling angels, and with God's shofar; those who died united with the Messiah will be the first to rise; then we who are left still alive will be caught up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in*

the air; and thus we will always be with the Lord." **Note: the term "caught up" in Latin equals "rapture"**

3. "Ancient Jewish tradition held that the resurrection of the dead would occur on Rosh Hashanah. Reflecting this tradition, Jewish gravestones were often engraved with a shofar."⁹

4. Scripture records two times when God blows a trumpet. In both instances it is a shofar. The first was at Mt. Sinai when God established the Old Covenant with the nation of Israel. (Ex. 19:18-20). The second will be at the Messiah's return when He will prepare the nation of Israel to be brought into the New Covenant. (Zech. 9:14).

a. There is often confusion regarding the phrase "the last trumpet". Some believe this refers to the series of trumpets mentioned in Revelation 8-9 and thus conclude that the church will go through the Great Tribulation.

b. Another plausible explanation is related to the three types of blowing of the shofar that occurs on this feast. The last blowing is a long blast, signaling victory, not alarm.¹⁰

5. Is it not possible, then, that the rapture will occur sometime during the Feast of Trumpets? "In explaining His return, Jesus left us with a paradox. On the one hand, He said that "of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only" (Matt. 24:36). On the other hand, we can know that He is "near--at the doors!" (Matt. 24:33)¹¹

6. The shofar was sounded by the priests from the southwestern corner of the Temple to signal the field workers to come into the Temple. "At that instant, the faithful would stop harvesting even if there were more crops to bring in, and leave immediately for the worship services. . . We can imagine the scene as a Jew and an Arab worked side by side in the fields, as they do even today. When the trumpet would sound, the Jew would leave immediately, and the Arab, believing otherwise of course, would continue bringing in the crops."¹² Matt 24:40 *"Two men will be in*

the field; one will be taken and the other left. . ."

B. The Bible teaches us that our names are inscribed in the Lamb's Book of Life. Our judgment will differ from that of unbelievers. When the bridegroom took His bride into the wedding chamber, he inspected her wedding garments. This was called the presentation. One day, our Bridegroom will inspect us. Will He be pleased with our wedding garments? Will He find them soiled and in disrepair?

⁹ Howard, p. 114.

¹⁰ Hagee, p. 103.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Levitt, p. 12.

C. **"The Feast of Trumpets is Israel's dark day.** It occurs at the New Moon when the primary night light of the heavens is darkened. Israel's prophets repeatedly warned of a coming dark day of judgment. They knew it as the 'Day of the Lord.' . . . The Day of the Lord will be a time when the Lord pours out His wrath not only upon Israel's enemies, but upon Israel herself to bring her to repentance and into the New Covenant."¹³

1. God will see to it that His promises to Israel will all be fulfilled. The Tribulation will be a purifying process for Israel so that she will be pure and undefiled and able to rule and reign when the Messiah sets up His millennial Kingdom.
2. Ancient rabbis taught that "In the month of Nisan (at Passover), our ancestors were redeemed, and in Tishri (Rosh Hashanah), they will be redeemed in the time to come" ¹⁴
3. Zech. 9:14: *Then the Lord will be seen over them, And His arrow will go forth like lightning. The Lord God will blow the trumpet, and go with whirlwinds from the south.* "The ancient rabbis repeatedly quoted this verse in connection with the coming of the Messiah. "And it is the ram's horn that the Holy One, blessed be he, is destined to blow when the son of David, our righteous one, will reveal himself, as it is said: 'And the Lord God will blow the horn'" ¹⁵

(conclusion)

Rosh Hashanah reminds us that we must examine ourselves and turn from sin. It reminds us that we need to establish right relationships between ourselves and God and with one another. We do not know when our Lord will come for us but Rosh Hashanah warns us to be ready and to listen for the trump of the Lord--a blast of the shofar.

¹³ Howard, p. 113.

¹⁴ Ibid, pp. 112-113.

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 114.

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