



## THE FULFILMENT OF THE FESTIVAL OF TRUMPETS

You may have seen references in the newspaper to the fact that we are now in the season of the Jewish New Year, Rosh Hashanah, which occurs on the first day of the 7<sup>th</sup> month (Tishri), or the Feast of Trumpets. So the Day of Trumpets is very important to the Jews.

The central feature of Rosh Hashanah services is the sounding of the shofar, or ram's horn—this is still sounded in Jewish synagogues today. Apparently trumpets constructed from cow's horns were rejected because they were a reminder of the golden calf. The ram's horn was seen as a better reminder of God's deliverance of Isaac through the ram caught by its horns in the thicket.

The Jews are still under the Old Covenant, because they don't recognise Jesus Christ has come and brought a New Covenant. We understand that we are no longer under the Old Covenant because Jesus instituted the New Covenant at His death, when He fulfilled many of the Old Covenant rituals. We read about this in Colossians 2:16-17—<sup>16</sup> *“Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day.”* <sup>17</sup> *These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.”*

The Holy Days were shadows pointing to Christ. Although this means we don't have to keep them in an Old Covenant way anymore, it is still very helpful to look at them and see how they point to Christ. We can dig from them a wealth of meaning that applies to us spiritually today!

It is quite clear that the Passover pointed forward to Jesus our Passover sacrificed for us. It is clear how the Day of Atonement pointed to and was fulfilled by Jesus. If they pointed to Him, so must the other days, such as the Feast of Trumpets. Jesus said the whole of the law and prophets testified of Him and pointed to Him. So let's look at the Feast of Trumpets, and see the amazing meaning it has for God's people today!

The basic instructions for the day are found in Leviticus 23:23-25: <sup>23</sup> *“The LORD said to Moses,”* <sup>24</sup> *“Say to the Israelites: ‘On the first day of the seventh month you are to have a day of sabbath rest, a sacred assembly commemorated with trumpet blasts.’”* <sup>25</sup> *Do no regular work, but present a food offering to the LORD.”*

There's only one more reference in the Bible to this day:

Numbers 29:1 *“On the first day of the seventh month hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work. It is a day for you to sound the trumpets.”*

So we don't see a lot in the Bible about this day, but we know all of the Old Covenant rituals had spiritual meaning, so we need to look at what the Bible says about trumpets and draw out the meaning from there.

There are quite a number of instances of trumpets being blown in the Bible—so many that we don't have time to go through them all today. But one section that summarises and brings out

much of the significance of trumpets to the people of Israel is Numbers 10:1-10. What were these trumpets to be used for?

### 1. Calling the community together, calling the assembly

The trumpet has a strident, authoritative, clear and commanding sound, which is ideal as a signal to call people together when they are scattered about. How does that apply to the Church today?

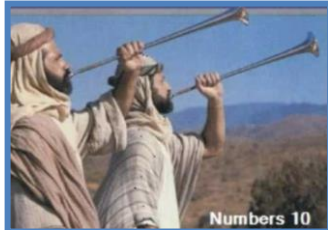
Notice in Verse 8 who was to blow the trumpets. “*The sons of Aaron, the priests, are to blow the trumpets. This is to be a lasting ordinance for you and the generations to come.*”

In the New Testament, our High Priest is Jesus, and He has blown the trumpet to call us out of the world to be His disciples; to call us to His assembly.

Interestingly, Hebrews 10:25 (KJV) warns us not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together.

But Christ isn't the only priest in the New Covenant. There are other spiritual priests here now. The people of God are a “royal priesthood”—we are all a priesthood of believers. So we have a responsibility to blow the trumpets today, the spiritual trumpet of the gospel, calling people to assemble before God.

Isaiah 58:1 (NKJV) “*Cry aloud, spare not; Lift up your voice like a trumpet; Tell My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.*”



So the gospel needs to be sounded like a trumpet. Maybe the two trumpets of silver picture the Old Testament and New Testament aspects of the gospel? A trumpet is useless unless it is blown. So the gospel isn't of any use unless we share it with others! A trumpet looks nice, and the gospel looks wonderful, but it needs to get out there to convict people of salvation, and we are the ones who have to sound the shofar of the gospel.

As well as a present significance, the use of a trumpet for assembling and gathering together God's people has a prophetic meaning too.

Matthew 24:31 “*And He will send His angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.*”

That's a gathering of God's people we can really look forward to!

It's interesting to think about how the trumpets were blown in Old Testament times. Ancient Israel looked for the new moon to appear. If the weather was bad, it was sometimes quite hard to determine the crescent moon was there. They needed two witnesses to verify the new moon was there, attesting it before the Sanhedrin in the temple.

No work was to be done on the Holy Day, but no one knew exactly when the Feast of Trumpets would start, until the two witnesses appeared, so the preparations for the Feast had to be made in advance, and people had to be in a constant state of alertness. The ancients kept track of time in this way for thousands of years, having a lunar calendar.

The comparisons with Jesus' return are obvious! We know roughly the time, but not the day nor the hour, so we have to be in a continual state of readiness. Now, back to Numbers 10:2 and notice the 2<sup>nd</sup> reason for blowing the trumpets.

## 2. For having the camps set out

1 Corinthians 15:52 describes the return of Jesus, at the sound of a great trumpet, and as well as being a signal for assembling God's people, it will involve God's people setting out on a journey—as they rise to meet Christ in the air, and then journey with Him wherever He takes them.

And it is not only future, but in the present time we are strangers and pilgrims on the earth and need to follow the trumpet of the gospel, the voice of Jesus, the Word of God directing us in the paths we need to go—we're on a journey right now.

The next few verses in Numbers 10 describe how the Israelites were to set out, and we need to come down to Verse 9 for the next use of the trumpets.

## 3. For going into battle

Because of the commanding sound of the trumpet, it has always been used in times of war. Jeremiah 4:19 refers to the “*sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war.*” We are all Christian soldiers in a spiritual war, and the Word of God is like a trumpet call, summoning us to battle, to put on the armour of God and go into our daily conflict. This has a prophetic aspect too, reminding us of the terrible trumpet blasts in the book of Revelation, which signify a great time of war and trouble prior to Christ's return.

And the last trump is also an alarm of war in that the first thing Jesus will have to do when He returns is to fight a war against mankind which assembles against Him.

Revelation 19:11,14,15 <sup>11</sup> “*I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice He judges and wages war.*” <sup>14</sup> *The armies of heaven were following Him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean.* <sup>15</sup> *Coming out of His mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. “He will rule them with an iron sceptre.” He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty.”*

## 4. (Numbers 10:10) Trumpets were also to be sounded at times of rejoicing and celebration

The trumpet is a great instrument to use at special occasions like the coronation or wedding of a monarch. The trumpet of the gospel is a trumpet of joy and rejoicing, because it is the message of victory over Satan and sin through the blood of Jesus!

And prophetically the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet will mark a great time of celebration and rejoicing when Jesus returns and is crowned King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Revelation 11:15 “Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “*The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!*”

## 5. (Numbers 10:10) Trumpets were sounded over sacrifices and offerings

Something the Jews always remember on the Day of Trumpets is an inspiring moment in their history recorded in Genesis 22:9-13:

<sup>9</sup> “When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. <sup>10</sup> Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. <sup>11</sup> But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, “Abraham! Abraham!” “Here I am,” he replied. <sup>12</sup> “Do not lay a hand on the boy,” he said. “Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.” <sup>13</sup> Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son.”



For us, the ram symbolises Jesus Christ, who was God’s only begotten son, and died in the place of Isaac and all of the sons of men. All of the various temple sacrifices symbolised and pointed to Jesus, and so did this one.

Any ram’s horn has to come from an animal that has died, and whenever the ram’s horn was blown over the sacrifices and offerings, it pointed to Jesus Christ.

The shofar blast can sound like a shriek of terror or a groan of pain. It reminds us of our Saviour’s final moments on the cross, when Jesus cried with a loud voice and gave up His Spirit.

So the Day of Trumpets pictures Jesus Christ in many ways. All the Holy Days pointed forward to Jesus. He is our Passover, our Unleavened Bread, our Firstfruits, our Shofar, our Atonement, and our Feast of Tabernacles (Kingdom rest). The Feast of Trumpets has a powerful meaning for God’s people today, when you think of the uses of trumpets in the Bible.

Trumpets picture Jesus assembling His people and guiding us on our journey. They picture the gospel message we have the responsibility to sound out to the world. They call us to the spiritual warfare we are engaged in. And trumpets point to the crucifixion of Jesus, and His return as King of Kings to take over the government of the world. And maybe best of all, this day pictures our resurrection to become spirit beings at the last trumpet, and to reign forever with Christ.

Let's heed and follow the trumpet call of God's Word. And let's take our part in blowing the trumpet of the gospel, so others can come to know our Saviour Jesus Christ, who is the fulfilment of the Day of Trumpets!

