



Feast of Trumpets

The authors' thesis is that Jesus will complete or fulfill the Feast of Trumpets at the time of His return, which will usher in the great Day of Judgment. Is this warranted on the basis of the biblical material itself?

The Jewish holidays: Are They God's Calendar? Is the roadmap of world history embedded in the holidays themselves?

We use the term "God's Calendar" because it is not a human calendar; it is not the kind of chronological calendar humans normally use to mark times and seasons. God's calendar is different, because He created time and space, transcends time and space, and dwells above or outside it but invades His creation for His own purposes.

The Creator God marks the grand sweep of history, many of us think, around the holidays of Israel. These incredible events that Israel was to keep throughout all generations seem to point to something beyond themselves. In the actual text of the Hebrew Scriptures, supported by the stories of events like the Exodus, is the calendar in and through which God's history will be worked out. The holidays are God's way of announcing what He has done, what He is doing, and what He is going to do.

Must the five feasts, the offering, and the fast be kept today?

Believers in Messiah Jesus are not required to keep the Jewish holidays, even Jewish believers. This is because, in Jesus the holidays are kept already. Keeping the holidays will not earn anyone, Jew or Gentile, favor with God. However, an understanding of the biblical-eschatological significance of the holidays for any believer in Jesus helps contextualize the gospel message and deepens an appreciation for the ancient plan of God embedded in Scripture from Genesis to Revelation.

Though not a requirement for being "in good standing with God," the holidays may be celebrated by any believer in Jesus. Many Jewish Christians as well as Gentile Christians do observe the holidays because it helps maintain Jewish identity and reminds them of God's work through the Messiah.

What about the warning of Acts 1:7?

The feast of Trumpets, as we will see later on in this chapter, points to the return of Jesus. As soon as this is stated it is clear that attention must be paid to Jesus' warning about trying to know or find out the timing of that second advent. Jesus told His disciples, who were inquiring about when the kingdom of God would be

restored to Israel, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority” (Acts 1:7). Matthew 24:36, Mark 13:32, and 1 Thessalonians 5:1–2 also speak to this general subject.

If the first four holidays were fulfilled on the very days they were celebrated, and if the fall holidays are to be fulfilled in a similar way, would not it be that we would then know the exact time, at least the exact day of the year, when Jesus would return to establish that kingdom?

The authors of this book do not have a definitive answer to this question, and clearly, we do not know the day or the date of the final act of God in history, nor do we suggest that the end time events will take place on the days of the biblical festive calendar. We are content to wait for His imminent return.

Though no one can know the date the Trumpets will be blown, some points can be made. One, though the day and month *might* be known, the year would not. Not knowing the year changes everything. Two, Acts 1:7 indicates that the date of the restoration is fixed, but there may yet be embedded in Scripture clues as to the times and seasons, which may serve as encouragements and promises to God’s people. Three, biblically-oriented Christians believe in the second coming of the Messiah Jesus at the close of the age. The point Jesus seemed to be making in the early section of Acts chapter 1 was that the focus of the disciples’ work was to be evangelism empowered by the Holy Spirit and not the ruling over of an earthly kingdom.

An interval of some unknown time

Between the spring and fall feasts is an interval of time of some unknown duration. The first three holidays of Passover, Unleavened Bread, and Firstfruits come in the first month of the Jewish religious year, Nissan. Pentecost is in the third month of Sivan. All three of the fall holidays come in Tishri, the seventh month. The interval of unknown time comes then between Sivan and Tishri, a time encompassing parts of the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth months. The question is: Why the interval and what is God’s strategy during that period?

The most crowded time on the Jewish calendar is the seventh month, with three holidays celebrated, the last one for seven days. The case might be made that the three are in fact one long feast since Trumpets announces the preparation for the Day of Atonement. “Seventh” points back to the beginning of creation. God infused these holidays with a sense of that seven-day perfection of creation and the seventh day of rest. In the seventh month a worshipful crescendo is reached. In between the fall and spring holidays is a dry time with little rain. At Pentecost, when the Spirit was given to the Church, there was a great harvest but it was a dry time for the people of Israel.

What about the Jewish People?

One of the issues Paul wrestled with was that while the Gentiles were trusting in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in droves, and while there were also many Jewish people who came to faith, still the Jewish leadership and with them the bulk of the Jewish community did not accept Jesus as Messiah. So, from Israel's perspective, the interval between Sivan and Tishri has been in some sense a dry time. However, there will be another harvest after the first harvest of the Gentiles is complete; and it is all a matter of timing. That timing will come in the seventh month of God's calendar, whenever that special time known only to God arrives.

The purpose of the interval

At the time of the ascension, Jesus made it very clear what the Church's work was to be. He said, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Jesus' followers were to be proclaimers of what we call the Gospel, which is essentially that Jesus took our sin upon himself, took our sin away, rose from the dead, ascended to the right hand of the Father, and from there, after some unknown interval of time, will return as the conquering Messiah.

The Feast of Trumpets

The Feast of Trumpets is the first of the fall feasts and was celebrated on the first day of the seventh month of Tishri. In Leviticus 23:24 the word that gives its name to the feast transliterated from the Hebrew is *teru`ah* and literally means "trumpet blast."

Two "horns" are mentioned in Scripture; there are the silver trumpets of Numbers 10, and there is the Shofar of Joshua 6 and other passages, which is an actual ram's horn.

Numbers 10:1-2 describes the silver trumpets: "The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 'Make two silver trumpets. Of hammered work you shall make them, and shall use them for summoning the congregation and for breaking camp.'" The ram's horns were blown while the Hebrew army under Joshua was circling the city of Jericho. The silver trumpets were blown when offerings were brought to the Temple, at the time of all the feasts, and for every New Moon (see Numbers 10:10). These trumpets were celebratory in nature. The trumpets spoken of in Leviticus 23 and 25 are traditionally thought to be a ram's horn, the Shofar, and are for calling to repentance and seeking of God's forgiveness.

It was a ram "caught in a thicket by his horns" (Genesis 22:13) that Abraham sacrificed instead of his son Isaac. The ram's horn therefore became of special significance in the history of Israel and became a symbol, an icon, in the religious life

of the people. In fact, Genesis 22 is traditionally read on Rosh Hashanah (the current Hebrew name for the holiday).

Leviticus 23:23-25

And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to the people of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall observe a day of solemn rest, a memorial proclaimed with blast of trumpets, a holy convocation. You shall not do any ordinary work, and you shall present a food offering to the LORD.”

Notes on the passage:

One. After almost four months have passed from the last spring feast, the clock is running again.

Two. Again, we find an emphasis on “rest,” which is the meaning of the word for sabbath in Hebrew. It is a solemn rest, or a time set aside to commemorate or remember.

Three. A blast of trumpets announced the coming of the holiday.

Four. No ordinary work was to be done.

Head of the Year

Passover began the religious year for Israel. Trumpets announced the beginning of Israel’s civil year or ordinary calendar. *Rosh Hashanah* is the transliterated form for the Hebrew *Head of the Year* and is the Jewish New Year. The new moon of the seventh month of the year would, of course, be a special and holy time. Rather than a time of joyous celebration, this was one of solemn spiritual and moral examination by each observant Jew.

New Year’s Day may mean the beginning of something entirely new and embedded here may be a pointer to something new for all that is Israel.

The close of the previous civil year

On the first day of the seventh month, Tishri, is the Day of Trumpets or the blast of trumpets, but it is also the thirtieth day in a season of *Teshuvah*, which means repentance and return—in the traditions of Judaism. In the sixth month of Elul is when preparations would be made for the climatic seventh month. Prayers and good deeds are performed in order to achieve reconciliation with God. In the Jewish mind, it is a time when you need to prepare yourself for judgment by making amends.

Seventh and sevens

The Torah, the Mosaic covenant, is riddled with sevens, starting with the Creation story. In the Hebrew Bible the very first statement is made up of seven Hebrew

words which are translated, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” The seventh month in God’s calendar—in a sense the perfect month, the month of completion—and the silence of the previous four months is broken by the blast of a trumpet.

The prophets also described God’s seventh month as though it were God’s final month, a time of great expectation. The prophets Isaiah, Zephaniah, and Zechariah talked about the Shofar of God that will be sounded “in that day.” Isaiah 18:3 reads: “All you inhabitants of the world, you who dwell on the earth, when a signal is raised on the mountains, look! When a trumpet is blown, hear!” Isaiah 27:13 reads: “And in that day a great trumpet will be blown, and those who were lost in the land of Assyria and those who were driven out to the land of Egypt will come and worship the LORD on the holy mountain at Jerusalem.” The prophet Zephaniah, proclaiming that the Day of the LORD was coming, wrote in 1:14–16:

The great day of the LORD is near,
near and hastening fast;
the sound of the day of the LORD is bitter;
the mighty man cries aloud there.
A day of wrath is that day,
a day of distress and anguish,
a day of ruin and devastation,
a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and thick darkness,
a day of trumpet blast and battle cry
against the fortified cities
and against the lofty battlements.

And finally there is Zechariah who, in a prophecy concerning the “Coming King of Zion” to save His people, the prophet preached: “Then the LORD will appear over them, and his arrow will go forth like lightning; the LORD God will sound the trumpet and will march forth in the whirlwinds of the south” (Zechariah 9:14).

The long prophetic conversation

The completion of the Torah catalyzed a conversation among Israel’s prophets that seems to have lasted throughout her biblical history; this process continued with the apostles of the New Testament period. The prophets were studying and looking for clues, not just about the past, but also about the future. There are hints in Scripture that what God did in the past pointed ahead to or were harbingers of what He would do in the future. A conversation about the seventh month and trumpet blasts was going on among the prophets, which was actually begun by Moses (remember the ram’s horn in Genesis 22).

Whether or not the prophets related the end-time trumpets to the Feast of Trumpets is not as obvious as we find in regard to the spring holidays, where it is plain that Jesus, in His life and ministry, fulfilled or completed those holidays. In this case, as with the Day of Atonement and Booths, surmises and analogies are made connecting the fall holidays with the end-time events spoken of in the New Testament.

Another conversation that went on in the Tanakh concerns suffering. Psalm 22, among others, depicts a suffering, dying, even crucified Messiah. Isaiah presents the same, in his chapters 52 and 53. Zechariah, in chapter 12 verse 10, spoke of a suffering, pierced, and dying Messiah.

The Tanakh reveals two Messiahs, one from the tribe of Judah and the other from the tribe of Ephraim. Although the ancient rabbis believed in two Messiahs, a suffering Messiah and a conquering Messiah, we think the Scriptures teach there is one Messiah who suffers in His first coming and conquers in His second coming. The coming of this last or second Messiah will be heralded by a trumpet blast in the seventh month of God's calendar.

Trumpets in the New Testament

Trumpets were used to gather the people of God together for celebrations. They were used in time of war and to announce judgment. In the wilderness after the Exodus, trumpets were blown to summon God's people to break camp for another day's journey toward the Promised Land. The silver trumpets were used in celebrative instances, the Shofar for serious and solemn times.

In the New Testament trumpeting announces the return of Messiah, or Son of Man as in the follow passage (*Messiah, Son of Man, and Son of God* are synonyms according to usage in the New Testament).

[Matthew 24:29–31](#)

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all of the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

Isaiah 13:10, 34:4; Ezekiel 32:7; Joel 2:10; and Amos 8:9 contain the same kind of language that Jesus used in verse 29; the sun darkened, the moon not giving light, stars falling from heaven, and the powers of heaven shaken. These are at least

images suggesting judgment, images of events that announce the arrival of the Day of the Lord or the day of judgment.

The Son of Man appears then, the Messiah Son of David, the conquering hero of Israel, to bring judgment upon the mourning nations.

Messiah's messengers, the angels, are sent out with a loud trumpet call. The word used in the Greek text is the generic term for trumpet, transliterated *salpiggos*. If the language had been Hebrew would we find *shofar* or the silver trumpets used?

The trumpets are probably, but not conclusively, the silver trumpets. Something utterly new and celebratory is present, the newest of the new, newer than any New Moon—the Kingdom of God has come. No more will anyone pray, “Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven,” because God’s kingdom will be present finally. The chosen of God, the elect, will then be gathered at the sound of the trumpet. The desire of ages is realized.

[1 Corinthians 15:51-52](#)

Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.

Paul described the resurrection of all those who are trusting in Messiah for salvation. Some Christians had already died, but that would not prevent them from being raised to life again. Those, however, who are alive at the return of Jesus will hear a trumpet sound. The dead will be raised, all things will be made new—the Messianic Age will suddenly come in power and great glory.

Among Biblically faithful Christians is a disagreement about the timing of what is called the rapture. Some think it will occur prior to a period of tribulation, others think it will follow a time of tribulation, and still others connect the rapture with the Second Advent itself. In any case, whichever turns out to be the reality, there will be a trumpet blast that announces the final end-time events, including the resurrection of the believers.

[1 Thessalonians 4:16](#)

For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

Here again, Paul describes what will happen at the arrival of the Messiah, and again there is a trumpet, a triumphant blast, and there is resurrection.

Connecting the trumpets

Trumpets figure prominently in the Old Testament. There we find the Shofar and the silver trumpets. In the New Testament there is the trumpet of God calling the elect and announcing resurrection. Are they the same one, in that the Levitical Feast of Trumpets foreshadows the day of judgment and resurrection as seen by the New Testament writers?

The New Testament writers were Jewish, and here in this chapter are quoted Jesus, Matthew, and Paul—all Jews and all steeped in the traditions of the Jewish people, and it must be considered plausible that they were aware of the significance of trumpets and the Feast of Trumpets. At least Jesus and Paul, and probably Matthew, were observant Jews. How often had these men heard the blasts of both the Shofar and the silver trumpets? It is not difficult to conclude that the trumpets of both Old and New Testaments are one and the same.

Is there a biblical warrant?

Is it possible to state that Jesus completed, satisfied, and fulfilled, in His death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and sending of the Holy Spirit something that God had laid the foundation for in the Spring Holidays? Is it also possible to think that the Fall Holidays will also, in essence, be completed, satisfied, and fulfilled in the return of the Messiah and thus usher in judgment, resurrection, and the great celebration that inaugurates the kingdom of God then come?

Are the Fall Holidays a shadow of the things to come? Paul was convinced that Christ is the substance behind the shadows cast by the holidays. Here is how he put it in Colossians 2:16–17:

Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. **These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.**

*May God richly bless you in this season,
Kent and Katie Philpott*