

THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS

Selected Scriptures

Introduction:

- Today – return to the study of the Jewish feasts – Holidays of God.
- A couple of Sundays off – our conference weekend and VM Sunday
- Now we have 3 more feasts or holidays to look at and 3 Sundays before we get to the Advent season, leading up to Christmas.

Review: We need to look back a bit to get our minds back into the cycle of Jewish holidays.

- There are seven main holidays or feasts ordained or established by God throughout the Jewish calendar year.
- Four spring feasts, three of which are wrapped up in an 8-day time period – Passover, Unleavened Bread, First fruits. The fourth feast is Weeks or Pentecost which came seven weeks or 50 days after First fruits.
- The feasts are all shadows of events related to the promised Messiah of Israel. The four spring feasts all find their fulfillment in the first coming of Messiah:
 - Passover – the sacrifice of Jesus for sin, the shedding of his blood – made effectual by the application of the blood by faith.
 - Unleavened Bread – fulfilled by the sinlessness of Christ's sacrifice. In his sinless life, he was qualified to take away our sin.
 - First fruits – Fulfilled in the resurrection of Christ as the first fruits of those who are raised.
 - Pentecost – the coming of the Holy Spirit, the birth of the Church, the breaking down of the wall of partition, making the two, Jew and Gentile, into one body, the Church.
- Following the spring feasts, there is four months, the summer season, before the arrival of the fall feasts. In the prophetic significance of this calendar of the feasts, this summertime represents the current church age—the time in which we now live.
- The remaining three holidays, the fall feasts, find their fulfillment in the second coming of Messiah, when He comes as Judge and King.

This morning we are going to begin our study of those three fall feasts, the holidays of God that foreshadow the Messiah's ministry in his second coming. They all happen in very quick succession in the month of Tishri on the Jewish calendar. The month of Tishri falls in Sept-Oct. on our calendar. This year it began on September 14.

The Names for Rosh Hashanah

The first of these fall feasts is Rosh Hashanah. We need to begin by looking at the names associated with this day. The term Rosh Hashanah is not used in the Scripture, but it is the common name of this holiday among the Jewish people. The term literally means, "the head of the year." The reason Jewish people call this feast Rosh Hashanah or "the head of the year" is because they believe that God created the heavens and the earth on this day. Therefore, this feast and this day has become known as the beginning of the Jewish civil year. It is their New Year's Day.

But there are other names used in the Scripture for this day. In Leviticus 23:24 it is called "*Zicharon Truah*," which literally means "*memorial of blowing*." In Numbers 29:1 it is referred to as "*Yom Truah*," which means, "*day of blowing*." The reason for this is that it is a day for the blowing of the trumpets—the shofar, or ram's horn.

There are a couple of other terms that are used as well, They refer to this day as "the day of remembrance" and "the day of judgment." The rabbis teach that this is a day for all Jews to remember their sins before they come to the Day of Atonement. It is also a day on which they are to pass in judgment to see if their sins will be forgiven or not.

The Meaning of Rosh Hashanah

There are so many aspects to the celebration of Rosh Hashanah, we don't have time to go into detail. Let me just briefly mention a couple of things.

Rosh Hashanah is the beginning of a ten-day period which make up the High Holy Days, which culminates with Yom Kippur—the Day of Atonement—on the tenth of Tishri. Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are referred to as the "Days of Awe" and they form the start and end of the

"Ten Days of Repentance." Jewish tradition says that God writes every person's words, deeds, and thoughts in the Book of Life, which He opens and examines on Rosh Hashanah. If good deeds outnumber the sinful ones for the year, that person's name will be inscribed in the book for another year on Yom Kippur.

Because of this belief, there is a great deal of emphasis on introspection and repentance during the ten days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, on order to be sure that a person's name is inscribed in the Book of Life for the next year.

A second important element of Rosh Hashanah is the blowing of the shofar, which is a trumpet made from the horn of an animal, often a ram. The only reason given in Scripture for the blowing of the trumpet is for a memorial.

"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." (Leviticus 23:24 ESV)

On Rosh Hashanah, the shofar reminds the Jewish people of two things. I want to share some thoughts from Bruce Scott and his pamphlet on this holiday:

First, it reminds them to offer their lives to God. The account of the offering of Isaac plays a major role on Rosh Hashanah and is highly regarded. Not only is it believed that the offering of Isaac occurred on Rosh Hashanah, but Isaac's willingness to be bound and put to death is seen as the greatest example for Jewish martyrdom—their readiness to be sacrificed for their beliefs. Also, when Israel remembers the offering of Isaac on Rosh Hashanah, as well as the merits of all of the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob), God grants them mercy on this day of judgment. It is said that when He hears the sound of the shofar, God is moved to leave His seat of judgment and go to His seat of mercy and forgiveness. As expressed in one of the prayers on Rosh Hashanah, "Do Thou heed from heaven's heights the Shofar-blast, and leave Thy throne of stern justice for Thy seat of mercy. Remember Isaac who was bound on the altar, and for his sake, grant his offspring mercy."

Second, it reminds them to have faith in the future coming of the Messiah and the regathering of Israel back to their homeland (Isa. 27:13). As the high holiday prayer book states, "Our God and God of our fathers, sound the great Shofar for our freedom, set up the banner to gather our exiles, assemble our scattered ones from among the nations, and gather our dispersed from the uttermost parts of the earth."²

All of these reminders for God and Israel show why Rosh Hashanah is also known as the Day of Remembrance.

I am not going to go into the actual practice as it is observed among the Jewish people. I want to move on to look at the significance of this feast in light of the Messiah and future prophecy.

The Messianic Implications of Rosh Hashanah

As we consider the Messianic implications of the feast of trumpets, there are two specific areas I would like to focus on briefly.

1. First, Rosh Hashanah is sometimes referred to as the Day of Judgment, when God judges the deeds of the people to see whether their names should be inscribed in the book of Life for the following year. We know that Jesus is the final judge who will judge "the living and the dead." (2 Tim. 4:1) God does have a book, the Lamb's book of life. But the difference is that the only way to have our names inscribed in the Book of Life is through faith in Jesus as Savior, and then it is permanent. Anyone not found in the Book of Life will be cast into lake of fire according to Rev. 20:15. (*Rose Study Chart*)
2. Second, the Rosh Hashanah story of Abraham offering up his son Isaac forms a perfect backdrop to show us how God offered up His own Son—Jesus. God instructed Abraham to sacrifice his son, his "only son" (Gen. 22:2). In the same way, God "gave his only begotten Son" (Jn. 3:16) as a sacrifice. God told Abraham to perform this deed on one of the mountains of Moriah (Gen. 22:2), later identified as being in Jerusalem (2 Chr. 3:1). It is this same area at which the sacrifice of God's Son took place (Mt. 16:21). Abraham laid the wood for the sacrifice upon his son Isaac (Gen. 22:6). God laid a wooden cross upon His Son for His sacrifice (Jn. 19:17). Abraham anticipated that in order for God to keep His promise, He would

have to raise Isaac from the dead ("I and the lad will...come again to you," Gen. 22:5). God raised His own Son from the dead (Acts 2:24). Abraham's son was given a substitute (the ram caught in a thicket, Gen. 22:13). God's Son **was** our substitute (Rom. 8:32). Abraham told his son that "God will provide himself a lamb" (Gen.22:8). God's Son was that Lamb, the one "who taketh away the sin of the world" (Jn. 1:29). *(Bruce Scott, Holiday Series)*

There is also a strong prophetic significance to the feast of trumpets. The sounding of the trumpet or shofar is a call to repentance. It is a call to the nation of Israel to come together in preparation for judgment, a time to repent and turn to God. As we look at the call of the trumpet in prophecy there are a couple of suggestions as to how this is fulfilled.

Arnold Fruchtenbaum sees the trumpet call as being fulfilled in the Rapture when the trumpet of God sounds and the saints of the church age are caught up to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4:16-18). However, this is one case where I do not agree with Fruchtenbaum.

I agree with Pastor Mark Hitchcock, who says, "My view is that the Feast of Trumpets will find its fulfillment in the regathering of the Jewish people at the end of the Tribulation." The Bible tell us that a trumpet will sound when the Jews are finally regathered to their land.

"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 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." (Mt 24:29-31 ESV)

The entire context of Matthew 24 is Jewish and the "elect" refers primarily to Jewish believers who survive the end-times tribulation. This is also the time when the Jewish people, as a nation, will turn to God in repentance and, as Paul says in Romans 11, "And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, 'The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will

banish ungodliness from Jacob; and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins." (Ro 11:26-27 ESV)

The fest of trumpets is a yearly call to repentance for the Jewish people. One day, the final trumpet will again call them to repentance and they will come, recognizing their Messiah and King.

Conclusion

Well, what about us? What does this have to say to us, as believers today? As we consider Rosh Hashanah and the annual call to a period of repentance in preparation for judgment, I am so thankful that we have the hope that comes from having a Savior.

I close with some final thoughts from Bruce Scott and his pamphlet on the feast of trumpets.

The Rosh Hashanah liturgy declares, "There is no advocate of righteousness to plead our cause" before the Judge of the Universe. As Biblical Christians, we see Jesus the Messiah as that righteous advocate.

"My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (1Jo 2:1 ESV)

Through Christ's sacrifice, our names can be permanently inscribed in the Book of Life and we can receive eternal mercy. Remember the words of Paul to Titus:

"he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life." (Tit 3:5-7 ESV)

And so, like the sound of a trumpet the call rings out, "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. 10:13). For all who would believe it, this is the good news of Rosh Hashanah.