

What is the trumpet of the Lord?

"When the trumpet of the Lord shall sound, and time shall be no more, and the morning breaks, eternal, bright, and fair ..." Most of us have been singing these words for a very long time. What should we think about when we consider the trumpet of the Lord?

The trumpet of the Lord is associated with many prophetic events in the Bible. The trumpet of the Lord will sound at the time of the Rapture, along with a shout from the Lord, **"with the voice of the archangel."**(1 Thessalonians 4:16) This trumpet blast will signal the resurrection of the dead church saints. (1 Corinthians 15:51-52) Seven years later, the trumpet will sound to resurrect the Old Testament saints and dead Tribulation saints at the end of the Tribulation when the Lord returns in all of His glory to establish His kingdom. (Daniel 12:2-3; Matthew 24:31)

During the Tribulation, the Lord will send forth seven angels with seven trumpets. When they sound their trumpets, God's wrathful judgment will fall upon this earth. (Revelation 8:2-9:21; 11:15-19)

All of the references to trumpets in these prophetic texts are significant, and can help us understand the nature and time of the end-time events. Therefore, it is important for us to answer four significant questions about the trumpet of the Lord.

What is the trumpet of the Lord?

The trumpet in all of these prophetic texts will be a shofar --- a horn made from a curved horn of a ram or ibex. This horn could give a good, clear, loud, distinct tone that could be heard from a distance.

To the ancient Israeli believer, this horn was associated with the voice of God. Like the shofar, God's powerful voice always gave them a good, clear, authoritative message. When trumpets sounded loudly at Mount Sinai at the giving of the law, the children of Israel connected it to the voice of God, thus they trembled. (Exodus 19:16-19)

Fifteen centuries later, when the Apostle John was on the island of Patmos, he identified the voice of the Lord with a trumpet. (Revelation 1:10) Later in his report about his journey into the Lord's day, John wrote, **"After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which much be hereafter."**(Revelation 4:1) Once again, this trumpet was associated with the voice of the Lord Jesus.

It is worth noting that the Lord instructed Moses that the sounding of the shofar was given to Israel, as **"an ordinance forever throughout your generations."**(Numbers 10:8) As we shall see in this article, the sounding of the trumpet of the Lord has a significant message for the children of the Lord, and especially Israel.

How was the trumpet sounded?

The congregation of Israel was given instruction concerning the sounding of the shofar. The time and place of the sounding, the length and number of blasts, and the number of trumpets sounding were all significant. When God gave Israel specific instructions concerning the unique method of the military attack against Jericho, the shofar played a significant role in God's instructions. Read Joshua 6:1-6.

Many centuries later, when the Apostle Paul communicated with the church of Corinth concerning the gift of speaking in tongues, he referenced the use of the shofar. In the church at Corinth, immature believers (see 1 Corinthians 3:1) had elevated the sign gifts above the teaching and preaching of the Word of God. Paul instructed them in 1 Corinthians 14 that these sign gifts were inferior to the greater gifts of teaching and preaching. Notice what he said in verses 6-12: **"Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or knowledge, or by prophesying [preaching], or by doctrine [teaching]? And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet gives an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to battle? So, likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? For ye shall speak into the air. There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification. Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me. Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church."** Paul's divine instruction reminded the church that God's message must be clear, like the sounding of the shofar.

Why will the Lord use a trumpet to call us home in the Rapture?

In ancient Biblical days, the shofar had four major applications:

- (1) The shofar was used as a call to worship. The priests blew the trumpet for sacrifices and during the feast days. When we are raptured it will be a call to worship in heaven. This worship service is recorded for us in Revelation 4-5.
- (2) It was used as an instrument of instruction. The trumpet was used to call the assembly together, to make camp, and to signal marching orders. The trumpet of the Lord will be the final call for the church's marching orders. It will be our retreat from earth - and our call to join Jesus in the air for our flight to heaven.
- (3) The ram's horn was an instrument of time. It signaled the new moons (the beginning of the Jewish calendar month), new beginnings (the Jewish new year and the year of Jubilee), and the coronation of a new king. When the trumpet of the Lord

sounds at the Rapture, it will be the signal of a new beginning for the church. We will be joined to our bridegroom, Jesus Christ. (Revelation 19:7-9) It will be a new beginning for our Lord. He will be crowned as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords – and will be known as “the Lion of the tribe of Judah.” (Revelation 5:5)

(4) This unique instrument was used to announce war. The shofar sounded the alarm that the enemy had been sighted, as a military charge, and for instructions during the military campaign. When the trumpet sounds for the church, it will be the sound of retreat for the church. Our spiritual warfare upon this earth will be over. However, for those who are left behind, it will signal that the final campaign of the spiritual warfare that has been raging for about 6,000 years will be entering its final phase.

What does this tell us about the time of the Rapture?

Some people have concluded that the Rapture will take place with the sounding of the seventh trumpet mentioned in Revelation 11:15. They have arrived at this conclusion because in 1 Corinthians 15:52, the Bible declares that the Rapture will be “at the last trump.” They believe that this “last trump” is a reference to the last of the seven trumpets mentioned in the Book of Revelation. However, the Bible student must remember that the Apostle Paul wrote the Book of 1 Corinthians in 55 A.D., while the Apostle John wrote the book of Revelation at least 40 years later, around 95 A.D. The Apostle Paul would not have been pointing the church at Corinth to a Biblical reference that had not yet been revealed.

Remember that the sounding of a shofar was given to Israel, as “an ordinance forever throughout your generations.” (Numbers 10:8) While the Rapture is for the church, it will also be a clear sounding from the Lord that the following seven years have direct application to Israel. Those who have studied Daniel 9:24-27, will remember that about 2,500 years ago, the angel Gabriel informed Daniel of 70 groups of seven years each [490 years] that were given to the Jewish people. Daniel was informed that 483 of these years would lead up to the rejection of the Messiah. After Israel’s rejection of Jesus Christ in 32 A.D., God’s prophetic clock in heaven stopped, with seven years remaining. That final seven years is now identified as the Tribulation Period. The final seven years, just like the first 483 years, will be for Israel. Therefore, when the trumpet of the Lord sounds, it will signal the end of the predominately Gentile church age, and the renewal of God’s program for Israel. This is the meaning of Romans 11:25-26: “For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.”

Therefore, for these reasons, and many more, the Rapture must take place before the Tribulation begins. The Tribulation is not for the church, but for the completion of God’s work with Israel before the beginning of His earthly kingdom for 1,000

years. The trumpet of the Lord at the Rapture will mark a new beginning for the church in heaven, and for Israel on the earth.

Like the watchman on the wall in ancient Israel, we must sound the trumpet of God's Word to warn sinners to repent, and turn from their wicked ways. (Ezekiel 33:1-9) They need to be saved, and get ready for the trumpet of the Lord that will call His children home to heaven at any moment!

As one looks around and sees the prophetic stage set for the Tribulation Period, he has to wonder if the sounding of the trumpet of the Lord is near. Like the watchman on the wall, it is our moral and ethical responsibility to warn this present generation of the approaching war that is ahead.

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Unique solution ID: #1008

Author: n/a

Last update: 2015-05-26 15:24