

THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS: A MEMORIAL

by

Robert R. Congdon

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Author: Robert R. Congdon  
Degree: Master of Divinity  
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Adviser: James E. Eisenbraun

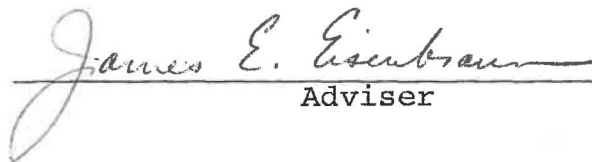
The Feast of Trumpets is one of seven God-appointed feasts in Leviticus 23 and also recorded in Numbers 29. The purpose and significance of the feast is not stated in the Scriptures by God, but through a study of the meaning of the words "memorial," "sabbath," "convocation," and "a sounding of trumpets," it is determined that the feast is a memorial of remembering, either by Israel or God of an unknown event, person, or action. It is to be perpetuated forever as a memory device which will stir a response in the remembering person's life.

Historically, three scriptural events occurred on the Feast of Trumpets. Each event had in common a return of the people of Israel to the Law of God, including Temple worship and sacrificing. At the initiation of these events on the Feast of Trumpets, a restoration of the Feast of Tabernacles also began in Israel.

This biblical feast is not the Jewish civil New Year as it is a religious feast and part of the Jewish Sacred Calendar.

While there are many views held as to the meaning of the feast and the proper method of celebration, not one purpose or significance suggested by men is conclusive. Apparently God has allowed the meaning to be lost or merely forgotten until some future date. Perhaps this date is the Millennium.

Accepted by the Faculty of Grace Theological Seminary  
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Adviser



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## CHAPTER I

### FEAST OF TRUMPETS, A MEMORIAL

The Feast of Trumpets is the fifth feast of God's appointed times listed in Leviticus 23. The Lord spoke to Moses and proclaimed the observances which the Jewish people were to follow. The Feast of Trumpets is specifically instituted in Leviticus 23:23-25. Moses again repeats these instructions in Numbers 29:1-6 in the context of his directions to Joshua on the plains of Moab. Four English translations of these two passages are presented at the end of this chapter for comparative use. The four are the King James Translation, the New American Standard Bible, the Jewish Publication Society of America's translation of the Torah, and the author's translation.

The elements presented in both passages indicate that the source of the instructions was the LORD, Moses received the message, and was to instruct the sons of Israel. This Moses did, both at Mt. Sinai and at the close of his life on the plains of Moab. The text clearly indicates the month and day of the feast and the people's obligation. The significant difference occurs not in the translations of a single passage but between the two passages themselves. The concept of remembering is introduced in Leviticus 23, while not in Numbers 29. The

purpose and significance of this feast may lie in this concept of remembering. Therefore, one must first establish what God intended with this word when the instruction was first given to Moses, rather than the repeated instruction on the plains of Moab. It is assumed here that the reference in Numbers 29 is a restatement to the people of Israel some forty years later.

The entire concept of "memorial" (KJV), "reminder" (NASB), "commemorated" (Torah), and "remembering" (author) carries with it a presupposition as to the meaning based on current English usage. Webster defines "memorial" as "(adj.) serving as a remembrance. (noun) anything meant to help people remember a person, event, etc., as a monument, holiday, etc."<sup>1</sup> From this, one pictures memorial stones, or trying to remember an important day or incident from the past, the idea of bringing "back to mind by an effort, to think again."<sup>2</sup> This is the English meaning of memorial or remembering. It may not fully encompass the meaning of the Hebrew term.

An examination of the Hebrew word, **זִכָּרוֹן**, must be made. This word is a masculine noun meaning "memorial, reminder, remembrance."<sup>3</sup> The root of **זִכָּרוֹן** is the verb **זָכַר**, which has many facets of meaning. The primary

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<sup>1</sup>David B. Buralnik, ed., Webster's New World Dictionary (New York: World Publishing Co., 1959), p. 339.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 458.

<sup>3</sup>F. Brown, et al., Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910), p. 272.

meaning is "to remember, recall, call to mind usually as affecting present feelings, thought or action."<sup>1</sup> The verb form substantiates the English concept of an aid to the memory with the person remembering being stirred into action.

The LXX translation uses the Greek word, *μνημοσυρον*, a "memorial (that by which the memory of any person or thing is preserved, a remembrance)."<sup>2</sup> Thayer further states that *μνημοσυρον* as used in Acts 10:4 indicates that Cornelius' prayers have "become known to God, so that he heeds and is about to help thee. . . ."<sup>3</sup> Here Cornelius stirs God's mindfulness so that God then acts in Cornelius' life in the present and immediate future by sending Peter. He goes on to reiterate the sacrificial element in the LXX use of the word as a means of commending the offerer to God's remembrance, citing Leviticus 2:9,16 and Numbers 5:26.<sup>4</sup> The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible states that the facets of meaning for this word include "record, be mindful, come to mind."<sup>5</sup> Perhaps this use is well summarized by the concept that "for the Hebrew the recollection of the past means that what is recalled becomes a present reality, which in turn controls the will."<sup>6</sup> Clearly the predominant

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 269.

<sup>2</sup>Joseph Henry Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977), p. 416.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, s.v. "Memorial, Memory," by G. Henton Davies, 3:344.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

meaning is of an event which is called to mind as a memory. Hastings states, "a memorial event . . . 'memory' is also used for remembrance, the retaining of the past in memory. . . ." <sup>1</sup> citing Esther 9:28 as an example.

In addition, the word is a sacrificial term "which brings the offerer into remembrance before God or which brings God into honorable remembrance with the offerer (cf. Num. 5:26)." <sup>2</sup> This additional concept brings in the question of who does the remembering; is it the people remembering God or God remembering His people? This will be examined in greater detail in Chapter V. Funderburk indicates that the verb **זָכַר** basically means "to prick, pierce, penetrate, hence of impressing on the memory . . . the object of memorials is to preserve and perpetuate the most valuable in persons and incidents. Every memorial commemorates something, otherwise it loses its significance and becomes worthless." <sup>3</sup> It is this point which presents the greatest difficulty with this word in the context of Leviticus 23:23-25. If this feast is to prick the memory, the meaning must remain to the present or it has failed in its purpose as a memorial. Many a memorial stone stands in parks across this country, with no one remembering what it is to recall;

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<sup>1</sup>A Dictionary of the Bible, s.v. "Memorial, Memory," by J. Hastings, 3:338.

<sup>2</sup>The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, s.v. "Memorial, Memory," by W. L. Walker, 3:2030.

<sup>3</sup>Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible, s.v. "Memorial, Memory," by G. B. Funderburk, 4:179.

as a result its purpose is worthless and it remains only a curiosity of the past. The question which must be examined is whether the Feast of Trumpets is just such a memorial or is it relevant today as a means of bringing back a memory which will result in a response that will direct a man's action in the future. Again the conclusion of this question must wait for Chapter V.

The word "memorial" has two aspects. First, it serves as a reminder of a past action, person, or event. Second, it stirs the one remembering to action. The Feast of Trumpets will be seen to be just such a memorial.

These two aspects are brought forth by three characteristics of the biblical use of memorial. They are: each memorial must have a symbol or object which is used as a memory device or aid; each must remember an actual event, action, or person; each is to be recalled, remembered, or perpetuated in the future.

The first characteristic is the symbol or object used to recall, i.e., the memory device. In Exodus 3:15, God is covenanting with Moses that He will use Moses to bring about the redemption of Israel from Egypt. Upon being asked who He was, God said that His name, or "my memorial-name," is the LORD. This new designation for God would be used by the people in two ways. The first way is to express "the nature and operations of God, and that God would manifest in deeds the nature expressed in His name."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, The Pentateuch,

Thus, the name would be a memory device used forever as a means of reminding them of God's covenant with Moses and the people. It is used similarly in Psalm 135:13 and Hosea 12:5. The second way it is used is that it will "be cultically remembered by his people throughout the generations."<sup>1</sup> It will become a name or medium to call upon God in their worship. In both uses it recalls to the people's minds the LORD and the memory of that occasion with Moses and the people.

A feast is said to be a memorial in Exodus 12:14 (Passover); Leviticus 23:24 (Feast of Trumpets); and Esther 9:28 (Purim). Stones are said to be memorials in Exodus 28:12,29; 39:7; and Joshua 4:7. Trumpets, plating of gold, gold, crowns, walls, are also used in Numbers 10:10; 16:40; 31:54; Nehemiah 2:20; and Zechariah 6:14, respectively as memory devices. For a memory to be perpetuated forever, man must have a symbol or object to stir him to remember an event, action, or person in the past. The object must be a present reality in order to stir the memory.

The event, action, or person remembered in the Scripture is often God's acts or preservation of Israel. For example, the Passover pointed back to God's saving of His nation from Egypt. Purim is based on tradition which points back to God's saving of the Hebrews from destruction

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vol. 2, trans. James Martin in Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., reprint 5, 1978), p. 442.

<sup>1</sup>Brevard S. Childs, The Book of Exodus, OTL Series (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974), p. 77.

by Haman. Shepherd states that the blowing of trumpets "was a memorial of God's grace when He substituted a ram to be sacrificed instead of his son, Isaac (Genesis 22)."<sup>1</sup> God's saving action is certainly worthy of memorial, as of the remembering of God Himself. Numbers 16:40, Korah's sin and God's punishment; Numbers 31:54, the slaughter of Midian; and Psalm 9:6, the remembering of God's destruction of enemies, are all events which are a memory of God's actions in the past and the memory is perpetuated today by memory devices.

The third characteristic is that each action is to continue to be remembered forever. It is not to be allowed to be forgotten forever. In Exodus 3:15; 12:14; 28:12,29; Joshua 4:7; Esther 9:28, the idea of perpetual memory is indicated by stating that the memory is to be continued "to all generations," "every generation," "throughout generations," "continually" and "forever."

Therefore, the noun **זִכָּרוֹן** is a device or object which recalls a past event, usually of an action taken by God involving Israel, which is to be remembered forever. The Feast of Trumpets is a memorial, as stated in Leviticus 23:23-25, and its significance in light of being a memorial will be examined in Chapter V.

In Leviticus 23, Moses states that "you shall have a rest" or "sabbath," while the Numbers 29 passage speaks

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<sup>1</sup>Coulson Shepherd, Jewish Holy Days--Their Prophetic and Christian Significance (New York: Loizeaux Bros., 1961), p. 60.



of "no laborious work." Once again, the first instruction in Leviticus seems to contain more meaning in regard to the Feast of Trumpets. Leviticus 23:24 used the masculine noun **שַׁבָּת**, meaning sabbath observance.<sup>1</sup>

In this passage the word is used in a way which is unique to Leviticus 23. The word **שַׁבָּת** is used in a double form of the root word, i.e., **שַׁבָּת וְשַׁבָּת** in all biblical usages except in Leviticus 23. In this passage it is used singularly with the Feasts of Trumpets, verse 24, and of Tabernacles, verse 39. This may suggest a particular use intended for these two feasts. This will be examined below.

The word comes from the root verb **שָׁבַת**, which means "cease, desist, or rest."<sup>2</sup> This fulfills the idea contained in Numbers 29 of ceasing from work. Unger defines it as a cessation from exertion.<sup>3</sup> Biblically, the term is used of God's resting or ceasing from creation. Certainly God was not fatigued but simply ceased from further creation, the work being completed. Thereafter, as commanded in Exodus 20:8, the concept of a sabbath was one of cessation of daily labor and a separation (holy) from the other days. It was a day to worship God. Edersheim states that David's eating of showbread (Mark 2:27) shows that the

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<sup>1</sup>BDB, p. 992.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 991.

<sup>3</sup>Merrill F. Unger, Unger's Bible Dictionary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1961), p. 939.

Sabbath-Law was not one merely of rest, but of rest for worship. The Service of the Lord was the object in view. The priest worked on the Sabbath, because this service was the object of the Sabbath and David was allowed to eat . . . because he pleaded that he was on the service of the Lord . . . The Sabbath was intended for man, to serve God.<sup>1</sup>

Edersheim's thorough discussion of Mark 2:27 seems to demonstrate best that the Sabbath was a time of ceasing from one's daily routine and worshipping God through service to Him. Clearly, at this feast this concept was to apply, only the Torah introduces the idea of "complete rest" which seems to reflect the pharisaic concept of no labor of any kind. Here, the Numbers passage conveys the limited concept of not working at your occupation on the Sabbath. Kellogg also holds this idea, since he says that the Sabbath is "marked by abstinence from all ordinary business of life, and a holy convocation."<sup>2</sup>

The unique use of the word, שָׁבַת, in the singular is not discussed by commentators, reflecting either a lack of observation on their part or the belief that it is not a significant point. The author believes the former well may be the cause because this passage is not considered among the significant passages of Leviticus 23. However, it is truly a unique usage in the Bible. One must speculate rather than be dogmatic in his statements of the purpose of this irregular usage. The fact that the only two

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<sup>1</sup>Alfred Edersheim, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah (MacDonald Publishing Co., n.d.), p. 348.

<sup>2</sup>S. H. Kellogg, The Expositor's Bible, the Book of Leviticus (New York: A. C. Armstrong and Sons, 1891), p. 462.

usages of this form occur in two feasts and these both, in the fifth and seventh feasts in the lists of the feasts, may provide a clue. Both feasts occur in the seventh month, a solemn month in which men must stop to consider God, primarily because of the significance of the Day of Atonement (the sixth feast). Possible there is a linkage of these two feasts, forming a set period of time, perhaps like the beginning and end of a time period. All these ideas are only a tentative explanation. As God has not revealed the purpose of this usage, one is limited and must not go beyond saying that this feast is a unique Sabbath, a time of cessation from normal labor, marked out in a unique way.

Two additional words must be considered in these passages. The first is **κλήρω**, translated "convocation." BDB defines this masculine noun as a "convocation, convoking, reading . . . a sacred assembly."<sup>1</sup> They add the concept of reading based on Nehemiah 8:8. The root verb is "to call or proclaim, read aloud." In the KJV it is variously translated as "assembly," "calling," "convocation," and "reading."<sup>2</sup> Unger defines it as a "holy assembly, i.e., a meeting of the people for the worship of Jehovah."<sup>3</sup> The LXX uses, **κληρη**, from **καλεω**, "an invitation, a holy calling."<sup>4</sup> The underlying meaning implies a proclamation

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<sup>1</sup>BDB, p. 896.

<sup>2</sup>Robert Young, Analytical Concordance to the Bible (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Co., n.d.), p. 27.

<sup>3</sup>Unger, Unger's Bible Dictionary, p. 219.

<sup>4</sup>Thayer, Lexicon of the New Testament, p. 350.

of the Gospel (Rom. 8:28; 1 Cor. 1:24; Jude 1), the calling of people (Rom. 1:6), and apostles (Rom. 1:1; 1 Cor. 1:1). The New Testament use of the word is that of God "calling" or "inviting" men. In the Old Testament the same concept is principally used. In Isaiah 1:13 the word is used to say that God does not want rebellious Israel to be called together. The context includes the appointed feasts (vs. 14). The idea is that the calling of the assembly is to be done by God to righteous people and it should not be done to rebellious people. Shepherd adds that,

It is interesting to note the meaning of the Hebrew word translated "feast." The root idea of the word carries the thought of "to keep an appointment." God made appointments with His covenant people to meet with them at certain times.<sup>1</sup>

This word,  $\text{קָרָא}$ , is used for the assembling of the camp when God was to move the Hebrews in the wilderness (Num. 10:2). Finally, in Nehemiah 8:8, the people were called to hear the reading of the Law. While the situation in the wilderness was not a religious gathering per se, all other cases were. God's purpose was to lead His people to the Promised Land; thus, even Numbers 10:2 would have some religious significance. BDB states "the term technically in P for religious gathering on the Sabbath and certain sacred days" is  $\text{קָרָא}$ , which signifies a calling, proclaiming, inviting by God to His people to come together for His purpose.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Shepherd, Jewish Holy Days, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup>BDB, p. 896.

The last word for consideration is שִׁירָה, a feminine noun meaning "shout" or "blast of war." It is from the verb root שִׁיר, meaning "to raise a shout or give blast with clarion or horn."<sup>1</sup> The LXX word σαλπίζω, means "a sounding of a trumpet."<sup>2</sup> Thus, the word means either a sound, for example, the sound from a trumpet or the shout or cry signifying a signal, or call of a horn. In the Scriptures, the context of this word always includes trumpets as opposed to any other instrument. The word is used on occasions of God's judgments either for or against Israel. His judgments include Jericho's destruction, involving trumpets in Joshua 6:5,20; the judgment against Rabbath of the sons of Ammon, signaled by trumpet blast, Jeremiah 49:2; the slaughter of Midian, with trumpets blown in Numbers 31:6. In each situation the cry with trumpet call was for judgment. BDB indicates that the trumpet call was for alarm of war, war cry, in eight passages; a blast for march in seven passages; a shout of joy in one passage.<sup>3</sup> Thus, a slight majority of the scriptural usage of this word is a shout or trumpet blast for either marching or war, often involving shouts of joy at the judgment of God. An aspect of joyfulness at an anticipated judgment of God or victory is recorded in 1 Samuel 4 where the Ark is brought into the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 929.

<sup>2</sup>Thayer, Lexicon of the New Testament, p. 567.

<sup>3</sup>BDB, p. 930.

Israelites' camp. Here both Israel and the Philistines recognized that the Ark represented to Israel God's presence. The Israelites believed that the presence of the Ark would give them victory in the battle with the Philistines, thus they shouted. The Philistines recognized this sense of potential military victory and the shout caused them to be fearful as seen in verse seven.

In comparing the translations of Leviticus 23:23-25 and Numbers 29:1, it has been shown that the Feast of Trumpets is remarkable because it is a memorial, a memory device used to perpetuate the memory of some event, action, or person forever and, based on the usage, should stir some response from the one remembering. Further, it is a time of coming together in a response to God's call or convocation, a time for ceasing from the daily labor, having been initiated by a shout or blast of trumpets. Gesenius calls it a day of memorial, a celebration festival.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the words used to designate this feast suggest joy or celebration in response to God. It should be noted that based on the specific words considered, the event, action, or person remembered is not mentioned. For this reason, the meaning or purpose of this feast must be determined by a thorough study of its use in Scripture and Jewish life. The author presupposes that if the meaning has been lost for eternity, then the basic idea of the feast, that of being a memorial, has

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<sup>1</sup>William Gesenius, Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1849), p. 279.

failed in its purpose. It is possible for the memory to have been lost to modern man. This can only be concluded after studying the use of the feast in Scripture.

PARALLEL TRANSLATIONS

LEVITICUS 23:23-25

King James Version:

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,  
Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the  
seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall  
ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trum-  
pets, a holy convocation.

New American Standard Bible:

Again the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,  
Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, "In the  
seventh month on the first of the month, you shall  
have a rest, a reminder by blowing (of trumpets), a  
holy convocation."

The Torah:

The LORD spoke to Moses, saying:  
Speak to the Israelite people thus: In the seventh  
month, on the first day of the month, you shall  
observe complete rest, a sacred occasion commemor-  
ated with loud blasts.

Suggested Translation by Author:

And the LORD spoke again unto Moses, saying,  
Speak unto the sons of Israel saying, in the seventh



month on the first of the month, you shall have a sabbath, a remembering of blowing, a holy convocation.

#### NUMBERS 29:1

##### King James Version:

And in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, ye shall have a holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work: It is a day of blowing the trumpets unto you.

##### New American Standard Bible:

Now in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall also have a holy convocation; you shall do no laborious work. It will be to you a day for blowing trumpets.

##### The Torah:

In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall observe a sacred occasion: you shall not work at your occupations. You shall observe it as a day when the horn is sounded.

##### Suggested Translation by Author:

Now in the seventh month in the first (day) of the month, you shall have a holy convocation, you shall do no laborious work at all, it will be a day of blasting (or shouting or sounding) to you.

## CHAPTER II

### A NEW YEAR'S FEAST, YES OR NO?

The modern Hebrew celebrates a feast called Rosh Hashanah and calls it a New Year's feast. This is celebrated in the early Fall. The Scriptures call this time the "seventh" month. A study must be made to determine if the Feast of Trumpets is a New Year's feast or not. If it is a New Year's feast, the significance of the feast is merely a celebration to bring in the new year, differing little from other cultural New Year's celebrations, and the significance of the feast is clear. If the feast is not a New Year's celebration, then God must have planned it as a memorial of a different nature and the significance must still be determined. Further, the feast would signify more than a division of time-keeping, i.e., one year from another, and thus have a possible religious significance. This question can be solved by a study of the Hebrew Calendar.

Throughout Hebrew history there is evidence of at least five calendar designations for the months of the year. The five systems are all based on lunar time-keeping. The Hebrew calendar is based on a seven-day week which reflects God's work in the Creation. The months are based on the appearance of the moon. The Hebrew begins his day at night,

or more properly, just after sunset. This is based on the Hebrew belief that the world came out of darkness (Genesis 1:2). The start of the day was traditionally based on the clear appearance of three stars in the sky.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the hour varied from season to season, yet the determining of the start of the day was based on observation rather than a calculated pattern. The Hebrews did not name the days of the week, rather they were designated by ordinal numbers. The term "sabbath" was not the name of the seventh day but a sacred designation.<sup>2</sup>

This seven-day week or period was observed in other cultures for special occasions such as Gudea's temple dedication at Lagash in Sumer, but

no other calendar insists on the eternal and unalterable succession of seven-day periods, independent of all earthly or astronomical considerations. Originally perhaps conceived as an expression of God's sovereignty over time, the Sabbath day became an inalienable rest-day and therefore a uniquely Israelite contribution to the social legislation of the world.<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, the Hebrew held his week in terms of his God's command, and not as a cultural idea established by man. God designated a week of seven days, the Hebrew obeyed and observed it.

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<sup>1</sup>R. Brasch, The Judaic Heritage--Its Teachings, Philosophy and Symbols (New York: David McKay Co., 1969), p. 23.

<sup>2</sup>Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary, s.v. "Calendar," by G. B. Funderburk, p. 138.

<sup>3</sup>Bernard Jacob Bamberger, The Torah: A Modern Commentary, Leviticus (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1979), p. xxx.

The months have had a succession of names, but have always been based on the new moon. According to Funderburk, the word "moon" was synonymous with month in the common parlance of Moses' day.<sup>1</sup> The Leviticus 23 text bears this out for **שִׁבְעָה** can refer to "new moon" or "month" or the **שִׁבְעָה שִׁבְעָה**, "seventh new moon."<sup>2</sup> Thus, the text labels the months by ordinal numbers and the counting of them is based on new moons and not the period of the sun.

The importance attached to the first of the new moon is seen in the method of declaring the new month by the Hebrew. During the Roman period, it was the duty of the Rabbinical council in Jerusalem to declare the new month. This was based on the testimony of two reliable witnesses and upon checking astronomical calculation; an official message was then sent out.<sup>3</sup> This reflects the Hebrew attitude showing their traditional care in determining the start of the month and the importance attached to the start of the month.

Many scholars believe that the first calendar or designation of months used by the Hebrews was the agricultural or civil calendar. This calendar begins the year in the Fall. The civil year claims a more remote antiquity, reckoning from the Creation, which traditionally took place

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<sup>1</sup>Funderburk, "Calendar," p. 139.

<sup>2</sup>BDB, p. 294.

<sup>3</sup>Brasch, Judaic Heritage, p. 24.

in the autumn (3760 B.C.).<sup>1</sup> Cited as evidence of this is Exodus 23:16, where the context is that of harvest of first-fruits, "Feast of the Ingathering at the end of the year."<sup>2</sup> The Feast of the Ingathering is the Feast of Tabernacles which occurs ten days after the Feast of Trumpets. This reference indicates that Moses held that the month of ingathering was the end of the year. Bloch states further,

An ancient farmer's calendar unearthed at Gezer, marks the succession of the months with regards to the various tasks which a farmer has to perform in the course of the year. It opens with the fall season, which is obviously the beginning of the agricultural year. The task indicated for the first month is "ingathering," the identical chore mentioned in the Bible for the month of Tishri.<sup>3</sup>

Albright locates the date of this calendar as 925 B.C.<sup>4</sup> Noth holds that the autumnal grape harvest festival was celebrated at the turn of the year.<sup>5</sup>

That there existed an agricultural or civil calendar seems likely and that Moses did refer to it on occasion must be conceded. This does not link the autumn festival to a New Year festival, "we must note straight way that in the oldest cultic calendars there is no trace of a New Year

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<sup>1</sup>Funderburk, "Calendar," p. 140.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Abraham P. Bloch, The Biblical and Historical Background of the Jewish Holy Days (New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1978), pp. 18-19.

<sup>4</sup>W. F. Albright, "The Gezer Calendar," in vol. 1 of The Ancient Near East, ed. James B. Pritchard (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1958), p. 209.

<sup>5</sup>Martin Noth, Leviticus, OTL Series (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965), pp. 172-73.

festival coming into prominence in connection with the autumn festival."<sup>1</sup> Further, Exodus 23:16 and 34:22 do show that Moses himself referred to the end of the harvest as the end of the year, but his other references to the feast give a chronological designation of the "seventh month." This is explained by the second Hebrew calendar, which is called the Sacred Calendar. This calendar began numbering the months from the Spring, with the commencement being the Passover Feast. Josephus held that "Moses ordered that the year of holy days and religious festivals begin with Nisan, the month in which the Exodus transpired, but he retained the old order of year for buying and selling and secular affairs."<sup>2</sup> This may explain Moses' double references to two calendars.

The Sacred Calendar numbered the months with no names, only ordinal numbers. This follows the procedure followed with the days of the week. The use of numbers must be taken as literal numerical values which suggest their order. Thus, seven is the month that occurs seventh after the first or beginning month. "The number seven should be regarded as a literal mathematical value unless the context . . . conveys the additional idea of 'complete.'"<sup>3</sup> While Davis is trying to prevent the symbolical abuse of the number seven, he also argues for the literal sense in Scripture.

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<sup>1</sup>Brasch, Judaic Heritage, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup>Funderburk, Zondervan Bible Dictionary, p. 140.

<sup>3</sup>John J. Davis, Biblical Numerology (Winona Lake, Indiana: BMH Books, 1971), p. 156.

Therefore, the seventh consecutive month of the Sacred Calendar cannot be called the month beginning the year and the first day of that month the New Year's day. The Sacred Calendar consists of twelve months with a thirteenth month added for the leap-year. There are seven leap-years in every nineteen-year cycle.

Funderburk states that this calendar was instituted by Moses following the Exodus.<sup>1</sup> Scripturally, the numerical month names are used in the book of Leviticus. Bloch states that "Following the Exodus from Egypt, the month of Nisan was proclaimed as the first month of the year (Exodus 12:1). (According to Targum Jonathan b. Uziel on 1 Kings 8:2, Tishri was the first month of the year prior to the exodus.) Nisan thus came to mark the beginning of the year."<sup>2</sup> The month of Nisan is the Sacred Calendar month "one" and civil calendar month "seven." Josephus in Antiquities 3.10 states, "In the month of Xanticus, which is by us called Nisan, and is the beginning of the year. . . ."<sup>3</sup> It appears, based on the book of Exodus, that God instituted through Moses the Sacred Calendar, which begins the year as Spring rather than Fall and this occurred at the time of the Exodus.

The names Tishri and Nisan, mentioned above, reflect a post-exilic calendar system used by the Hebrews and

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<sup>1</sup>Funderburk, Zondervan Bible Dictionary, p. 140.

<sup>2</sup>Bloch, Biblical and Historical Background of the Jewish Holy Days, p. 18.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

Scripture in Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, and Zechariah. The names were adapted from the Babylonian calendar and influenced the Hebrews. In Esther 8:9 there is a correlation between the named post-exilic Babylonian month and the Sacred Calendar, "in the third month (that is the month of Sivan)." Thus, the book of Esther emphasizes the Hebrew "third month" and notes the Babylonian name, showing that both were known and used in this period. The Talmud confirms that this calendar was adapted from the Babylonians.<sup>1</sup> Nehemiah preferred the Babylonian names while Ezra used Judean numbers with only one exception. Clearly, both calendars were in existence during the post-exilic period and considered the start of the year to be Spring.

A fourth calendar is the Phoenician Calendar, pre-exilic in time. This calendar is referred to in 1 Kings 6 and 8. Only three months of this calendar have names which are known to modern man. These three names are listed in Scripture in the context of the building and dedication of Solomon's temple. This calendar may have been used because it was the secular calendar of Israel's neighbors or the Phoenician technicians which were used in building the temple may have introduced the Phoenician months of Ziv, Ethanim, and Bul. Ethanim in 1 Kings 8:2 is identified as the seventh month during the "feast." This feast is the Feast of Trumpets (see Chapter III). The significance is that once again, the calendar refers back to the numeral or

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<sup>1</sup>Funderburk, Zondervan Bible Dictionary, p. 140.



Sacred Calendar with the beginning of the year in the Spring.

A fifth calendar used in Scripture is the Abib Calendar mentioned in Exodus 13:4 and 23:15. It is supposed that this one name was a part of a complete pre-exilic calendar. Little conclusive knowledge is known of the calendar other than the title of this one month. Abib means "month of the ripening ears,"<sup>1</sup> and in Deuteronomy 16:1, the month is correlated with the Passover, as in Exodus 23:15. This scriptural data contributes no evidence either for or against the New Year being in the seventh month.

The five calendars used by the Hebrews and mentioned in the Scriptures indicate that basically two systems were used in Hebrew history, a Sacred Calendar with the start of the year in the Spring, and the other, a civil calendar with the start of the year in the Fall. The primary scriptural use is the numerical counting of months starting with Passover in the Spring. Logically, a numerical order assumes a succession based on a beginning point. The Feast of Trumpets occurs in the seventh consecutive month and seems to be based on the Sacred Calendar. Thus, it represents the completion of seven-twelfths of the religious year rather than the New Year. As Chapter I showed that the feast has a religious aspect and that scripturally it is in the seventh month not the first month, then the Feast of Trumpets must be based on the Sacred Calendar rather than the civil calendar.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 139.

The only remaining area of question is the Hebrew name for this feast, Rosh Hashanah, meaning "the head of the year." This term, used today of the holiday or feast, is not mentioned in the Bible and appeared first in the Talmud. Bloch says this name first was used after the return from the Babylonian diaspora.<sup>1</sup> The current use of New Year or Rosh Hashanah for the Feast of Trumpets has no biblical basis and reflects the civil calendar.

Therefore, the Hebrew either consciously or unconsciously, celebrates two events on this date. The civil New Year and the sacred Feast of Trumpets. As in the Hebrew culture the sacred becomes part of the civil, this distinction may be slight, however, the origin of each is distinct.

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<sup>1</sup>Bloch, Biblical and Historical Background of the Jewish Holy Days, p. 19.

### CHAPTER III

#### SCRIPTURAL EVENTS OF THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS

Philip Birnbaum has said, "the Talmud emphasized the importance of Rosh Hashanah not only as the birthday of the world, but also as the festival commemorating some of the most dramatic events in Israel's history."<sup>1</sup> Jewish traditions teach that not only did God create the world on the day of this feast, but that Abraham was to sacrifice Isaac on this feast, Samuel was born on this feast,<sup>2</sup> and God remembered Sarah and Hannah.<sup>3</sup> All these events are recorded as Jewish traditions and while held popularly, they are not substantiated by Scripture. However, there are three scriptural records of events occurring on this feast and they are also among "the most dramatic events of Israel's history."

The first reference to a historical event occurring on the Feast of Trumpets is recorded in 1 Kings 8 and 2 Chronicles 5. The Lord instructed Solomon to build the first temple of Israel. The promise was given to David, that his son was to construct the temple. The completion

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<sup>1</sup>Philip Birnbaum, A Book of Jewish Concepts (New York: Hebrew Publishing Co., 1964), p. 559.

<sup>2</sup>T. H. Gaster, Festivals of the Jewish Year (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1953), p. 111.

<sup>3</sup>Birnbaum, p. 559.

(ca. 960 B.C.) was during the seventh month (2 Chronicles 5:3). 2 Chronicles 5:1 states, "Then all the work . . . for the house of the Lord was finished." 2 Chronicles 5:12 indicates that trumpets were blown as part of the celebration and dedication which began with the Feast of Trumpets and concluded at the end of the Feast of Tabernacles, twenty-three days later (2 Chronicles 7:10). The great event of the Feast of Trumpets of that year was the dedication of the Temple, the bringing in of the Ark of the Covenant which contained the two tablets of Law, and the Shekinah Glory coming to dwell in the Temple. Temple worship began with sacrifices (2 Chronicles 7:4) and God's visible presence came to Israel (2 Chronicles 7:2) on this date.

The second great historical event which occurred on the Feast of Trumpets and is recorded in Scripture is found in Ezra 3. Verse one states "Now when the seventh month came . . . the people gathered together. . . ." Notice that this event was in the seventh month and the people of Israel came together, reflecting the ideas contained in the words used in Leviticus 23:23-25 and explained in Chapter I. These two passages, Leviticus 23:23-25 and Ezra 3, indicate that this feast was a time of gathering together for religious purposes. The purpose here (ca. 537 B.C.) was the restoration of the altar and sacrifices (vs. 3). The people did this because of their terror "of the people of the lands" (vs. 3). The Hebrews turned back to sacrifices in the hope

of divine protection.<sup>1</sup>

Cyrus had permitted the captured Hebrews to return to Israel to begin rebuilding the Temple on the very site where Solomon had dedicated the first Temple, also on the Feast of Trumpets. Thus, the first two scripturally recorded observances of the Feast of Trumpets record that the people sought to obey the Law, to sacrifice, and worship their God in Jerusalem at His Temple site. That this occasion in Ezra was on the date of the Feast of Trumpets is evidenced by verse six.<sup>2</sup> Notice that verse five states that from this point onward "there was a continual burnt offering, also for the new moons and for all the fixed festivals of the Lord. . . ." A final observation of this occasion is that once again the Feast of Tabernacles (vs. 4) is mentioned in conjunction with this event, perhaps hinting at a linking of the two feasts suggested by the unique use of  $\text{פִּינְחָשׁ}$ , discussed in Chapter I.

The third and final great historical event which occurred on the day of the Feast of Trumpets recorded in Scripture is found in Nehemiah 7 and 8 (ca. 444 B.C.). Here the people have gathered (8:1) at the Water Gate to hear Ezra read the book, the Law of God. This also was on the first day of the seventh month which is the day the

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<sup>1</sup>C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, vol. 3. Translated by Sophia Taylor in Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., reprinted 1978), p. 50.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

Feast of Trumpets (vs. 2) was to be celebrated. The Water Gate was on the east side of the walls of Jerusalem (Neh. 3:26) and was repaired by the Temple servants. This occasion was shortly after completion of the repair of the walls for security reasons. This occurred under Nehemiah's governorship of Jerusalem under Artaxerxes. Nehemiah, concerned for the religious life as well as political life of the people, had the people assemble to hear the reading of God's Law. Verse twelve tells us that the people "understood the words which had been made known to them." It was because of this understanding that the people began to "celebrate a great festival" (vs. 12) on this day. The implication is that prior to this date, the feasts of the seventh month had not been remembered or understood and were not celebrated. The implication is that it had not been celebrated at least within the memory of those attending (vs. 14). Keil and Delitzsch state of this verse, "they met with this precept, and were thereby induced to celebrate the approaching festival in strict accordance with its directions."<sup>1</sup> As with the previous two scriptural records of the feast, there was a return to formal worship of God in accordance with the Law, resulting in the people's celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles (vs. 15). Verse seventeen says that they had not done this since the days of Joshua the son of Nun. However, Ezra 3:4 (ca. 537 B.C.) states that they celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles according to the Law. Further,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 233.

2 Chronicles 7:9-10 (ca. 960 B.C.) indicates that they also celebrated Tabernacles. Apparently the explanation of Nehemiah 8 is that the actual construction of booths and living in them as described in Nehemiah 8:15-17 had not been done since the days of Joshua.

The occasion has in common with the previous two the turning of God's people to God's Law, Jerusalem, at or near the Temple, as the location of the event; and a response by the people of sacrificing and worshipping God. Further, the beginning of the activity was on the day of the Feast of Trumpets and the conclusion was the Feast of Tabernacles.

On each occasion the people were reminded of the need to study God's Law, to worship, to gather together or assemble, and to make it a holy occasion (Neh. 8:11) which culminated with the Feast of Tabernacles. Whether the occasion was chosen because the Feast of Trumpets was coming or whether the occasion simply occurred on the date as a result of the providence of God, the result is that the three recorded occasions are very similar in action and purpose. Further, each occasion was a memorial which reminded the people of God's Law and the need of drawing unto Him or responding to Him in the days ahead.

While the above are the only scriptural records of the celebration of the Feast of Trumpets, it is of value to consider two additional passages of Scripture. The first is Psalm 81:1-6. It is stated by Jewish sources that this

text definitely refers to the feast.<sup>1</sup> Kidner states, "This powerful psalm leaves no doubt of the particular feast it was designed to serve. . . ." <sup>2</sup> He goes on to indicate that it is the Feast of Tabernacles.<sup>3</sup> As is often done, men seem to confuse the separate identity of the feasts and to consider them as one. Perhaps Kidner only sees one feast lasting twenty-three days, rather than three appointed times within that period. Keil and Delitzsch attribute Jewish ancient customs to proclaiming this "the Psalm of the Feast of Trumpets."<sup>4</sup> They then contradict themselves by saying that they feel it must apply instead to the first of Nisan or the first month. They base this on the trumpet reference.<sup>5</sup> They argue that (1) because of the solemnity of the Day of Atonement, the joyful voice of a festive season would result in the ignoring of atonement; (2) the remembering of the redemption of Israel is more characteristic of Passover than Tabernacles; (3) because of verse 6b the allusion is made to the fact which Passover commemorates. These arguments ignore the fact that (1) trumpets and their joyful

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<sup>1</sup>Encyclopaedia Judaica, s.v. "Rosh Hashanah," by Louis Jacobs.

<sup>2</sup>Derek Kidner, Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary, 2 vols. (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1975), 2:292.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 2:293.

<sup>4</sup>F. Delitzsch, The Psalms, vol. 5. Translated by Francis Bolton in Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., reprinted 1978), p. 391.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*



voice are a characteristic of the Feast of Trumpets and therefore, are sounded on that day and not on the Day of Atonement; (2) both Tabernacles and Passover look back to the redemption and wanderings, i.e., the same general historical action of God; (3) again the brick or basket of verse 6b is part of the Egypt left behind and celebrated equally by means of Passover and Tabernacles. It is believed that both sources neglect to associate this Psalm with the unit of three feasts, Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and Tabernacles, and that indeed this Psalm is a psalm of the Feast of Trumpets. In it God (vs. 13) cries that His people would "listen to Me, that Israel would walk in My ways!" The three occasions studied above were a temporary response by the people to this Psalm of God. He speaks of blessing His people with the "finest of wheat; and with honey from the rock I would satisfy you" (vs. 16).

While blessing of His people is the desire of the Lord, whenever Israel turns from Him they not only fail to seek Him, but He then causes them to forget or neglect to celebrate the feasts. Lamentations 2:6 states, "The LORD caused to be forgotten the appointed feast and sabbath in Zion." The Scriptures studied above bear this out. When on three occasions Israel turns back to God, they do so by observing the feasts, reading the Law, and responding in worship through sacrifice as an assembled people.

The Feast of Trumpets was celebrated by the Hebrews, as recorded in Scripture on at least three significant occasions in Hebrew history.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE CELEBRATION OF THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS

"It was the trumpet-sound, heard from morning to evening, that was peculiar to this feast."<sup>1</sup> "From time to time all through the year, the trumpet-call was heard in Israel; but on this occasion it became the feature of the day, and was universal throughout their land."<sup>2</sup> Thus was the Feast of Trumpets characterized in Israel. The action of the trumpets was the unique feature of the feast.

The feast today is called Rosh Hashanah by the modern Jew and is celebrated over a two-day period. Perhaps within the celebration of the feast, one can find further indications of the significance of the Feast of Trumpets. It is important to separate, as best as possible, human traditions which have been added to the celebration over the years and have deviated or detracted from the original purpose of the feast. The only criterion for rejecting a tradition is to compare it to Scripture and if the method of celebration is in direct opposition to the purpose God indicated for the celebration, it must be

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<sup>1</sup>Andrew Bonar, A Commentary on the Book of Leviticus (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, reprinted 1978), p. 404.

<sup>2</sup>Kellogg, The Expositor's Bible, Leviticus, p. 472.

rejected. If it is not in direct opposition to God's commands and His character, it should not necessarily be rejected. The Feast of Hanukkah, while not instituted by God in Scripture, has become a part of Judaism and was celebrated by the Lord Jesus Christ (John 10:22). As the Lord does not condemn the feast on this occasion one might conclude that this feast does not contradict Scripture and God. Today the Feast of Trumpets has both scriptural and non-scriptural elements in its celebration. God instituted the feast in Leviticus 23 and specified a single day of remembering, specifically a day of blowing, in Numbers 29. The modern Jew celebrates it as a two-day feast, which is contrary to God's instruction of a one-day feast. Further it is called by the modern Jew the New Year's feast, while Scripture states it to be in the "seventh" religious month not the first month. There is no indication of the feast ever being celebrated as New Year's in the Bible. Therefore, these additions may not detract from the true purpose of the Feast of Trumpets, but they certainly do not add to the understanding of a religious feast. In addition, a secular New Year's celebration can only detract from a religious feast, for the Scriptures never speak of the New Year's for it is a secular topic.

As shown in previous chapters, God's people were to do no laborious work and were to assemble together, reading God's Law and sacrificing both animals and grain to the Lord. As shown in Psalm 81 (see Chapter III) this day was a joyous

day with trumpets sounding. The importance of trumpets is seen in each of the passages referring to the feast. Philo of Alexandria (ca. 20 B.C.--ca. A.D. 50) stated, "When the opening of the sacred month comes, it is customary to sound the trumpet in the temple at the same time the sacrifices are brought there. . . ." <sup>1</sup> Thus, during the Lord's time on earth, as the sacrifices were brought in, the trumpets sounded according to the scriptural instructions.

The Scriptures used by Jews during the celebration of the Feast of Trumpets may reflect God's intention of the feast. The prime biblical texts used are: Numbers 23:21; Deuteronomy 33:5; Psalm 93:1; Isaiah 44:6; and Zechariah 14:9. These all refer to God as the King over Israel and the world. The emphasis is on His sovereignty rather than His creative acts. This group of verses is the first to be recited in the modern service on the feast. After emphasizing God's sovereignty, a second series speaks of God's remembering of the past and present events which have evoked His mercy. They are: Genesis 8:1; Exodus 2:24; Psalm 106:45; Jeremiah 2:2; and Ezekiel 16:60.

The final series refers to the blasts of the shofar on various historic occasions. They are: Exodus 19:16; Psalm 47:6, 81:4, 98:6; Isaiah 18:3; and Zechariah 9:14. <sup>2</sup> Whether God desires these verses to teach the purpose of

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<sup>1</sup>Philip Goodman, The Rosh Hashanah Anthology (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1970), p. 13.

<sup>2</sup>Gaster, Festivals of the Jewish Year, pp. 116-17.

the feast or whether they reflect man's view concerning the feast cannot be determined. However, it is clear that the Scriptures and trumpets are a significant part of the worship on this feast and are predominant in both Temple and modern practices.

As the trumpet is a significant part of the feast, one must consider what the trumpet means to the celebrant. Brasch says, "Far from being tuneful and soothing, its sounds are rousing and shattering. They are meant to stir man to the very depth of his being, to call to his conscience to renew his faith and return to God."<sup>1</sup> Ezekiel 33:3-5 speaks of the trumpet as being a warning to the people. Maimonides as quoted by Birnbaum says of the trumpet,

It consists of three distinctive notes . . . looked upon since ancient times as a call to repentance. Serving as a reminder of the shofar blasts at Mount Sinai, they have been interpreted to call: "You who are asleep, wake up! Search your deeds and repent."<sup>2</sup>

Birnbaum says that the trumpet as blown on the feast, "begins with short, plaintive sounds and finishes on a triumphant note."<sup>3</sup> While these statements could apply to a New Year's feast, the terms "repentance" and "wake up" reflect the concept of spiritual repentance. As the three recorded observances of the feast (see Chapter III) show an awakening of the Hebrews in a spiritual sense rather than a

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<sup>1</sup>Brasch, Judaic Heritage, p. 38.

<sup>2</sup>Birnbaum, A Book of Jewish Concepts, p. 560.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

secular New Year's sense, it would seem that the quote of Maimonides supports the sacred Feast of Trumpets rather than a New Year's Feast. The triumph reflected in Birnbaum's statement above, is also reflected in a talmudic statement that on this feast "Jews should not appear depressed or in somber clothes, as do supplicants before a human judge, but in a joyous mood and dressed in festive, white garments, symbolizing cheerful confidence (Rabbi Yerushalmi, Rosh Hashanah 1:3).<sup>1</sup> The trumpet expresses this confidence. This theme of God's judgment is associated with the trumpets and the Jew sees God as being a just judge of His people, for He is their King and that their "remembrance may rise favorably before Me."<sup>2</sup>

It is seen that in both tradition and Scripture, the Feast of Trumpets speaks to Judaism of its God, the Sovereign One, who judges men righteously, Who is remembered, or Who remembers them (see Chapter V), and they express this through the blowing of the trumpets.

The ability of the Hebrew to celebrate this feast as God commanded has ceased since A.D. 70 with the destruction of the Temple. Sacrifices ended in that day and so the modern Jew can keep the feast only in part. The question may be asked, is this an interruption as spoken of in Lamentations 2:6? The Hebrew today celebrates this feast as the New Year, but will it be celebrated one day in

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 561.

<sup>2</sup>Jacobs, "Rosh Hashanah," p. 307.

Jerusalem, as part of a unit with the Feast of Tabernacles? Zechariah says, "they will go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths" (Zechariah 14:16). The Feast of Booths is another name for the Feast of Tabernacles and the context is the time of the Millennium. Perhaps this is why the following prayer is offered each year at the Feast of Trumpets, for in that day God will rule over all the earth in a visible way.

Reveal Thyself in Thy splendor as King over all the inhabitants of the earth, that whatsoever hath been made may know that Thou hast made it, and whatsoever hath been created may understand that Thou hast created it, and whatsoever hath breath in its nostrils, may say, the Lord God of Israel is King, and His dominion ruleth over all.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Julius H. Greenstone, Jewish Feasts and Fasts, (Philadelphia: Press of the Jewish Publication Society, 1945), p. 22.

## CHAPTER V

### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FEAST

The Feast of Trumpets is a little discussed feast in literature. While much is written of it in terms of Rosh Hashanah, i.e., the New Year's feast, little scholarly work relates to the scriptural Feast of Trumpets. Where the work has been done, there is much variation concerning the significance or purpose of the feast. Two basic views are held, the Jewish view and Christian view. While there is some overlap of interpretation, each view is distinctly Jewish or Christian and will be treated as such.

Common to both Jewish and Christian interpretation is the belief that the meaning of the Feast of Trumpets has been lost to mankind of the Twentieth-Century. This concept believes that the Hebrew of Moses' day fully understood the purpose of the feast and memorial. A slight variation is that he never knew the meaning and God did not necessarily intend for him to know it, but he observed it as a command of God. The former view believes that with the passage of time, the significance was lost and today it reflects only the civil celebration of the New Year. While many writers do not say that this is their interpretation, the brevity of their discussions on this feast speak



for their view. The author of Jubilees states, "the first of Tishri merely marks the beginning of the fall season."<sup>1</sup> Gaster concurs, saying the feast only reflects the alternation of seasons.<sup>2</sup> While this may be the significance to the modern Jew, the fact that God instituted this feast makes it of religious significance, and as shown in Chapter II, the Sacred Calendar makes this feast not a sacred New Year's feast.

Another view held by many Jews is that it is a period of preparation for the solemn days of the seventh month, particularly the Day of Atonement. Gaster goes on to say that the original purpose of the feast "was to usher in the period of lenten abstinence and austerity which preceded the real commencement of the agricultural year at the Feast of Ingathering."<sup>3</sup> As this concept was elaborated, the idea of repentance and return to God developed. Bloch states that, "the ingathering of the Jewish people and its ultimate return to God will be announced by a prolonged blast of the shofar."<sup>4</sup> The idea being that since the shofar is the trumpet used on the Feast of Trumpets and the predominant feature of the feast is the trumpet, then this feast will be the ingathering of God's people. Brasch holds

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<sup>1</sup>Bloch, Biblical and Historical Background of the Jewish Holy Days, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup>Gaster, Festivals of the Jewish Year, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>4</sup>Bloch, Biblical and Historical Background of the Jewish Holy Days, p. 21.

that "Repentance in Hebrew really means 'return'--to God's ways."<sup>1</sup> Maimonides thought that this feast awakened people to repentance in prospect of the Day of Expiation.<sup>2</sup> This view is commonly held because the Talmud teaches that the period from the beginning of the Feast of Trumpets to the Day of Atonement is "to repent and become righteous."<sup>3</sup>

Similar to this view is the concept that the repentance of Israel is due to its remembering of God or His remembering of them. The Jew sees his history as a succession of serving God, obeying His commands, and then a falling away from God. His history reflects a remembering of God when threatened as a nation. The Scriptures verify this, particularly in the covenant relationship of Exodus 19-24.

The Jew also sees these struggles as a part of a battle against evil and a battle for the Kingdom of God. Gaster states,

. . . in Jewish teaching, memorial always looks forward as well as backward, the blasts of the shofar came, by a fine twist of the primitive conception, to prefigure the great day when, as the prophet foretold, God himself would drive out the powers of darkness, "blow the ram's horn, and come with the whirlwinds" (Zech. 9:14). Nor this alone, it was interpreted also as a symbol of the Last Trump and as a rallying call of Israel in its eternal battle for the Kingdom of God.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Brasch, Judaic Heritage, p. 37.

<sup>2</sup>Bonar, A Commentary on the Book of Leviticus, p. 403.

<sup>3</sup>Isidore Singer, ed., Jewish Encyclopedia (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1905), Vol. 9, p. 256.

<sup>4</sup>Gaster, Festivals of the Jewish Year, p. 113.

The question is: who remembers, God or the Hebrews? As the word "remember" can mean "be mindful" (see Chapter I) and thus, the sense of being mindful of someone as opposed to neglecting or not dealing with them, then God can remember. The Bible tells us that God remembers people, such as Noah, Abraham, Rachel, and Hannah. In addition, God is the subject in remembering His covenant, (Genesis 9:15; Exodus 2:24, 6:5; Leviticus 26:52; Ezekiel 16:60; 1 Chronicles 16:15; and Psalms 105:8). He does or does not remember sins (Isaiah 43:25; and Jeremiah 14:10, 31:34). The Bible also says that God bids Israel to remember the sabbath day (Exodus 10:8, Malachi 4:4); His commandments (Numbers 15:39); and other items such as the former things (Isaiah 43:18). There are ample examples of both God and Israel remembering in the Bible.

Perhaps most significant to this feast is the way remembrance is used in relation to prayer. "The appeal to God to remember is, of course, a frequent formula of prayers. . . ."<sup>1</sup> Examples include: Samson (Judges 16:28), Hannah (1 Samuel 1:11), Solomon (2 Chronicles 6:42), Hezekiah (2 Kings 20:3), Nehemiah (Nehemiah 1:8), Habakkuk (Habakkuk 3:2), and Job (Job 7:7). Numbers 10:9,10 are examples of trumpets being "sounded at the time of battle, that God may remember Israel and that victory may be ensured."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Davies, "Memorial, memory," p. 345.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

Further, Gaster holds that the remembering must be part of the people as a unit. He states, "the festivals . . . are essentially communal in character."<sup>1</sup> The Hebrew who fails to observe them, "not only neglects his obligation to God but automatically cuts himself off from his people."<sup>2</sup> Thus, it is collective Israel involved in the remembrance. This Jewish view is best summarized by Saadiah Gaon when he says that the shofar heralds the beginning of the penitential season, the great day of the Lord (based on Zephaniah 1:14,16) and the messianic age (based on Isaiah 27:13).<sup>3</sup> The question of who remembers is best answered by saying that either the people of Israel or God could be the one remembering. The Scriptures do not specifically say who does the remembering. In Passover, it is clearly the people who remember God's deliverance. Thus, it seems that most likely the people of Israel are to remember God and He then responds to them.

The Jewish view is best summarized as a repentance resulting in God's people remembering Him, with a resultant renewal of their relationship to Him as His nation, the culmination being the Messianic Kingdom.

The Christian view reflects some of the Jewish thinking. Christian commentators often do not even mention the Feast of Trumpets when commenting on Leviticus 23. There

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<sup>1</sup>Gaster, Festivals of the Jewish Year, p. 20.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Jacobs, "Rosh Hashanah," p. 307.

are two possible reasons for this. Either, they do not realize that the feast is distinct from the Day of Atonement, and thus a separate feast worthy of comment or they do not wish to comment because of a lack of clear scriptural statements on the meaning of the feast. The former is due to a lack of careful reading of the text. The latter is scholarly caution.

Many Christians, as in the Jewish view above, see the feast as only an announcement for the Feast of Tabernacles. Bonar believes this feast is "to be considered as God's solemn call to attention in prospect of the very special causes for joy in this month. In short, it is just the symbolic language for the word 'Behold' which prefaces many a New Testament call to regard to the same truth."<sup>1</sup> It is held by this writer that this is too great a simplification when this feast is in context with the feasts of Passover, Pentecost, Day of Atonement, and Tabernacles, all of scriptural and historical significance. Bonar also holds that this feast is an introduction for the Feast of Tabernacles.<sup>2</sup> Kellogg follows this same view, emphasizing the Feast of Tabernacles.<sup>3</sup> Each of these men have the idea of an announcement pointing to the Feast of Tabernacles.

Shepherd sees Numbers 10:1-10, a Feast of Trumpets

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<sup>1</sup>Bonar, A Commentary on the Book of Leviticus, p. 404.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 403

<sup>3</sup>Kellogg, The Expositor's Bible, Leviticus, p. 462.

context, as a calling and gathering of the people.<sup>1</sup> This is precisely the scene at the millennial gathering of Zechariah 14:16 which refers to the Feast of Booths. Could this once more be a uniting of the period of both feasts, for the Feast of Booths is the Feast of Tabernacles? As the word study of Chapter I suggests a convocation, this will be the calling of God to His people. This calling is more than just an announcement for the Feast of Tabernacles. This is a distinct event in which the people will respond to God, this is different than the worship of Tabernacles. A further elaboration of this view is best summarized by Kellogg.

The special ceremony of the day, which gave it its name, is described as a "memorial of blowing of trumpets." This "blowing of trumpets" was a reminder, not from Israel to God, as some have fancied, but from God to Israel. It was an announcement from the King of Israel to His people that the glad sabbatic month had begun, and that the great day of atonement, and the supreme festivity of the feast of tabernacles, was not at hand.<sup>2</sup>

This view holds that in the time of God's choosing, He will remember Israel again, i.e., be mindful of them and once again restore temple worship.<sup>3</sup> Some Christians believe that period will be the Day of the Lord.

McClain speaks of the Day of the Lord as paralleling the Jewish day beginning at sunset and extending to the

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<sup>1</sup>Shepherd, Jewish Holy Days, p. 60.

<sup>2</sup>Kellogg, The Expositor's Bible, Leviticus, p. 462.

<sup>3</sup>Victor Buksbaze, The Gospel in the Feasts of Israel (Fort Washington, PA: Christian Literature Crusade, 1954), p. 30.

next sunset (Lev. 23:32). Similarly, "the great day of the Lord is pictured as a period composed of both darkness and light; and the sequence is the same."<sup>1</sup> Further, "that Day begins with the darkness of divine wrath (Isa. 34:8, cf. context); and then moves on to the light of divine blessing (Isa. 35)."<sup>2</sup> He goes on to speak of penal events and transitional events of the Day.<sup>3</sup>

In the New Testament there are two significant occasions of trumpet soundings; these occur in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 and Matthew 24:31. The two New Testament verses bracket a period of time known as the Tribulation, which begins and ends with trumpets. They are not the same occasion, for in the former, the "Lord Himself will descend . . ." and in the latter He is coming in the clouds but "He will send forth His angels . . . they will gather." This period of time will be when Israel begins to turn to their God. Temple worship will be restored. The Jews will unite against the world and the world will come against them. At the point of apparent world destruction, the Lord will return with "a great trumpet" (Matt. 24:31). In Matthew 25:31 it states that the Son of Man, when He comes in "His glory and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne." Then will come a judgment of the sheep and

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<sup>1</sup>A. J. McClain, The Greatness of the Kingdom (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1974), p. 178.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 307.

goats, a separating. The parallel between this period (its turning of the Jews back to God, its remembering of Israel by God, its returning to Temple worship, and the Law) and the Day of Atonement (with the forgiveness for those properly atoned for) and the Millennium which follows and the three feasts of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and Feast of Tabernacles is worth consideration. This prophetic view reflects the Jews remembering God by returning to Temple worship and sacrifices. Further, it is a calling or convoking of the people of Israel to their God. The unique use of  $\text{שְׁמִינִי}$  may be explained by the unique period of the Millennium. The return to Temple worship and sacrificing is very similar to the historical occasions studied in Chapter III.

In Colossians 2:16-17, Paul states that the festival, a new moon, or a Sabbath day are "a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ." Edersheim quotes Paul, in reference to this feast as saying to Israel, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light!" (Eph. 5:14).<sup>1</sup> Will the awakening of Israel be symbolized by a return to observing the sacred Feast of Trumpets? No one knows.

While each of the above views seem to hint at the true meaning of the Feast of Trumpets, the answer remains with God, for He has not clearly revealed the significance.

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<sup>1</sup>Alfred Edersheim, The Temple Its Ministry and Services (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., reprinted 1978), p. 300.



## CONCLUSION

The Feast of Trumpets is the fifth feast that God appointed in Leviticus 23 and repeated in Numbers 29. It is to be celebrated on the first day of the seventh month of the Jewish sacred year and is not the Jewish New Year, as held by the modern Jew. The feast is a memorial which is to recall some as yet unknown person, event, or action. It is to be a unique sabbath, having an apparent link with the Feast of Tabernacles, also in the seventh month. On this feast the Jews are to assemble as the united congregation of Israel and read the Law, perform sacrifices, and worship God in Jerusalem. It is not possible to determine conclusively whether God is to remember Israel on this feast or whether Israel is to remember God, the latter being the most likely. It is shown that the one who remembers should then be stirred to action. The feast was celebrated by the Hebrews on at least three occasions in Hebrew history.

The true significance of the item to be remembered is unknown and will remain so, until the Lord reveals His purpose.

## APPENDIX

### EVENTS RECORDED IN SCRIPTURE DURING THE SEVENTH MONTH

<u>Scripture</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Event</u>
Genesis 8:4	17	The ark rested on the mountains of Ararat
Leviticus 16:29	10	The atonement feast
1 Kings 8:2 2 Chronicles 5 2 Chronicles 7	1	The Ark brought into the Temple
2 Kings 25:25 Jeremiah 41:1	--	Ismael, son of Nethaniah and ten men kill Gedaliah at Mizpah
2 Chronicles 31:7	--	Reforms of Hezekiah finished
Ezra 3	1	Started sacrifices and read from the Law
Nehemiah 7 and 8	1	Ezra read from the Law and began celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles
Jeremiah 28:15-17	--	Hananiah the false prophet died
Haggai 2	21	Haggai spoke to the people about the glory of the new temple
Zechariah 7:5	--	A review of the history of the people's fasting

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