

# The Good Word

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## THE BIBLICAL FEAST OF TRUMPETS<sup>1</sup>

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THE 7 TRUMPET JUDGMENTS OF THE APOCALYPSE  
OF ST. JOHN THE THEOLOGION, ST. DIONYSIOU, MT. ATHOS

The seven biblical feasts found in the *Old Testament* book of *Leviticus* chapter 23 were appointed by the LORD to be celebrated on specific dates of the Hebrew calendar and foreshadow important events in the redemption of mankind. The first four, the Passover (Pascha), the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of First-Fruits, and the Feast of Weeks<sup>2</sup> (Pentecost), were fulfilled by Christ in His first coming and were

prophetic of His passion, death, resurrection, and sending of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles. The latter three, the Feast of Trumpets, Yom Kippur, and the Feast of Tabernacles/Booths<sup>3</sup>, all occur in the fall in the seventh month (September time frame)--on the 1st, 10th, and 15th of Tishri respectfully, and are reflective of future events related to the Second Coming of Christ, the Judgment, and the Heavenly Kingdom. All adult male Israelites were required by the LORD to attend 3 of these 7 feasts every year:

*Deuteronomy 16: 16-17 Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which He shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the LORD empty ...*

In this issue we will consider the Feast of Trumpets, -- not one of those 3 mandatory feasts celebrated in Jerusalem. In Rabbinical Judaism the Feast of Trumpets is synonymous with Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year celebrated on the 1st of Tishri (on Sep 21 in 2017). However, in *New Testament* times it was known solely as the Feast of the Blowing of the Shofars (i.e., of trumpets made from certain animal horns). Unfortunately this feast doesn't receive much attention in the Scriptures. What little it does receive is found in the *Old Testament* books of *Leviticus* and *Numbers*:

*Leviticus 23:23-25 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 24 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 trumpets**,<sup>4</sup> an holy convocation. 25 Ye shall do no servile work therein: but ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD.*

*Numbers 29:1-6 And in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work: it is a **day of blowing the trumpets**<sup>5</sup> unto you. 2 And ye shall offer a*

1. Scripture passages are from the King James Version unless otherwise stated.

2. שבועות, *Shavuot*, "weeks" is the traditional Jewish name of this feast.

3. סוכות, *Sukkot*, is the traditional Jewish name of this feast.

4. Chabad Jewish translation: **a remembrance of the shofar blast** (in Hebrew: תְּרוּעַת הַשּׁוֹפָר *teruah*, a blowing sound) [http://www.chabad.org/library/bible\\_cdoaid/9924#showrashi=true](http://www.chabad.org/library/bible_cdoaid/9924#showrashi=true)

5. Chabad translation: **day of shofar sounding**. תְּרוּעַת הַשּׁוֹפָר *teruah*

burnt offering for a sweet savour unto the LORD; one young bullock, one ram, and seven lambs of the first year without blemish: 3 And their meat offering shall be of flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals for a bullock, and two tenth deals for a ram, 4 And one tenth deal for one lamb, throughout the seven lambs: 5 And one kid of the goats for a sin offering, to make an atonement for you: 6 Beside the burnt offering of the month, and his meat offering, and the daily burnt offering, and his meat offering, and their drink offerings, according unto their manner, for a sweet savour, a sacrifice made by fire unto the LORD.

In neither of these descriptions of the feast is the type of trumpet mentioned, rather, only the general term for trumpet is used in the *Septuagint* and only the type of trumpet sound, תְּרוּעָה, the “*teruah*,” is used in the *Tanakh*, the Jewish Bible, the Hebrew Masoretic text. That it was the shofar that was blown on the Feast of Trumpets has been traditionally inferred by the rabbis from the more detailed biblical description of the blasts for the Day of Atonement 10 days later:<sup>6</sup>

**Leviticus 25:9.** [Chabad translation]. *You shall proclaim [with] the shofar blasts [שופר תְּרוּעָה] shofar teruah, in the seventh month, on the tenth of the month; on the Day of Atonement, you shall sound the shofar throughout your land.*

וְהַעֲבַרְתָּ שׁוֹפָר תְּרוּעָה בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבַעִי בְּעָשׂוֹר  
לַחֹדֶשׁ בְּיוֹם הַכִּפּוּרִים תַּעֲבִירוּ שׁוֹפָר בְּכָל  
אַרְצְכֶם:

#### WHAT IS A SHOFAR?

In the Bible there are two types of trumpets described: animal horns and silver trumpets. In the Greek *Septuagint Old Testament* and in the Greek *New Testament* there are two words used for trumpets: (1) σαλπινγξ *salpingx*, a commonly used but nonspecific word for trumpets, either of animal horn or made of metal, and, (2) κεράτινη *keratine*, a word rarely used for trumpets made strictly from animal horns.<sup>7</sup> In the Hebrew *Old Testament* there are four Hebrew words used for the two different types of trumpets. Three of these words are used for those trumpets made from animal horns: (1) שׁוֹפָר *shofar*, (2) יִבֵּל *yobel*, a “ram’s horn”<sup>8</sup> and (3) תְּקוּעַ *takoa*.<sup>9</sup> There is a fourth word, (4)

6. See *Babylonian Talmud, Seder Moed, Rosh Hashanah, Gemara* page 33b, Socino Press, London.

7. κεράτινη is only used in the books of *Judges* and *Kingdoms* in the *Greek Septuagint*. Source: “*Rosh Hashanah Between Tanach and Mishnah: Missing Links*” at <http://thetorah.com/rosh-hashanah-between-tanach-and-mishnah/>

8. Note: used only in *Joshua* 6 for the destruction of Jericho.

חֲצוֹצֵרֹת *chatsotserot* (plural), used for the two silver trumpets that the LORD ordered Moses to make in *Numbers 10:1-10*. For the Feast of Trumpets, Jewish tradition mandates that the shofar must be blown.

#### WHAT IS A PROPER SHOFAR AND WHAT ARE THE CORRECT SOUNDS TO MAKE ON THE SHOFAR/TRUMPET?

The earliest rabbinic Jewish tradition on what is a proper shofar and how it is to be sounded is found in the *Mishnah, Seder Moed, Tractate Rosh Hashanah* (compiled c. AD 200). Plenty of disagreement is also found there and even more in the Gemara for Rosh Hashanah in the *Babylonian Talmud* (compiled c. AD 600). How much of this material pertained to Temple times and how much was a new creation by the rabbis centuries after the destruction of the Temple and the reconstruction of a Temple-less Judaism is not always clear. Nevertheless, the following Mishnahs in the *Tractate Rosh Hashanah*<sup>10</sup> are likely to be valid for Temple times:

Mishnah 3.2 “All shofars are valid except for that of a cow, because it is called a *keren*.”

[Note: generally all animal horns that are called *shofars* are valid for use on Rosh Hashanah. This includes the horns of rams, ewes, goats and antelopes which are curved and the horn of the wild goat which is straight. The cork-screw horn of the Yemenite kudu is a very popular source for the longer shofars used today.]



YEMENITE KUDO WITH HORNS USEFUL FOR SHOFARS

9. Note: a noun created from the verb to blow (the shofar), used only in Ezekiel 7:14, and translated by Orthodox Jews as “shofar.”

10. *Mishnah, Seder Moed, Volume III, Tractate Rosh Hashanah*, Artscroll Mishnah Series, Mesorah Publications, Ltd, Brooklyn, NY, 1990, pp. 7-107.



Mishnah 3.3 “The shofar of Rosh Hashanah should be from a wild goat/antelope, straight with a gold covered mouthpiece, and with two (silver) trumpets at the sides. The shofar blows long and the (silver) trumpets blow short, for the commandment of the day is with the shofar.”

Mishnah 4.1 “When the Rosh Hashanah festival fell on the Sabbath, they would blow [the shofar] in the Temple, but not in the province. After the Temple was destroyed, Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai (c. AD 70) instituted that they blow the shofar in every place where there is a *beis din*.”<sup>11</sup>

Mishnah 4.9 “The order of the shofar blasts are three [sets] of three [blasts] each. The duration of a *tekiah* is like three *teruos*. The duration of a *teruah* is like three *quavers*.”<sup>12</sup>

Shofars generally have two different registers: a bass note and a treble note when blown with tighter lips. The *tekiah* was a continuous sound in the lower register; the *teruah*, in the higher register, was a broken sound or an oscillating loud and soft sound; and the *quavers* were staccato-like very short blasts.

The word *teruah* (a broken sound) appears three times in the Jewish *Old Testament* in the context of the shofar, from which the *Talmud* derived the rule that three such sounds must be made. In addition, other verses connect the word *tekiah* (an unbroken sound) to *teruah* twice, thus leading the rabbis of the *Talmud* to conclude that each *teruah* must be preceded and followed by a *tekiah*, leading to a total of nine blasts (*tekiah-teruah-tekiah* three times).



BLOWING OF THE SHOFAR (YEMENITE KUDU HORN)

Over time doubts arose as to the correct sound of the *teruah*. The *Talmud* is uncertain whether it meant a moaning/groaning or a staccato beat sound. So in good rabbinic fashion, a system of three sounds was therefore devised to account for all the possibilities: the *shevarim*

11. A *beis din* is a rabbinic court of Judaism.

12. *teruos* = plural of *teruah*; *quaver* = a short tremulous note, a trill.

שברים (same as the *quavers*) were composed of three connected short sounds, the *teruah* were composed of a series of nine very short notes divided into three disconnected or broken sequences of three notes each. Variations on these were included thus insuring that the “correct sound” would be played. The general sequence of the shofar blowing for Rosh Hashanah in our era is thus:

*tekiah, shevarim-teruah, tekiah*  
*tekiah, shevarim, tekiah*  
*tekiah, teruah, tekiah gadolah*<sup>13</sup>

The blowing of the shofars, whatever the exact pattern was in Temple times, was to be repeated over and over again for the entire day, while the animal and meal sacrifices listed in *Numbers 29: 2-6* were performed by the priests.

#### HOW WAS THE FEAST OF THE BLOWING OF THE SHOFARS CELEBRATED IN TEMPLE TIMES?

The only contemporary witness to write about how the Feast of the Blowing of the Shofars was celebrated in our LORD Jesus Christ’s day was Philo (20 B.C. - A.D. 50), a Jewish Philosopher living in Alexandria, Egypt, who wrote in Greek. Being a contemporary of both Christ Jesus and St. Paul, and having visited Jerusalem, he is an important Jewish witness to the Second Temple period and the only one to reveal to us the immediate purpose of the this feast.<sup>14</sup> [Note: Philo always uses the Greek word *salpingx* for *trumpet*.]

“XXXI. Immediately after [Festival of Pentecost] comes the festival of the sacred moon; in which it is the **custom to play the trumpet in the temple** at the same moment that the sacrifices are offered. From which practice **this is called the true feast of trumpets**; and there are two reasons for it, one peculiar to the nation, and the other common to all mankind. Peculiar to the nation, as being a **commemoration of that most marvelous, wonderful, and miraculous event that took place when the holy oracles of the law were given: for then the voice of a trumpet sounded from heaven**, which it is natural to suppose reached to the very extremities of the universe, so that so wondrous a sound attracted all who were present, making them consider, as is probable, that such mighty events were signs betokening some great things to be accomplished. And what more great or more beneficial thing could come to men than laws affecting the whole race.

“And what was common to all mankind was this: the trumpet is the instrument of war, sounding both when commanding the charge and retreat ...”

To Philo, the immediate purpose of the feast was

13. a *tekiah gadolah* is a much longer *tekiah*. The following YouTube video is helpful in understanding the various sounds:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0jR20-0sy1Y>

14. Philo, “The Special Laws, Treatise II,” Section XXIX, (¶162-175), in Yonge CD, (translator), *The Works of Philo, Complete and Unabridged*, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA 1993, pp. 583-4.

exactly as written in **Leviticus 23:24**: *a memorial of the blowing of shofars, a remembrance of the shofar blasts*, a memorial of that most wonderful event in the history of the children of Israel. That event was the descent of the LORD, the God of Abraham, Issac, and Jacob, upon Mt. Sinai in a dark cloud, accompanied by fire, thunder and flashes of lightening, and announced by deafening shofar blasts. Further, on the day of the first Pentecost, the LORD presented Moses with the Torah which the Israelites agreed to follow as His covenant people. Was there anything accompanied by the blowing of shofars more worthy of remembrance, of commemoration, than this since their departure from Egypt? Certainly not while Moses was still alive. Moreover, at the time of the LORD's descent and His giving of the Law, Israel only had shofars. [The LORD's order to make the two trumpets of silver, **Numbers 10:2**, came months after He gave Moses the Law (cf. **Numbers 9:1-23**).]

Let's review "that most marvelous, wonderful, and miraculous event" in the history of Israel.

#### THE DESCENT OF THE LORD UPON MOUNT SINAI

**Exodus 19:1** *In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. 2 For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount. 3 And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; 4 Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. 5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: 6 And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. 7 And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him. 8 And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD. 9 And the LORD said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever. And Moses told the words of the people unto the LORD. 10 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes, 11 And be ready against the third day: for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai. 12 And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death: 13 There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live: when the trumpet [Hebrew: ram's horn] soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount. 14 And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people; and they*

*washed their clothes. 15 And he said unto the people, Be ready against the third day: come not at your wives. 16 And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet [Hebrew: shofar] exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. 17 And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. 18 And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. 19 And when the voice of the trumpet [Hebrew: shofar] sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice.. 20 And the LORD came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the LORD called Moses up to the top of the mount; and Moses went up. 21 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the LORD to gaze, and many of them perish. 22 And let the priests also, which come near to the LORD, sanctify themselves, lest the LORD break forth upon them. 23 And Moses said unto the LORD, The people cannot come up to mount Sinai: for thou chargedst us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it. 24 And the LORD said unto him, Away, get thee down, and thou shalt come up, thou, and Aaron with thee: but let not the priests and the people break through to come up unto the LORD, lest he break forth upon them. 25 So Moses went down unto the people, and spake unto them.*

#### ANOTHER REMEMBRANCE OF THE BLOWING OF THE SHOFARS: THE CONQUEST OF JERICHO

Despite the many other uses of shofars and trumpets in the *Old Testament* scriptures<sup>15</sup>, the one other miraculous event in the history of the children of Israel that would be worthy of their commemoration in the future was their conquest of the Canaanite city of Jericho under the leadership of Joshua (Jesus of Nevi), their first conquest in the Promised Land:

**Joshua 5:13** *And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? 14 And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come.<sup>16</sup> And*

15. E.g. to assemble the Israelites for announcements (**Numbers 10:1-4, 7**), to sound alarms, for watchmen to warn the people (**Ezekiel 33:3-6**), for the anointing of Kings (**3 Kingdoms 1:34-39**), to celebrate the new moon and the beginnings of festivals, to proclaim the year of Jubilee, to sound over the burnt offering and peace offerings that they may be a memorial before God for the Israelites, to summon the Israelites to go to war (**Judges 3:27, 2 Kingdoms 10:1**), to be remembered in war by the LORD and be saved from their enemies, to call the Israelites to repentance, to gather the dispersed of Israel to Jerusalem for worship of the LORD with a great shofar (**Isaiah 27:13**), to announce the great day of the LORD (**Joel 2:1, Zephaniah 1:14-18**), and with a shout and the sound of the shofar to subdue the nations (**Psalms 46 Lxx, Psalm 47** Masoretic Text)

16. St. John of Damascus, in his *Divine Images*, 1:8 & 3:26, interprets the *Captain of the Lord's hosts* to be an angel in the form of a man. Rabbinic tradition considers him to be the Archangel Michael.



Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship<sup>17</sup>, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? 15 And the captain of the LORD's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so.

6:1 Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in. 2 And the LORD said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour. 3 And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days. 4 And seven priests shall bear before the ark **seven trumpets of rams' horns** [שופרות shofarot, (plural of shofar)]: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow<sup>18</sup> **with the trumpets** [בְּשׁוֹפְרוֹת b'shofarot]. 5 And it shall come to pass, that **when they make a long blast** [בְּמִשְׁךָ bim'shok drawn out sound] **with the ram's horn** [בְּקֶרֶן הַיּוֹבֵל b'keren ha-yobel, with the horn of the ram], **and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet** [קול השופר voice of the shofar], all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him.

6 And Joshua the son of Nun called the priests, and said unto them, Take up the ark of the covenant, and **let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns** [שופרות shofarot] **before the ark of the LORD**. 7 And he said unto the people, Pass on, and compass the city, and let him that is armed pass on before the ark of the LORD.

8 And it came to pass, when Joshua had spoken unto the people, that **the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns** [שופרות shofarot] **passed on before the LORD, and blew with the trumpets** [שופרות shofarot]: **and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them**. 9 And the armed men went before the priests that **blew with the trumpets** [שופרות shofarot], and the rearward came after the ark, the priests going on, and **blowing with the trumpets** [שופרות shofarot]. 10 And Joshua had commanded the people, saying, Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise with your voice, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout. 11 So the ark of the LORD compassed the city, going about it once: and they came into the camp, and lodged in the camp.

12 And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD. 13 And **seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns** [שופרות shofarot] **before the ark of the LORD went on continually, and blew with the trumpets** [שופרות shofarot]: and the armed men went before them; but the rearward came after the ark of the LORD, **the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets** [שופרות shofarot]. 14 And the second day they compassed the city once, and returned into the camp: so they did six days.

15 And it came to pass on the **seventh day**, that they rose early about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times: **only on that day they compassed the city seven times**. 16 And it came to pass **at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets** [בְּשׁוֹפְרוֹת b'shofarot], Joshua said unto the people, **Shout; for**

**the LORD hath given you the city**. 17 And the city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein, to the LORD: **only Rahab the harlot shall live**, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent. 18 And ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. 19 But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto the LORD: they shall come into the treasury of the LORD.

20 **So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets** [בְּשׁוֹפְרוֹת b'shofarot]: **and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet** [הַשּׁוֹפֵר the shofar], **and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat**, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. 21 And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword.



22 But Joshua had said unto the two men that had spied out the country, Go into the harlot's house, and bring out thence the woman, and all that she hath, as ye sware unto her. 23 And the young men that were spies went in, and **brought out Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had**; and they brought out all her kindred, and left them without the camp of Israel. 24 And they **burnt the city with fire, and all that was therein**: only the silver, and the gold, and the vessels of brass and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD.


25 **And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day; because she hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho**. 26 And Joshua adjured them at that time, saying, Cursed be the man before the LORD, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it. 27 So the LORD was with Joshua; and his fame was noised throughout all the country.

The conquest of Jericho, a great and most dramatic victory, is a prime example of the LORD fighting on behalf of the Israelites and helping them win their first battle against the Canaanites.

But it is also a portrayal, a type of the LORD's victory over Satan's kingdom (Jericho) at the consummation. Here, the Canaanite king, his nobles, and his people in the walled city of Jericho are types of Satan, the fallen angels, and the fallen men that follow him in the kingdom of the Antichrist. Joshua, the priests

17. The phrase and did worship is absent in the *Septuagint*.

18. תִּקְעוּ has the same root תִּקַּע as תִּקְעָה *tekiyah*, the longer blast. This same word is used throughout this chapter for *blow, blew, or blowing*.



blowing the shofars, and the Israelites marching behind are types of the LORD Jesus Christ, His hosts of Angels, and His Church preparing for, warning, and destroying Satan's kingdom, and rescuing those (Rahab and her family) who turn to Him in faith with all their heart and remain faithful to Him to the end. Thus, Rahab, who recognized the God of Israel as the LORD, the God of Heaven, and who declared her faith in Him and justified her faith by hiding the Israelite spies, represents the Church of the faithful on the earth who are protected by Him during the Great Tribulation period and rescued by Him out of Satan's hands.

#### TRUMPETS/SHOFARS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT THE APOCALYPSE

The 6 days of circling the city of Jericho once while blowing the shofars in preparation for the final assault on the 7th day is reminiscent of the 7 trumpet judgments in chapters 8-11 of the *Apocalypse* of St. John the Theologian -- "plagues that will occur before the consummation."<sup>19</sup> These judgments were unleashed by the LORD on the ungodly and unrepentant during the second half of the 7 year long Tribulation Period in preparation for the final assault on the Antichrist's (and Satan's) kingdom. This began in *Apocalypse 8:1* with the opening of the 7th seal. Here 7 angels stand before God and are given 7 trumpets [remember that the Greek word *σαλπιγξ salpingx*, can mean a trumpet made from metal or from animal horns, i.e., a *shofar*].

1. At the first angel's trumpet blast hail and fire were cast upon the earth and burned up one third of the trees and grass.

2. At the second angel's trumpet blast a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea and one third of the sea creatures perished and one third of the ships.

3. At the third trumpet, one third of the waters became wormwood (causing great bitterness) killing many.

4. At the fourth trumpet, one third of the sun, moon, and stars were darkened, darkening one third of the day and one third of the night.

5. At the fifth trumpet, the first of the woes, the bottomless pit was opened --smoke poured forth and locust-appearing creatures with scorpion like stingers, whose king was the angel of the bottomless pit and named Abaddon/Apollyon<sup>20</sup>, were released and for 5

months tormented those men who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads.

6. At the 6th trumpet blast, 4 angels were released to slay one third of mankind. An army of 200,000 horsemen went forth, whose horses had heads like lions which breathed out fire, smoke, and brimstone to complete this task. Those men who were left alive [and presumably not marked with the seal of God], repented not of their evils.

7. *And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. 16 And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, 17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. 18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth. Apocalypse 11:15-18*

#### TRUMPETS/SHOFARS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT ST. PAUL AND ST. MATTHEW

As we look at St. Paul's First Epistles to the *Corinthians* and to the *Thessalonians*, and St. Matthew's *Gospel*, we see that the the resurrection and the gathering of the saints at the Second Coming of Christ are accompanied by trumpet blasts:

*1 Corinthians 15:51-54 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.*

*1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 For this we say unto you by the word of the LORD, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the LORD shall not prevent them which are asleep. 16 For the LORD himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the LORD in the air: and so shall we ever be with the LORD.*

*Gospel of St. Matthew 24:29-31. Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: 30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And He shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*

19. St. Andrew of Caesarea, *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, Book 8, Chapter 22, on verse 8:7, in *Ancient Christian Texts, Greek Commentaries on Revelation: Oecumenius and Andrew of Caesarea*, IVP Academic, Downers Grove, IL, 2011, p. 144.

20. *Abaddon* is Hebrew for *Destroyer*. *Apollyon* is the Greek translation of *Abaddon*.



These trumpets are associated with the raising of the dead, the uniting of their souls with their bodies and putting on incorruption, and their rising into the clouds to meet the LORD Jesus Christ at His Second Coming. Those elect still alive on the earth at the time of the resurrection of the dead, following the great sound of a trumpet, will be gathered together by the angels to meet Christ in the clouds of heaven. The character and sequence of these trumpet blasts is much more clearly revealed by the 4th century Hierarch St. Nephon of Constantia's<sup>21</sup> revelation from the LORD as follows:

### THE 3 TRUMPETS IN ST. NEPHON'S VISION OF JUDGMENT AND HEAVENLY REWARDS:

Then a divine command was given for **the mighty leader, Michael**, to come again to stand by the throne of the LORD. **At that moment an angel holding a thunderous trumpet appeared.** The Judge took it in His hands, **blew three times**<sup>22</sup> and spoke three words. Then He gave it to Michael and said: "Go to Golgotha, where I stretched My immaculate hands, and **sound the trumpet three times** there also."<sup>23</sup>



ARCHANGEL MICHAEL SOUNDING THE TRUMPET

As soon as Michael left, the LORD called the battalion of Authorities and turning to its leader He said: "I command you to take your divine battalion and disperse yourselves in all the

21. This 4th century saint is also referred to as St. Nifon of Constantiana.

22. Consistent with the traditional pattern the *Mishnah* states for Rosh Hashanah -- here the first of 3 sets of 3 blasts

23. The second 3 blasts of the trumpet are consistent with the traditional blowing of the shofar as a *tekiah-teruah-tekiah*.

world to transport the saints on top of clouds, from East and West, North and South. **You will gather all of them so that they may welcome My presence, as soon as the trumpet sounds."**

After all this, the righteous Judge glanced at the earth and saw ... fog and darkness, weeping and woes and many lamentations from the fearful tyranny of Satan. The beast raged and raved.

He destroyed everything crushing them like grass, because He saw the angels of God preparing eternal fire for him.

As soon as the LORD saw all this He called a fiery angel with a strict and fearful appearance and without pity -- he was the leader of the angels that watch over the fire of Hell -- and said to him: "Take My staff that binds and crushes with you. Take innumerable angels from your battalion also, the most powerful and fearful, who were promised as avengers of the damned. You will go to the noetic sea to find the traces of the black leader. Grab him with force and strength and strike him unmercifully with the staff, until he surrenders the battalion of evil spirits. And after you tie all of them tightly with the force of My rod, according to My command, you will throw them in the most merciless and horrible punishments! ... "

Finally, then, when everything was ready, a sign was given to the archangel who was holding the **trumpet** to sound it loudly. Immediately dead silence spread out, as if the universe had become calm. With the **first sound, all the bodies of the dead were raised.**<sup>24</sup> With the **second,**<sup>25</sup> **the Spirit of the LORD again restored the souls in the dead bodies.** Awe and horror seized the universe. The celestial and the terrestrial trembled. And then the **third and most horrible call resounded,**<sup>26</sup> which shook all the world. **The dead were resurrected from their graves "in the twinkling of an eye."**<sup>27</sup> What a frightful sight! They surpassed the sand of the sea in number. At the same time, like dense rain, the angelic armies were descending from heaven toward the "throne of preparation" shouting: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts, the whole earth is full of fear and trembling."

All the people and the countless armies of angels stood waiting. They were trembling and shuddering before the terrible divine authority which was descending on earth. However, while all were looking up high, suddenly earthquakes began to take place, thunder and lightening in the Valley of Judgment and in Heaven so that everyone was shocked. Then, the firmament rolled up like a scroll: the Holy Cross appeared glowing like the sun and scattering divine flashes. The angels were holding it before our LORD Jesus Christ and Judge of the universe, Who was coming.

In a little while a hymn was heard, a song never heard before: "'Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the LORD; God is the LORD,' Judge, Sovereign, Prince of Peace."

As soon as that thunderous doxology ended, the Judge appeared in the clouds, seated on a fiery throne. He set heaven and earth afire with His very splendor.

Suddenly, in the midst of the masses of the resurrected dead some began to glow like the sun! Immediately they were

24. *1 Corinthians* 15:51-52

25. *1 Corinthians* 15:53-54

26. Perhaps the 3rd set of the traditional Jewish 3 sets of 3 blasts *tekiah, shevarim-teruah tekiah; tekiah, shevarim, tekiah; tekiah, teruah, tekiah gedolah* -- the third being the most horrible, shaking the whole world. [Note: *tekiah gedolah* is the greatly prolonged *tekiah*]

27. *1 Thessalonians* 4:16



## THE GOOD WORD

c/o St. Seraphim of Sarov & St. John of Kronstadt Orthodox Church  
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snatched from the clouds in the air to meet their LORD. The majority, however, remained below. No one brought them to heaven! ... They were weeping bitterly that they too weren't able to be snatched from the clouds and their grief and pain was like poison to their souls. They all fell on their knees before the Judge and rose up again.

The fearful Judge had finally sat on the throne of Judgment, and all the powers of the heavens gathered around Him with fear and trembling. Those who had been snatched from the clouds to be received by Him, were placed on His right. The rest were directed to the left of the Judge. The majority of them were Jews, nobles, Bishops, priests, kings, and a large number of monks and laymen. They stood very ashamed, deploring themselves and weeping for their loss. Their faces were wretched and they sighed deeply crushed. A deathly grief had spread over all and there was no comfort in sight anywhere.

But all those who were standing on the right of the LORD were cheerful, bright as the sun, reserved, glorified, white like the light, ablaze, as if by a flash of divine light. They resembled--if it isn't daring for one to say it--their LORD and God.

The fearful Judge immediately threw His gaze to the one side and to the other. On the right side He looked satisfied and smiled. However, when He turned to the left, He was troubled and very angry and turned His face away at once.

Then with a loud and solemn voice He said to those at His right hand: *"Come, O blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave Me food, I was thirsty and you gave Me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed Me, I was naked and you clothed Me, I was sick and you visited Me, I was in prison and you came to Me."*<sup>28</sup>

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28. *An Ascetic Bishop: Stories, Sermons, and Prayers of St. Nephon*, (Second Edition) Jeannie Gentithes, Florence, AZ, 2015, pp. 99-102.

## FUTURE BLOWING OF THE SHOFARS

The next time the shofars/trumpets sound from Heaven, it will be in the Great Tribulation with the 7 trumpet judgments. Who knows what day that will be -- no one! Will those shofar/trumpet blasts be heard on the earth? St. Andrew of Caesarea implies a yes:

*"[8:5-6] And there were voices peals of thunder, flashes of lightning and an earthquake. And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets readied themselves to blow them. Through all of these, the horrors that are to occur before the consummation are indicated. It was the same on Mount Sinai when such wonders were symbols making known the divine presence, frightening everyone, and persuading the more sensible of them to repentance."*<sup>29</sup>

In my opinion the last three blasts will be heard by all upon the earth on the Appointed Feast of the Blowing of the Shofars because all the LORD's Appointed Feasts have been fulfilled on their appointed days so far. The first blast will raise the dead, the second blast will unite their souls and their bodies, the corruptible putting on incorruption, and the third and great trumpet blast, will resurrect the bodies of the dead, and signal the hosts of angels to descend upon the earth. It will announce the coming of the LORD and summon all to appear before Him for His Judgment at the next Appointed Feast, the Day of Atonement.

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29. St. Andrew of Caesarea, Book 8, Chapter 21, on 8:5-6, p. 143.