

THE RAPTURE AND THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS

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Soli Deo Gloria!

“Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day.” (Ps81:3)

“Behold, I show you a mystery ... 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.” (1Cor15:51-52)

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voiced of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first.” (1Thess4:16)

INTRODUCTION.

The Feasts of the LORD (Lev23:2) are not only linked to the agricultural cycle in Israel and commemorative of historical events, but they are also **prophetic** (Col2:16-17). The first three feasts in the 1st month are associated with the Messiah’s 1st Coming; the last three feasts in the 7th month are associated with His Second Coming. The 4th (middle) feast highlights the unexpected birth of the Church (within which exists the remnant of Israel during the Dispensation of Grace; cf. Rom11:5). Thus, the first four feasts have been fulfilled in their prophetic sense, and their fulfillments occurred on the very days the feasts were being observed¹. The final three feasts will undoubtedly be fulfilled in an analogous fashion².

<u>Feast</u>	<u>Date of Celebration</u>
1. Passover.....	1st month 14
2. Feast of Unleavened Bread*.....	1st month 15-21
3. Feast of First Fruits.....	Sunday after Passover
4. Feast of Weeks* (aka Pentecost).....	50 Days after First Fruits
5. Feast of Trumpets (aka Rosh Hashanah).....	7th month 1
6. Day of Atonement (aka Yom Kippur).....	7th month 10
7. <u>Feast of Tabernacles*</u> (aka Booths).....	7th month 15-21

*Attendance in Jerusalem required for Jewish men (Deut16:16).

In Leviticus 23:2, the Hebrew word translated “feast” literally means “to keep an appointment” (Cp., Gen18:14; Exod9:5).

THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS. The Feast of Trumpets is celebrated on the 1st day of the 7th month (i.e., Tishri; cf. Lev23:23-25; Num29:1-6). Coincident with, but distinct from, the Feast of Trumpets is the celebration on the 1st of Tishri of the Jewish New Year (i.e., Rosh Hashanah). Jewish tradition holds that the world was created on the 1st of Tishri (Mishna, San Hedrin 38b); originally Tishri was the 1st month of the Jewish year, but the order of months was altered by God at the first Passover (Exod12:2).

¹ Jesus was crucified on Passover, in the tomb on the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and resurrected on the Feast of First Fruits. The Holy Spirit was given, and the Church was born, on the Feast of Weeks (i.e., Pentecost).

² Thus, if the rapture of the Church is a fulfillment of the Feast of Trumpets, the rapture should occur on the day the feast is being celebrated (i.e., the 1st day of the 7th month).

Although Leviticus 23:24 (Cp., Numbers 29:1) only calls for the celebration of this feast for 1 day, a second day was added c. 500 BC due to difficulties in knowing and promulgating the date of the new moon in advance, designating the beginning of a new month³. The problem of predicting the precise day of the Feast of Trumpets is caused by the fact that it falls on the new moon.

There are two types of trumpets used in the Bible: 1) the silver trumpets, and 2) the shofar (i.e., a ram's horn). The shofar is a reminder of Abraham's offering of Isaac and God's provision of a ram as a substitute (Gen22:13). In the routine trumpet blowings associated with Temple worship and weekly sabbaths, the silver trumpets are used. On the Feast of Trumpets, however, the shofar is employed. On the Feast of Trumpets, a series of 100 trumpet blowings are performed. The final blowing, a single blast that is sustained as long as the trumpeter has breath to keep blowing, is designated as the "**last trump**" (Cp., 1Cor15:52).

PROPHETIC FULFILLMENT. The Feast of Trumpets in its prophetic type is yet unfulfilled. Some speculate that the **rapture** of the Church will be the future fulfillment of the Feast of Trumpets. The mention of a trumpet occurs in both of the major N.T. passages⁴ pertaining to the rapture.

"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. Then we who 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."
(1Thess4:16-17)

"Behold, I show you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. 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."
(1Cor15:51-52)

Some have tried to connect the trumpet associated with the rapture to the "last" trumpet (Rev11:15) of the seven Trumpet Judgments during the Tribulation. This linkage would support a mid-tribulation rapture, not a pre-tribulation rapture. However, the 7th trumpet of Revelation is never referred to as the "last trump" or the "trump of God." This trumpet is not the "last" trumpet in the Tribulation, and there will be many more trumpets blown during worship in the Millennium Temple, etc. Furthermore, when the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians of "the last trump", the Book of Revelation had not yet been written; yet, the use of the article indicates he had a specific "trump" in mind and assumed his readers would understand the reference (which was impossible if the seventh Trumpet Judgment was intended). In contrast, the final trumpet blowing on the Feast of Trumpets is explicitly referred to as the "last trump", which is what would immediately come to mind for any Jew.

³ The "new moon" is so designated because it marks the (biblical) beginning of a new month. The lunar cycle, from one new moon to the next, is 29.53 days. Thus, there was always an uncertainty of ±1 day associated with the new moon (and, thus, the Feast of Trumpets).

⁴ There is also the mention of a "voice ... as it were of a trumpet" associated with the call of the Apostle John to ascend into heaven (Rev4:1), considered by some to be a type of the rapture of the Church.

* * * NOTES ON THE FEASTS OF THE LORD * * *

Due to the difficulty in predicting the day of the new moon in advance, and thus the exact day on which the Feast of Trumpets would fall, it was traditionally referred to as the "hidden day" or the "day that no man knew". For this reason, when Jesus said, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only," (Matt24:36), He might have intentionally used an Hebrew idiom to imply that the rapture would occur on the Feast of Trumpets.

The period of time between the Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement is called the "Days of Affliction"; during this period, Israel is to focus on national repentance. Since the Feast of Trumpets is a 2-day festival (Tishri 1-2), and the Day of Atonement occurs on Tishri 10, there are actually 7 days (Tishri 3-9) between these two feasts. Could this period of 7 days between the Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement represent the "time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer30:7), the 7-year tribulation period (Dan9:27)? If so, a pre-tribulation rapture is implied.