

Lesson 8 – Trumpets

Also known as Yom HaTeruah (יום תְּרוּעָה) or Rosh HaShanah (ראש השָׁנָה)

Observed – 1 Tishri (7th Month - September / October)

The Origins

Leviticus 23:23–25 (ESV)

²³ And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²⁴ “Speak to the people of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall observe a day of solemn rest, a memorial proclaimed with blast of trumpets, a holy convocation. ²⁵ You shall not do any ordinary work, and you shall present a food offering to the LORD.”



The name “trumpets” comes from Yom HaTeruah (יום תְּרוּעָה) in Lev 23:24, which means “day of shouting or blasting (i.e. with trumpets).”

Today this feast is known as “Rosh HaShanah (ראש השָׁנָה)” which means “head of the year” and it marks the beginning of the civil new year. Why?

In Bible times, silver trumpets were often used in Israel (Num. 10:1–2). Today, for Rosh HaShanah the ram’s horn trumpet (shofar) is primarily used.

The Feast of Trumpets was considered a call for repentance and it was a day of rest and offerings. Psalm 81 may allude to the Feast of Trumpets (Ps 81:3) in the context of deliverance from Egypt. It ends with a call for repentance, reminding the people to call upon the Lord (Ps 81:11–16).

Jewish tradition purports that the blowing of trumpets is a reminder of the shofars that Joshua and the Israelites used at Jericho (Josh 6:1-5), and also the horn of the ram that Abraham sacrificed in place of Isaac (Gen 22:10-14). At Rosh HaShanah, the shofar is blown to call people to repent and remind them that the holy days are arriving. The shofar is blown 100 times during synagogue services today.

New Year?

The Babylonian Captivity (Exile) was the time when Babylon forcibly deported Jews from Judea and Israel to live in Babylonian territories beginning in the late sixth century BC. During exile from their homeland, the Jewish people adopted some Babylonian ways of life, including the Babylonian calendar and new year. This is why the first month of the Jewish civil calendar today is actually the seventh month of the biblical (religious) calendar. Tishri, the first month of the civil calendar, is a Babylonian word for “beginnings”.

Although the origin of this tradition may have been adopted from the Babylonians, the rabbis imbued it with Jewish significance as the anniversary of the day on which the world was created, or of the day on which humanity was created.

Ten Days of Repentance (Days of Awe)

Rosh HaShanah introduces the most serious season in the Jewish calendar known as *Yamin Noraim*, the Days of Awe. This period includes ten days of introspection and repentance, leading to Yom Kippur on the tenth day. It is a time of soul searching and of making things right with God and one's neighbors. These ten days make up the High Holy Days for the Jews.

Many Jewish people attend Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur services even if they have not attended synagogue services the rest of the year.

Jewish tradition holds there are three books that are opened on Rosh HaShanah (*Perhaps coming from Dan 7:10*).

1. One book is for the absolutely wicked; their names will not be written in the Book of Life for the coming year.
2. Another book is for the perfectly righteous; their names will be written in the Book of Life for the coming year.
3. The third book is opened for those not in either of the first two books, those ordinary people who are neither perfectly evil nor perfectly good. They have to do good works during the ten **Days of Awe** in order to include their names in the coming year. *This does not provide assurance of eternal, spiritual salvation.*

The Blowing of the Horn

In the future, the blowing of the horn will mark the time when the followers of Christ (dead and alive) will meet Him in the air. Will we be ready?

1 Corinthians 15:51–52 (ESV)

⁵¹ Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.

1 Thessalonians 4:16–18 (ESV)

¹⁶ For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage one another with these words.

The True Book of Life

God does have a Book of Life, the Lamb's Book of Life (Rev. 20:11-15; 21:22-27). The only way to have one's name inscribed in the Book is through faith in Jesus as Savior. Those whose names are not in the book will be judged and sentenced to hell (Rev. 20:15).

Background Passages

Leviticus 23:23–25 (ESV)

²³ And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²⁴ “Speak to the people of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall observe a day of solemn rest, a memorial proclaimed with blast of trumpets, a holy convocation. ²⁵ You shall not do any ordinary work, and you shall present a food offering to the LORD.”

Numbers 29:1–6 (ESV)

¹ “On the first day of the seventh month you shall have a holy convocation. You shall not do any ordinary work. It is a day for you to blow the trumpets, ² and you shall offer a burnt offering, for a pleasing aroma to the LORD: one bull from the herd, one ram, seven male lambs a year old without blemish; ³ also their grain offering of fine flour mixed with oil, three tenths of an ephah for the bull, two tenths for the ram, ⁴ and one tenth for each of the seven lambs; ⁵ with one male goat for a sin offering, to make atonement for you; ⁶ besides the burnt offering of the new moon, and its grain offering, and the regular burnt offering and its grain offering, and their drink offering, according to the rule for them, for a pleasing aroma, a food offering to the LORD.

Silver Trumpets

Numbers 10:1–2 (ESV)

¹ The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ² “Make two silver trumpets. Of hammered work you shall make them, and you shall use them for summoning the congregation and for breaking camp.

Conquest of Jericho

Joshua 6:1–5 (ESV)

¹ Now Jericho was shut up inside and outside because of the people of Israel. None went out, and none came in. ² And the LORD said to Joshua, “See, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king and mighty men of valor. ³ You shall march around the city, all the men of war going around the city once. Thus shall you do for six days. ⁴ Seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams’ horns before the ark. On the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. ⁵ And when they make a long blast with the ram’s horn, when you hear the sound of the trumpet, then all the people shall shout with a great shout, and the wall of the city will fall down flat, and the people shall go up, everyone straight before him.”

Abraham and Isaac

Genesis 22:10–14 (ESV)

¹⁰ Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son. ¹¹ But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” ¹² He said, “Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.” ¹³ And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his

son. ¹⁴ So Abraham called the name of that place, “The LORD will provide”; as it is said to this day, “On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided.”

Books Opened

Daniel 7:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ A stream of fire issued and came out from before him; a thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened.

The Blowing of the Horn

1 Corinthians 15:51–52 (ESV)

⁵¹ Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.

1 Thessalonians 4:16–18 (ESV)

¹⁶ For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage one another with these words.

The Book of Life

Revelation 20:11–15 (ESV)

¹¹ Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. ¹³ And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. ¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵ And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Revelation 21:22–27 (ESV)

²² And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. ²³ And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. ²⁴ By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, ²⁵ and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. ²⁶ They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. ²⁷ But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

TRUMPETS, FEAST OF.

‘Day of blowing the trumpets’ (Heb. *yôm t̄rû’â*, Nu. 29:1) or ‘memorial of blowing of trumpets’ (Lv. 23:24). The 7th month in the Jewish *calendar, *tišri* (Sept./Oct.), was the beginning of the civil year. The first day of the month was to be ‘a day of solemn rest’, in which ‘no laborious work’ was to be done. The lxx of Nu. 29:1 renders the phrase *yôm t̄rû’â* by *hēmera sēmasias*, ‘a day of signalling’, but the Mishnah and traditional Jewish practice have understood by this the use of the *šôpār*, usually, though not always, made of ram’s horn. Tradition is not clear as to what precisely was meant by the trumpet-blowing, which was accompanied by reading of relevant passages of Scripture (H. G. Friedmann, *JQR* 1, 1888, pp. 62ff.). / Bibliography. N. H. Snaith, *The Jewish New Year Festival*, 1947. / T. H. Jones.¹

Trumpets, Feast of,

a celebration on the first day of the seventh month (Tishri) of the Hebrew religious year. Its name comes from its designation as a ‘day of (horn-)blasts’ (Num. 29:1; cf. Lev. 23:24; Num. 10:10). It was a day of rest. An extra set of new-moon offerings was brought (except for one bull as a burnt offering) because it was the foremost of the new-moon celebrations (Num. 29:2–6; cf. 28:11-15). In the Bible, this day does not appear to have the character of a New Year’s celebration. **See also** Feasts, Festivals, and Fasts.²

Trumpets, Feast of—

was celebrated at the beginning of the month Tisri, the first month of the civil year. It received its name from the circumstances that the trumpets usually blown at the commencement of each month were on that occasion blown with unusual solemnity (Lev. 23:23–25; Num. 10:10; 29:1–6). It was one of the seven days of holy convocation. The special design of this feast, which is described in these verses, is not known.³

Trumpets, Feast of

(זְכֵרוֹן תְּרוּעָה, *zikhron teru'ah*). Literally “Memorial of Trumpets”; an Israelite celebration on the first day of the seventh month (Lev 23:24; Num 29:1–6). For more information on Israelite celebrations, see this article: Feasts and Festivals of Israel.⁴

¹ Jones, T. H. (1996). [Trumpets, Feast Of](#). In D. R. W. Wood, I. H. Marshall, A. R. Millard, J. I. Packer, & D. J. Wiseman (Eds.), *New Bible dictionary* (3rd ed., p. 1213). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

² Achtemeier, P. J., Harper & Row and Society of Biblical Literature. (1985). In [Harper’s Bible dictionary](#) (1st ed., p. 1100). San Francisco: Harper & Row.

³ Easton, M. G. (1893). In [Easton’s Bible dictionary](#). New York: Harper & Brothers.

⁴ Major Contributors and Editors. (2016). [Trumpets, Feast of](#). In J. D. Barry, D. Bomar, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, D. Mangum, C. Sinclair Wolcott, ... W. Widder (Eds.), *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

New Year Festival

(Heb. Rosh Hashanah, ‘the beginning [lit. ‘head’] of the year’), the festival celebrated on the first day of the month of Tishri (Sept.-Oct.), the seventh month of the Jewish calendar. Basic regulations for the observance of the New Year Festival appear in Lev. 23:23–25 and Num. 29:1–6. These texts refer to the festival as ‘a holy convocation’ or ‘the day of trumpet blasts.’ It is a day of rest on which no work is to be done. Sacrificial offerings include one young bull, one ram, and seven male lambs together with their respective cereal offerings. In addition, a male goat is to be sacrificed as a sin offering.

There is some confusion in the biblical tradition concerning the New Year Festival. The first of Tishri is nowhere designated as New Year’s Day in the Bible. The term *Rosh Hashanah* appears only in Ezek. 40:1 where it refers to the general time of the year, but not specifically to the New Year Festival. According to Exod. 12:2, the month of Abib, later known as Nisan (March-April), is the first month of the year, but no New Year Festival is prescribed for the first of Nisan. The first of Nisan, however, is the beginning of the eleven-day Babylonian New Year Festival. This has prompted some scholars to suggest that the biblical New Year originally fell on the first of Tishri but at some time, probably during the Babylonian exile, the observance shifted to the first of Nisan to conform with Babylonian practice. Others argue that the original New Year was in the spring and later shifted to the autumn. A third position distinguishes two types of New Years. The first of Nisan was the regnal New Year, by which the reigns of kings were reckoned, and the first of Tishri was the religious or agricultural New Year for reckoning the liturgical calendar. In this respect, it is noteworthy that the Mishnah (*Rosh. Hash. 1:1*) identifies four New Years, including the first of Nisan, the New Year for kings and festivals, and the first of Tishri, the New Year for agriculture and reckoning the reigns of foreign kings.

Another issue concerns the relation of the biblical New Year Festival to the Babylonian New Year or *akitu* festival. This festival, held in the spring from the first to the eleventh of Nisan, emphasized the renewal of creation and kingship. The celebration featured a liturgical recitation and reenactment of the Babylonian creation epic in which Marduk, the city god of Babylon, defeated the chaos monster Tiamat and set the cosmos in order. The festivities also included a ritual procession around the city, a ritual humiliation of the king, and a ritual marriage of Marduk atop the ziggurat of Babylon. At the end of the festival, the king received the tablets of destiny that assured his rule for another year. Some scholars have attempted to argue that a similar New Year Festival was observed in Jerusalem during the monarchical period, but the evidence does not support such a claim. It is more likely that the biblical New Year Festival was a harvest celebration associated with the Day of Atonement (Lev. 23:26–32; Num. 29:7–11) and the Festival of Booths (Lev. 23:33–43; Num. 29:12–38; Deut. 16:13–15; cf. Exod. 23:16; 34:22). **See also** Babylon; Nisan; Tiamat; Time; Tishri. M.A.S.⁵

⁵ Achtemeier, P. J., Harper & Row and Society of Biblical Literature. (1985). In [Harper’s Bible dictionary](#) (1st ed., pp. 703–704). San Francisco: Harper & Row.

Feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah).

The Feast of Trumpets signaled a call for repentance. Leviticus says that it should be announced with the blast of trumpets and be treated as a holy convocation. A food offering was included in the celebrations alongside the prohibition against work (Lev 23:23–25). The meat offerings of the feast were the same as those of the Feast of Weeks, but with only one bull (Num 29:2).

The Feast of Trumpets marked the beginning of a new agricultural year. It was unusual in that the trumpet, likely the *shofar*, would announce the feast and assemble the people. This feast dedicated the new agricultural year to God for His provision. Psalm 81 may allude to the Feast of Trumpets (Psa 81:3) in the context of the deliverance from Egypt. The psalm ends with a call for repentance, reminding the people to call upon the Lord as those in Egypt did (Psa 81:11–16).⁶

⁶ Swann, J. T. (2016). [Feasts and Festivals of Israel](#). In J. D. Barry, D. Bomar, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, D. Mangum, C. Sinclair Wolcott, ... W. Widder (Eds.), *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.