

Yom Teruah (the Day of the Trumpet)

Bible text: Matthew 24:30-31
Sermon series: Fall Feasts 2025

Introduction

Today we're starting a brand-new series to honor the Biblical fall feasts. Tomorrow when the sun goes down, Rosh Hashana starts, and then over the course of four weeks there are two other important festivals we need to highlight. We're not studying these feasts to become Jewish, but to understand God's prophetic calendar of redemption and the renewal of all things. The Fall Feasts are all mo'edim (appointed times) that point us to Jesus, to the hope of his return, and to the restoration of all things.

The Feast of Trumpets announces the coming King. The Day of Atonement points us to the cleansing and restoration that only Messiah can bring. The Feast of Tabernacles celebrates God dwelling with his people, and looks ahead to the day when all nations will worship the King in Jerusalem. The King is coming. Our calling is to live awake, repentant, joyful, and ready until he arrives.

Here is a great quote to keep in the back of your mind as we start this series: our eschatology always drives our discipleship (John Harrigan). In other words: what we believe about the end times determines how we live as Jesus' disciples in the here and now as we're discipling others. Our view of the future should give us the urgency to live holy lives and to do everything we can to reach others with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Every generation should live as if Jesus is coming back in their generation. The Fall Feasts should fire up our sense of urgency!

New Year in Spring or Fall?

So when is the New Year on the Hebrew calendar?

- The Biblical New Year is the first day of the month of Aviv / Nisan in the spring (Ex.12:2).
- Jewish tradition shifted this to the fall: Rosh Hashanah ("head of the year").
- But Rosh Hashana is not a biblical term. The correct term is Yom Teruah = Day of Trumpet Blasts/Shouts (Lev.23:24; Num.29:1).
- Yom Teruah is in the seventh month (Tishri) biblically speaking. This is somewhere around late Sept or October.

Practical instructions for Yom Teruah

So what does the Bible say about Yom Teruah... what it means and how to celebrate it? Not a whole lot:

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 29:1-2 (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...”

And then the next 4 verses give some more instructions about those sacrifices.

Yom Teruah remains a mystery... until...

Notice that there is no explanation given, only practical instructions: the shofar, rest, a holy convocation (=assembly), and offerings. It's as if God left this feast as a mystery appointment, waiting to be fulfilled in Messiah.

Some of the prophets started to fill in some of the blanks of this mystery, led by the Spirit. A great example is Joel, who links it with the coming day of the LORD:

Joel 2:1-2 (ESV)

*Blow a trumpet in Zion; sound an alarm on my holy mountain!
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming;
it is near, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness!*

Over time, rabbinic Judaism started to fill in more of the blanks and started to associate it with judgment, repentance, and the civil new year. These themes developed around it because of the timing (7th month, agricultural year turning) and the Ten Days of Awe leading to Yom Kippur. But it remained a mystery...

Jesus' teaching on the trumpet

So what is the meaning of Yom Teruah? In the New Testament, the mystery is unveiled: the trumpet announces the return of the King and the gathering of his people. Let me connect the dots for you! Let's first look at Jesus – who is the Messianic King who came and who will return:

Matthew 24:30-31 (ESV)

“Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

“all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” >>> everyone will see Jesus returning! Could this be because his return will be broadcast on social media from the city of Jerusalem? I don't know for sure, but it's certainly possible!

Jesus here echoes the “son of man” language from Daniel – it doesn't point to his humanity but to him as the divine King:

Daniel 7:13-14 (ESV)

13 “I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. 14 And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.”

Zechariah 14:4 shows that Jesus' feet will stand on the Mount of Olives before he establishes his Kingship from Mount Zion (Zech.14:9). So Jesus shows that the blowing of the shofar signals the return of the King.

Paul's teaching on the trumpet

Paul shows that when the shofar sounds, the King will return and the saints will welcome him – very comparable to the triumphal entry:

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 (ESV)

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. 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.

So you see that Paul also connects the sounding of the shofar with the resurrection of the dead and the glorification of the bodies of the saints. He expands on that in 1Cor.:

1 Corinthians 15:51-52 (ESV)

Behold! I tell 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 trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.

John's teaching on the trumpet

The book of Revelation also shows something very important that happens at that eschatological Yom Teruah we're waiting for:

Revelation 11:15 (ESV)

Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.”

So from Jesus to Paul to John, the consistent NT message is this: the trumpet announces the coming King and the gathering of his people. In the process, the kingdoms of the world are coming to an end... and the Kingdom of our Lord and his Moschiach will be established! Yom Teruah is the day that signals the coming of the King!

Days of Awe, Israel's salvation and the coming of the King

As we enter the Ten Days of Awe, a season of repentance and intercession between Yom Teruah and Yom Kippur, we join Paul's cry for Israel's salvation:

Romans 11:25-26 (ESV)

Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob."

And today, we also take Communion, proclaiming Messiah's death until He comes, restores Israel and fully establishes the Kingdom from Mount Zion. As we break the bread and drink the cup, we don't only remember what Jesus did for us on the cross, but we anticipate the day we'll drink the cup with him in his Kingdom.

Starting with Yom Teruah, let's spiritually team up with the Messianic remnant in Israel and around the world for the salvation of Israel... let's fast and pray!

Communion

So today we will have communion in anticipation of the return of our King:

Luke 22:18 (ESV)

"For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."

Matthew 26:29 (ESV)

"I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

1 Corinthians 11:26 (ESV)

"For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

The mission to the nations is coming to an end... the fullness of the gentiles has almost come in... Now is the time for Israel's salvation and the restoration of the Kingdom to Israel with Jesus the Messiah on the throne (Acts 1:6). The "restoration of all things" (Acts 3:21) and the restoration of Israel's Kingdom are two sides of the same coin.

Through communion, we remember the price that Jesus paid to open the door for us Gentiles to be part of this Kingdom... and we look forward to the day when Zech.14:9 is fulfilled:

Zechariah 14:9 (ESV)

*"And the LORD will be king over all the earth.
On that day the LORD will be one and his name one."*