

# Truth for Today

The Bible teaching radio programme

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## The Seven Feasts of the LORD: The Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement

Today's talk is about the Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement and I'll do so in four different ways:

1. Their place in the cycle of Feasts;
2. What actually was celebrated at those two feasts;
3. The prophetic significance of the two feasts; and
4. Things for Christians to learn from these two feasts.

### Their place in the cycle of Feasts

The Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement are the fifth and sixth appointed feasts that the LORD, that is Jehovah, stipulated in Israel's religious calendar, as listed in Leviticus 23. In their annual cycle, the first four feasts occurred in Spring, whilst the last three feasts took place in Autumn. The busy summer period, during which the Israelites collected their wheat and fruit harvests, separated these two sets of feasts. The autumn feasts all occurred during Tishri, the seventh month of the religious year. The Feast of Trumpets took place on the first day of the month. It was preliminary to the Day of Atonement, which occurred on the tenth day of the month. This latter feast prepared the people spiritually for the final week-long celebration of the year, the Feast of Tabernacles or Booths.

### What happened at The Feast of Trumpets and on the Day of Atonement?

In Leviticus 23:23-25, the LORD spoke to the people through Moses: "In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall observe a day of solemn rest, a memorial proclaimed with [the] blast of trumpets, a holy convocation. You shall not do any ordinary work, and you shall [prepare] a food offering to the LORD" (English Standard Version).

The trumpet was consistently used to bring the Israelites together into one place. It was first used at Sinai: "When the trumpet sounds a long blast, they shall come up to the mountain", Exodus 19:13. (Further instructions about the use of trumpets are given in Numbers 10:1-10). For this feast, it was to bring the people back together from their fields, where they'd been busy with the summer time harvests. They were to prepare themselves for the Feast of Tabernacles, by making offerings to Jehovah, as He prescribed in Numbers 29:1-6. It was to be a holy convocation, that is, a special assembly. It was also a memorial (Leviticus 23:24), so that the people would remember all that Jehovah had done for them, as we find in Psalm 81, which, in later times was sung at the festival:

- "Sing aloud to God our strength; shout for joy to the God of Jacob!" Psalm 81:1
- "Blow the trumpet at the new moon, at the full moon, on our feast day", Psalm 81:3. (The trumpets were blown over the sacrifices)
- "I am the LORD your God, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt. Open your mouth wide, and I will ... feed you with the finest of the wheat, and with honey from the rock I [will] satisfy you", Psalm 81:10, 16.

Like the weekly Sabbath, it was a day when ordinary work was prohibited. The burnt offerings, accompanied by their grain offerings, consisted of one bull, one ram, and seven male lambs. One male goat was presented for a sin offering, to make atonement for the people. In addition there was the burnt offering of the new moon (it being the first day of the lunar month), with its grain offering; the regular burnt offering and its grain offering; and their drink offerings, all the rituals were done in accordance with Jehovah's laws so that He could smell the aromas and get pleasure from the worship of the people.

According to Numbers 29:7-11, the Day of Atonement rituals repeated those of the Feast of Trumpets. However, the people were also to be cleansed from unintentional sins by "the sin offering of atonement" (Numbers 29:11), with all the additional solemnity that the occasion demanded. The LORD instructed Moses in Leviticus 23:26-32: "Now on the tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. It shall be for you a time of holy convocation, and you shall afflict yourselves and present a food offering to the LORD. And you shall not do any work on that very day, for it is a Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the LORD your God. For whoever is not afflicted on that very day shall be cut off from his people. And whoever does any work on that very day, that person I will destroy from among his people. You shall not do any work. It is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwelling places. It shall be to you a Sabbath of solemn rest, and you shall afflict yourselves. On the ninth day of the month beginning at evening, from evening to evening shall you keep your Sabbath."

Aaron, the High Priest, was solely responsible for the special Day of Atonement rituals, which are detailed in Leviticus 16. He had to be careful in their execution “so that he may not die” (Leviticus 16:2, 13). He had special linen clothes to wear (Leviticus 16:4) and he went alone into the Tabernacle, where he offered a bull as a sin offering for himself and his family of priests (Leviticus 16:6). He took two goats and cast lots for them (Leviticus 16:7-8). The goat chosen “for Jehovah” was slain as a sin offering for the nation (Leviticus 16:9). Over the other one Aaron confessed the sins of the people and symbolically transferred the sins to it by laying his hands on its head (Leviticus 16:10). This Azazel, or scapegoat, was taken away into the wilderness and set free to indicate that the people’s sins had gone out of God’s sight (Leviticus 16:10). In a cloud of incense, Aaron entered the Holy of Holies to sprinkle the blood of the sin offerings on and before the Mercy Seat to atone for sins (Leviticus 16:13). Further blood sprinkling was carried out for the tent of meeting and the altar (Leviticus 16:14). Then the carcasses of the animals of the sin offerings were burned outside of the camp to show that the people’s sins had been consumed (Leviticus 16:27). In this way atonement was made for the people of Israel once every year to cover all their sins, see Leviticus 16:34.

### **The prophetic significance of the two feasts**

I have four aspects to talk about:

- a. The prophetic fulfilment of the first four feasts;
- b. The summer period between Pentecost and the seventh month;
- c. The prophetic meaning of the autumn feasts; and
- d. When will the prophetic events of the Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement take place?

#### **a. The prophetic fulfilments of the first four Feasts**

The first four feasts picture major historical incidents of the Christian faith, namely the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and the formation of the church by the baptism of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. However, it’s important to remember that the Feasts of Jehovah were for His covenant people, the nation of Israel. In prophetic terms, this cycle of feasts describe the ways of God with Israel, not with the church. Viewing Leviticus 23:1-22 in this way, we see from the spring feasts:

- That the death of their Messiah for the spiritual deliverance of the nation of Israel is the prophetic meaning of the Passover Feast (Leviticus 23:4).
- That the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Leviticus 23:5-8) shows that although Messiah died and was buried, He was untouched by corruption. “For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption”, Psalm 16:10. Through the risen Christ, Christian believers can “walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4), which is described by Paul as “the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (1 Corinthians 5:8).
- That Israel’s resurrected Messiah is the true answer to the Feast of Firstfruits (Leviticus 23:9-14). “Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep”, 1 Corinthians 15:20.
- That the prophetic meaning of the two loaves of the New Grain Offering (Leviticus 23:15-22) is found with the Christian Church, composed of both Jew and Gentile, the nation of Israel having refused their Messiah.

#### **b. The Summer Period between Pentecost and the seventh month**

In prophetic terms, the summer interval between the spring and autumn feasts represents the Gospel age. During this time a partial hardening has come upon Israel, because of their unbelief. A harvest, mainly of Gentiles, is being collected as fruit for God. Pentecost was the start of the wheat harvest. The Lord Jesus said in John 12:24: “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the [ground] and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit”. The ‘Gospel-summer’ lasts until the fullness of the Gentiles comes in (see Acts 15:14 and Romans 11:25). During this time, it’s the church, composed of both Jew and Gentile, not the nation of Israel, who are a new grain offering:

- “Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures”, James 1:18.
- In the priestly service of the Gospel, the offering of the Gentiles is acceptable to God, because they are sanctified by the Holy Spirit, see Romans 15:16.

#### **c. The prophetic meaning of the autumn feasts**

At the end of the Church age, God will resume His dealings with the nation of Israel. A number of events occur at the second coming of Christ:

1. First, the Rapture of His church to glory.
2. Second, the recall of Israel from the nations into which they have been scattered, as pictured in the Feast of Trumpets.
3. Third, Israel’s repentance and acceptance of their Messiah, as pictured in the Day of Atonement.
4. Finally, Israel’s entrance into blessing in the millennial reign of the true King, as pictured in the Feast of Tabernacles.

#### d. When will the events of the Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement take place?

In His prophetic discourse about the Jews and Jerusalem in Matthew 24, the Lord Jesus said that His appearance in power and glory will be accompanied by the trumpet call: “[the Son of Man] 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”, Matthew 24:31. He’ll re-establish them in their Promised Land as a complete nation - Israel, composed of both Ephraim and Judah. Many Old Testament scriptures predict this. Here are three examples:

1. Isaiah 11 is a prophecy about the righteous reign of the Messiah, the Branch of Jesse: “In that day the LORD will extend his hand yet a second time to recover the remnant that remains of his people, from Assyria, from Egypt, from Pathros, from Cush, from Elam, from Shinar, from Hamath, and from the coastlands of the sea. He will raise a **[trumpet]** for the nations and will assemble the banished of Israel, and gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth ... Ephraim shall not be jealous of Judah, and Judah shall not harass Ephraim”, Isaiah 11:11-13.
2. Isaiah 27:12-13 promises: “In that day from the river Euphrates to the Brook of Egypt the LORD will thresh out the grain, and you will be gleaned one by one, O people of Israel. And in that day a **great trumpet** will be blown, and those who were lost in the land of Assyria and those who were driven out to the land of Egypt will come and worship the LORD on the holy mountain at Jerusalem”.
3. Joel’s great prophecy of the Day of the LORD states: “Blow **the trumpet** in Zion; consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Consecrate the congregation; assemble the elders; gather the children, even nursing infants. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her chamber ... Then the LORD became jealous for His land and had pity on His people. The LORD answered and said to his people ... ‘Be glad, O children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God ... You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, who has dealt wondrously with you. And my people shall never again be put to shame. You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the LORD your God and there is none else’”, Joel 2:15-16, 18-19, 23, 26-27.

But before Israel will receive their restored position as God’s favoured nation, they must recognise and receive Jesus as their Messiah. Once the elect are recalled, in fulfilment of the Feast of Trumpets, they’ll be confronted with their Messiah, who suffered for them on the cross of Calvary. When He reveals Himself to them, they’ll repent and afflict themselves as they did on the Day of Atonement. This is predicted by Zechariah: “on that day I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on Me, on Him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over Him, as one weeps over a firstborn. On that day the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great as the mourning for Hadad-rimmon in the plain of Megiddo”, Zechariah 12:9-11. Just as in the actual festival, it will be a very solemn occasion and with great sorrow. Zechariah 12:12-14 outline the extent of this affliction. The anguish will be felt by each family by itself, from the kingly family to the prophets to the priestly family to each family of all the ordinary people.

Restored Israel will repent with the words of Isaiah 53:3-6: “He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all”. When they do this, they’ll be forgiven. Zechariah goes on to explain in Zechariah 13:1: “On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness”.

Recalled, awakened and cleansed Israel will then enter into the blessings of the kingdom of the Messiah, as we’ll hear in next week’s talk on the Feast of Tabernacles. But to finish my talk today, let’s consider the question: What can Christians learn from these two feasts?

#### The Feast of Trumpets

The basic idea of the Feast of Trumpets was to gather people together for a religious memorial. Trumpets are not used in Christianity, but there are church meetings stipulated in the New Testament for believers to come together in church. One of the most important is the communion service, at which believers gather to remember the Lord Jesus Christ in His death (see 1 Corinthians 11:17-34). Other major meetings are:

- for prayer, where the goodness and the grace of God are recalled to mind, and
- for the preaching/teaching of the word of God, where the blessings of God are recounted.

However, the trumpet will sound to gather the whole Church at the Rapture, when it is caught away to glory. “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", 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17. Every church meeting anticipates this great event of "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to Him", 2 Thessalonians 2:1. The secret of our hope in Christ is that "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", 1 Corinthians 15:51-52.

### The Day of Atonement

In Hebrews 9 and Hebrews 10, the writer compares and contrasts the activities of Aaron in the Holy of Holies on the great Day of Atonement with the once-and-forever sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ at the cross of Calvary. Some of the important points in the teaching are:

- Christ, as High Priest, entered into the true sanctuary, heaven itself, not into a man-made earthly tent, Hebrews 9:11, 24.
- He did so by means of His own blood, by which He effected an eternal redemption, Hebrews 9:12, 14.
- He offered a single sacrifice for sins, which is effective forever, in contrast to Israel's repeated sacrifices. These were a yearly reminder of sin because there was no intrinsic value in the blood of the bulls and goats, Hebrews 9:25-26; 10:3-4, 12, 14, 18.
- All Aaronic priests had to remain standing on duty, but Christ sat down at the right hand of God, because His work was completed, Hebrews 10:12, 14.

The cleansing from sins at the Day of Atonement was outward and God was only "covering over" sins (the meaning of atonement). At best, it allowed Israelites to come into the courts of the Tabernacle. In contrast to Aaron, Christ became "a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make **propitiation** for the sins of the people", Hebrews 2:17. The word atonement does not properly appear in the New Testament. Propitiation means that the righteous requirements of a holy God have been completely satisfied. The blood of Christ purifies our consciences and His sacrifice completely sanctifies us. Thus every believer is able to worship the living God, Hebrews 9:14-15. They have confidence to enter the very presence of God by the blood of Jesus, who has opened this new and living way. Christ is also our great priest over the house of God. That is, He's a priest after the superior order of Melchizedek. Through Him, believers can draw near to God with a true heart in full assurance of faith, knowing that they have been cleaned both internally and externally, Hebrews 10:19-22.

Finally, Israel did not receive Christ when He came; they're still looking for their Messiah to come. Christian believers know that He has already appeared; and that He has put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself! Moreover, they know that Christ, at the present time, is in heaven where He's operating as a High Priest in the presence of God on our behalf. Furthermore, we're eagerly awaiting His re-emergence for the completion of our salvation at His second coming, Hebrews 9:24-28.

Let's conclude with Charles Wesley's hymn:

*Lo, He comes from heaven descending,  
Once for favoured sinners slain;  
Thousand, thousand saints attending  
Swell the triumph of His train:  
Hallelujah! Jesus comes, and comes to reign!*

*Lo, the tokens of His passion,  
Though in glory, still He bears,  
Cause of endless exultation  
To His ransomed worshippers;  
Hallelujah! Christ, the Lamb of God appears.*

*Israel's race shall now behold Thee  
Full of grace and majesty;  
Though they set at naught and sold Thee,  
Pierced and nailed Thee to the tree,  
They in glory, shall their great Messiah see.*

*Yea, Amen, let all adore Thee  
High on Thine exalted throne:  
Saviour, take the power and glory,  
Claim the kingdoms for Thine own:  
Come, Lord Jesus, Hallelujah, come, Lord, come.*

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