

FANTASTIC FEASTS... & WHERE WE FIND THEM

We've been taking a look at the seven feasts of the Lord - the appointments He has made with mankind on His calendar. We've come to the first of the fall feasts, the Feast of Trumpets.

Trumpets might not be its best name... Hold that thought for a moment while I give a brief introduction and overview.

We are introduced to the Feast of Trumpets in Leviticus chapter twenty-three.

Lev 23:23 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

Lev 23:24 "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'In the seventh month, on the first *day* of the month, you shall have a sabbath-*rest*, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation.

Lev 23:25 You shall do no customary work *on it*; and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD.' "

Beginning with this, the three fall feasts cover a 21-day period during the Jewish month of Tishri:

- Tishri 1 is the Feast of Trumpets.
- Tishri 10 is the Day of Atonement (v27).
- Tishri 15 is the Feast of Tabernacles (v34).

Tishri came to be called *Rosh Hashanah*, which we often say is the Jewish New Year. That wasn't the case in biblical times. Here is an overview by a Jewish commentator:

Rosh Hashanah is the Jewish New Year, the day the Hebrew calendar begins. But that wasn't always the case.

In fact, the ancient Hebrews probably had no concept of when the year started at all. Nor did they give the months names: the Torah merely enumerating them - "the first month," "the seventh month."

Nowadays we celebrate Rosh Hashanah on the first day of the fall month of Tishri. But in biblical times, that period was explicitly called "the seventh month." During the First Temple period (8th to mid-6th century BC), the year began in the spring, on the first day of Nisan.

Also, when listing the holidays, the Bible always starts with the spring holiday of Passover, in the seventh month - Nisan.

None of the biblical texts about it say anything about Tishri beginning the new year. If anything, the fall feasts end the year, since they come at the end of the harvest cycles.

The Bible does not list any special practices for the holiday beyond making noise and sacrificing some animals. No specific reason is given for the practices, nor are we told what we are supposed to remember.

Trying to draw a conclusion from the lack of information, one commentator said,

It is possible that a deeper significance of the first of Tishri has been lost in time. Alternatively, it is possible that the day was marked by blowing trumpets and messengers going out to the countryside just to remind the Israelites that [Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles] would be coming... and they had that much time to come to Jerusalem with their tithes and sacrifices.

We can accurately say this: What we think we know about the Feast of Trumpets comes mostly from later Jewish practices - *not from the Bible*.

I really like the comment, “the day was marked by blowing trumpets and messengers going out to the countryside just to remind the Israelites that [Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles] would be coming.” I like it because of a very unique feature of Tishri. **It was the only feast that began on the first day of the month.**

One Jewish scholar said this:

The Hebrew calendar is based upon the lunar cycle and consists of twelve 30-day months; with the month officially beginning with the sighting of the first sliver of the new moon.

All Jewish holidays always fall on the full moon of the month - except one. Tishri, also known as the Feast of Trumpets, is the only holiday that occurs on the first of the month.

Before science understood the cycles of the planets and the solar system, the Jews knew that **there was a two-day window for the sighting of the new moon.** The new month could not officially begin until two witnesses reported to the High Priest that they had seen the sliver of the new moon.

Once the first two sightings were confirmed, the priests would sound the shofar to declare the start of Tishri.

At the beginning of our time together I suggested that the Feast of Trumpets might not be the best name for Tishri. Marvin Rosenthal writes,

This designation [i.e. feast of trumpets] was not applied to this feast until at least the second century AD., more than 1,500 years after the institution of the holiday. Additionally, this first feast of Tishri is never called “the Feast of Trumpets” in the Bible. The title *Rosh Hashanah*, which the Jews now call the first feast of Tishri, does not occur in Scripture in connection with this feast either.

It’s interesting to note that there are no examples in the Bible of the Jews keeping this feast. They undoubtedly did; but we have no information what they actually did.

It is here that we would ordinarily quote the Jewish historian, Josephus - but he said nothing about Tishri.

The first record of it is in Jewish writings from the second century AD.

At the beginning I suggested “Trumpets” might not be its best name. In some of the places in modern Bibles where you read the word “trumpets,” it is italicized - meaning it isn’t in the original text, but was added by the translators for clarity. But it’s really more of an *interpretation* than a *translation*.

Young’s Literal Translation, as well as footnotes in other translations, makes clear that the Hebrew term has something to do with a “shouting noise,” made with the mouth - not a trumpet.

Another commentator said,

[It is given] the traditional name "Feast of Trumpets" even though that designation does not occur in the Bible.

In fact, there is some question whether *teruah* means "trumpet blast" in this context, since it can also mean a "war-cry" (Joshua 6:5) or a "shout of joy" (First Samuel 4:5).

There's a lot of other scholarly language talk, but the gist of it is that trumpets are not the critical element; so to call Tishri the Feast of Trumpets is likely a misnomer that emphasizes the wrong aspect of it.

People needed to get ready for the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles. By "get ready," I mean they had to set out for the Temple. But they couldn't know when those days would occur until the first day of the month of Tishri was announced - by shouting, and (maybe) with trumpets.

The Hebrew sources further claim that, since they were unsure when Tishri began, there was an idiomatic phrase that people would use around the time of the full moon. If they asked the priest, "When is Tishri," he would respond, "No man knows the day or the hour."

Sound familiar? Jesus quoted it. Asked about His coming, He said, "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only" (Matthew 24:36).

That single statement has become synonymous with refuting folks who try to set a date for the rapture of the church.

I totally agree that we cannot set a date for the rapture. Jesus' statement in Matthew, however, is not about the rapture.

In that verse, and in that chapter, *Jesus is not talking about the rapture*. He's not even talking about the church.

He's talking about the future Tribulation, the nation of Israel, and His Second Coming at its end, to establish His one-thousand year kingdom on the earth.

That's one reason I believe that Jesus will return in His Second Coming on Tishri of whatever year it is at the time. I believe His use of the phrase, "No one knows the day or the hour," would have been understood to be synonymous with Tishri.

I have another reason why I think this feast has nothing to do with the rapture, but everything to do with the Second Coming.

In studying the spring feasts, we noted that Jesus, in His first coming, fulfilled them all, to the very calendar day:

- He died on Nisan 14, just as the Passover lambs were being slain in the Temple - fulfilling the Feast of Passover.
- Jesus lay in the tomb, but His body did not decay - fulfilling the Feast of Unleavened Bread.
- Jesus rose on Nisan 17, a Sunday - fulfilling the Feast of First Fruits.
- Fifty days later was the Feast of Pentecost - fulfilled by Jesus when the promise of the Father, the baptism with the Holy Spirit, was given.

Since Jesus fulfilled the four spring feasts in immediate calendar order, it's most likely He will do the same regarding the three fall feasts. It's called a Temporal Parallel.

The temporal parallel with the fall feasts is this (and I'm quoting):

Since the three fall feasts (the first feast of Tishri, Atonement, and Tabernacles) occur during the month of Tishri, we are better able to argue our case that, just as the four spring feasts follow the traditional Jewish temporal sequence, the three fall feasts will do the same... expect the three fall feasts to occur on Tishri 1, 10, and 15, just as God determined in Leviticus 23. The three fall feasts cover a 21-day period during the month of Tishri.

It doesn't make sense that Tishri would be fulfilled by the rapture, then wait seven years for the Tribulation to end for the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles to be fulfilled.

A third reason why we can say that the rapture has nothing to do with Tishri is that it is presented in the Bible as being imminent. An imminent event can't simultaneously be scheduled to happen on a particular date, only once each year.

We noted that there is an interval between the spring feasts and the fall feasts of four months during which the harvest was gathered in.

This long interval typifies the present dispensation in which the Gospel is going out into all the world, and Jesus is building His church, and during which Israel is scattered among the nations.

When the present dispensation has run its course, and the "fulness of the Gentiles" has been gathered in (Romans 11:25) along with the "remnant according to the election of grace" of Israel (Romans 11:5), Israel will be gathered back from the four quarters of the earth at the end of the Great Tribulation, at the Second Coming of Jesus - probably on Tishri, followed by the Day of Atonement, then Jesus tabernacling with mankind for one thousand years in the kingdom on earth.