

### **Study 34: Leviticus, Part 7 Leviticus 23 Trumpets**

Last week, we looked at the feast of Pentecost (Weeks). We've seen that the Spring feasts, whose antitypes (fulfillment of the types/shadows) included the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ and the establishment of the Church as God's covenant people, were fulfilled on the **very same days** of these feasts. We should expect, therefore, that the Fall feasts will follow the same pattern of fulfillment.

Just as Israel was delivered from the bondage of slavery from Egypt on Passover, Jesus delivered His people from the bondage of sin on that **very same day**. And just as God had formed His holy nation through the delivering of His covenant to them at Sinai, He RE-formed His holy nation by delivering His *New Covenant* to them on the very same day. But, between receiving the covenant and receiving the Promised Land, a generation intervened (40 years), during which time, the unbelieving partook of God's judgment and wrath. Afterward, God's people inherited what He had promised them. Moses, the mediator of the Old Covenant, was unable to bring the people into the Promised Land. Hoshea (whose name means "salvation") was given the name Joshua by Moses (meaning "Yahweh saves"). The name "Jesus" (Y'shua) is a shortened form of the name "Joshua" (Yahoshua), and like his typological predecessor, He would lead His people into the *true* Promised Land, heaven itself. After writing of the faith of Abel, Enoch, Noah, and Abraham, the author of Hebrews says:

**Heb 11:13-16** All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth. 14 People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. 15 If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them. [**New Jerusalem**]

He continues a little bit later, 39 "These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, 40 since God had planned something better for us so that **only together with us** would they be made perfect." (Heb 11:39-40, emphasis added). Remember that when he says "us," he is not speaking to *us*, the modern reader! He is writing to a 1<sup>st</sup> century audience, *not* a 21<sup>st</sup> century one!

According to the typology of the feasts, and the history of the Exodus, there would be a one-generation (i.e. 40 year) "gap" or "delay" after the receiving of the covenant before God's people would receive the fulfillment of His promise of a land of their own. The giving of the covenant, though, was a *signal* that the **countdown** had begun. The *antitype* (fulfillment of the type) of the giving of the covenant, as we saw last week, was the day of Pentecost. Peter recognized this, and, quoting Joel chapter 2, said that "the last days" had begun (Act 2:16 ff.). **They** (the saints of the 1<sup>st</sup> century), not we, were living in what Hal Lindsay called "the terminal generation." The "end," however, was not, as the King James Version most unfortunately translated the term, "the end of the *world*," but, as the Greek text bears out, "the end of the *age*."

Jewish theology said there were 2 ages. What they called "this age," that is, the age in which they were living in the 1<sup>st</sup> century (what we today would call the Mosaic, or Old Covenant age), during which the New Testament was written, and "the age to come" (what we would call the New Covenant age). Paul speaks of these ages in **1 Cor 2:6-8**: "We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of **this age** or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. 7 No, we declare God's wisdom, a mystery that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. 8 None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."

The Rabbis of old spoke of a time in between these ages that they called the "birth pangs of the Messiah." Using verses such as Lev 12:2,<sup>1</sup> these teachers compared the coming of the Messiah to the birth of a male child. They speculated that before the "age to come" fully arrived, there would be a time of "distress" (as Dan 12:1 puts it) or "birth pangs" (as Jesus put it in Mark 13:8 (also Matt 24:8; cp John 16:21)). Using the idea of a day = a year (a concept they got from Gen 24:55), the Rabbis assumed this time of "labor pains" would be 7 years in length. The Rabbis were often wrong, however, so we shouldn't be tempted to take what they said as biblically definitive. (There were often more opinions than there were Rabbis).

Whether we begin this period ("Jacob's trouble") with the Roman-Jewish War in AD 66 and count until the fall of Masada in AD 73 (7 years), or follow the prophecy of Daniel, in which the final "week" of the 70 "weeks" is divided into 2 periods of 3½ years each,<sup>2</sup> isn't the important point. It was a time of intense tribulation for Israel (both the physical and the spiritual nations). The Church was severely persecuted by the Jews, and at their behest, by Caesar Nero (whose wife, Poppea, was very likely a convert to Judaism). As the time of "the end" (of the age) neared, the intensity of these events increased, just as labor pains increase just before the baby is born.

<sup>1</sup> **Lev 12** "...A woman who becomes pregnant and gives birth to a son will be ceremonially unclean for seven days..."

<sup>2</sup> Jesus' earthly ministry of 3½ years, and the 3½ years of the Roman-Jewish War (AD 66-AD 70) with one generation (40 years) in between. The temple was destroyed on the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av (Aug 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup>) in AD 70.

So, we come now to the last of the feasts, the first being:

**The Feast of Trumpets** 23 The Lord said to Moses, 24 “Say to the Israelites: ‘On the first day of the seventh month you are to have a day of sabbath rest, a sacred assembly commemorated with trumpet blasts. 25 Do no regular work, but present a food offering to the Lord.’”

Note that this is *not* the same as Rosh Hashanah. That is the term used for the secular New Year’s Day, not the biblical feast. Jewish tradition says the Feast of Trumpets marks the 6<sup>th</sup> day of creation (Adam/Eve). Remember the 4<sup>th</sup> cup of the Passover Seder? This is the cup that spoke of the “gathering together of God’s people.” In Ex 6:7, God said, “I will **take you** as my own people, and I will be your God.” The trumpet call is meant to awaken God’s people from their slumber, and to proclaim God as King. It seems natural, therefore, to equate this feast with the resurrection of the dead.

The Feast of Trumpets (which starts on the 1<sup>st</sup> of Tishri) begins a 10-day period of prayer, self-examination, and repentance, called the “Days of Awe,” or the “High Holy Days.” On the day before this feast, Orthodox Jewish men undergo a *mikvah*, or ritual bath. When John the Baptist began his public ministry, he preached “a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins” (Mark 1:4), and warned the people: “The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.” (Matt 3:10; also Luke 3:9). Note that Mark begins his gospel by saying J. the B. was a fulfillment of the messenger of Malachi 3:1, and Jesus said John was “the Elijah who was to come” (Matt 11:14; see also Matt 17:12),<sup>3</sup> a reference to Malachi 4:5 “Behold, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes.”

It was thought that a person’s final destiny in the “age to come” was fixed during the ten “days of awe.” Their name would be written either in the Book of Life or the Book of Death. Because the Feast of Trumpets was the first of these days, it was also called “the Day of Judgment.” *The Jewish Encyclopedia* (1907, p. 586) has this to say: “According to the *Mishna* (R. H. 1.2) the 1<sup>st</sup> of Tishri is the great yearly day of judgment, on which all creatures pass before God’s throne, as **sheep pass for examination before the shepherd**....” [Emphasis added]

This might bring to mind Jesus’ parable in Matt 25:31 “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. 32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.”

Notice how it finishes, v 46: “Then they [the goats] will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to **eternal life**.” Note well that it is not until the judgment takes place that salvation (eternal life) is actually received. Compare this to Rev 20:11-15:

Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. The earth and the heavens fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the **book of life**. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. 13 The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done. 14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. 15 Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

In **Matt 11:21-24**:

...Jesus began to denounce the towns in which most of his miracles had been performed, because they did not repent. 21 “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. 22 But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the **day of judgment** than for you. 23 And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted to the heavens? No, you will go down to Hades [the realm of the dead]. For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day. 24 But I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the **day of judgment** than for you.”

Guess when the Roman-Jewish War (which ended the Mosaic covenant forever) began? On the 1<sup>st</sup> of Tishri in AD 66: on the Feast of Trumpets! Their day of judgment had come. No longer would they be God’s chosen people, His covenant nation. The kingdom of God was going to be taken from them, as Jesus had foretold a generation earlier, and would be given to a nation (one formed of Jews and Gentiles) that would “produce its fruit” (Matt 21:43).

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<sup>3</sup> **Matt 17:12** (Referring to John the Baptist, Jesus said): “I tell you, Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but have done to him everything they wished.”

Most Christians today assume the Feast of Trumpets foretells “the Rapture,” but have no real understanding of what that notion entails. **1 Thess 4** speaks of God’s people being **gathered together** with those who had died in Christ prior to His return (“...with the voice of the archangel and with the **trumpet call** of God...” Matt 24:31 says, “And he will send his angels with a **loud trumpet call**, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.” This is not a *removal*, but an *inclusion*. Verses such as Luke 17:34-35 (“one will be taken, the other left”; see also: Matt 24:40-41) are talking about the righteous being *left*, and the unrighteous being taken away in *judgment*. In Luke 17:37, the disciples ask Jesus, “Where?” and He replies, “Where there is a dead body, there the **eagles** will gather.” (The NIV says “vultures,” but the Greek word is ἀετός (aetos, Strong’s #105), “eagles”, cp Rev 4:7; 8:13; 12:14). This is a clear reference to the Roman army, with its eagle-topped standards, that would destroy Jerusalem before that generation passed away.

The destruction of the temple signaled the “end of the [Mosaic/Old Covenant] age,” and the beginning of the “age to come.” God had gathered the “wheat” into His barn, and all Israel was now saved, since being a citizen of Israel *now* meant believing in Christ (being in *covenant* with Him). God now had *one* people, composed of Jews *and* Gentiles.

