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THE MESSAGE OF THE SHOFAR
AND ITS APPLICATION TO BELIEVERS
THROUGH THE FEASTS OF THE LORD

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THE MESSAGE OF THE SHOFAR

AND ITS APPLICATION TO BELIEVERS
THROUGH THE FEASTS OF THE LORD

Greg Stevenson

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CALENDARS AND BIBLICAL FEASTS

The standard calendar used today is the **Gregorian calendar**. It is a solar calendar, with 365 days each year. The day runs from midnight to midnight. One extra day every four years keeps this calendar in time with the agricultural seasons. The **Jewish calendar** is also based on the seasons but is a lunar calendar, by the Lord's choice, with 354 days each year. The day runs from sunset to sunset. It is around 11 days shorter than the solar year and requires an extra month of 29 or 30 days every 3 years or so. This keeps the calendar in time with the Biblical seasons. Each month begins with the appearance of the new moon.

In Scripture there are two lunar calendars. The **agricultural calendar**, like most calendars in agrarian cultures, starts in the autumn with ploughing and planting (Oct/Nov), sowing barley and wheat (Nov/Dec), before the early (winter) rains (Dec/Jan). The almond harvest (Jan/Feb) is followed by the citrus fruit harvest (Feb/Mar) and the latter (spring) rains (Mar/Apr). Then comes the barley harvest (Apr/May), the wheat harvest (May/Jun), and the harvests of grapes (Jun/Jul), olives (Jul/Aug), and pomegranates, dates and figs (Aug/Sep). This calendar began with the Biblical month *Tishri* (Sep/Oct), and included the autumn Feasts of the Lord. Later it became the civil calendar. The **sacred calendar**, again by the Lord's choice, is founded not on the agricultural seasons, but on the principle of redemption by grace, when He brought His covenant people Israel out of Egypt, and delivered them from bondage and slavery. This deliverance was so foundational that the event was to be the first month of the Hebrew's calendar (Exodus 12:2), and was called *Abib* (meaning 'green ear'). The name was changed during the exile in Babylon, to *Nisan* (meaning 'their flight'). This calendar follows all the seven Feasts of the Lord described in Leviticus 23:23-44 and Numbers 28 and 29. The three major feasts, *Pesach* (Passover), *Shavuot* (Weeks) and *Sukkot* (Tabernacles) are summarised in Deuteronomy 16. Why are these three feasts significant? Because they are 'Holy Convocations' - *miqra kodesh* (see the Glossary). The Lord calls them 'My Feasts' (Leviticus 23:2) - special meetings with the Lord, which all Jewish men (usually with their families) were required to attend, in Jerusalem, to worship the Lord in the Temple. Jesus was no exception (John 5:1). The Feasts were kept at the Lord's appointed times (*mo'ed*) and marked by the blowing of the *shofar*. They have importance for Gentile believers also.

Our heavenly Father is now restoring consideration of the Biblical Feasts to Gentile believers as part of our Hebraic heritage that has been lost to so many of His people for centuries. Though the importance of the Sabbath - *Shabbat* (Leviticus 23:1-3) - has largely been set aside by the Gentile church, the broad parallels between the Biblical feasts of *Pesach*, *Shavuot* and *Sukkot*, and the church festivals of Easter, Pentecost and Harvest Festival are not difficult to see. However, the variable date of Easter has been set by the vernal equinox, and was chosen in 325 A.D. at the First Council of Nicaea specifically to be distinct and separate from Passover – ‘to be kept at the same time as the Romans’ – and the pagan focus on Easter eggs and bunnies have little to do with what it cost the Lamb of God to free us from the slavery of sin. The other Hebrew name for Passover is *zman cheruteinu* - the season of our emancipation - which emphasises their freedom from slavery in Egypt.

Pentecost focuses more on the apostolic commission to the gentile nations and the suggested founding of the church than on the revelation of the Holy Spirit associated with *Shavuot*, and thankfulness for the giving of Torah as the Lord’s gift of grace showing us the principles of our walk as a priestly nation in these days. The covenant community of faith and witness is found early among the Hebrew people in the family of Seth, when men began to call upon the name of the Lord (Genesis 4:26). The Harvest festivals, with their thanksgiving for the autumn fruits gathered in, fix our thoughts on His provision of food from the earth, rather than the transient and fragile nature of our earthly pilgrim journey, and our dependence upon His goodness for everything we need.

In addition, the added celebrations at the winter solstice, not required by Scripture, with the adoption in 549 A.D. of the 25th December on which to mark Jesus’ birth, now involve the tinsel, trees and the excessive consumerism of Christmas. These are surely not the Lord’s focus for His appointed times. As the Lord said to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, He says to us also, **It is time to break up the fallow ground, and sow not among thorns** (Jeremiah 4:1-4). It is time to return to the Lord in these areas also, in Biblical truth, justice and righteousness. In particular, the autumn feasts are of great value for believers, both in the context of their Biblical history and in their fulfilment, which is why they are introduced by blowing the *shofar*.

WHAT IS A SHOFAR?

The word *shofar* is derived from the three-letter Hebrew root **sh-f-r**, meaning to be pleasing, acceptable, to be bright, pleasant. Other derivatives from this root, which expand our understanding of related words, include *shifrah* - beauty, brightness (Exodus 1:15), and *shefer* - beautiful, as the sayings of Naphtali (Genesis 49:21). The *shofar* is made from the horn of a kosher animal (any animal of the family Bovidae, with a cloven hoof that chews the cud, though not a cow or calf, which is reminiscent of the sin of the golden calf in the wilderness). It is usually a horn from a ram (having identity with the *Akedah*, the binding of Isaac, where the Lord provided a ram as a substitutionary sacrifice in place of Isaac (Genesis 22), and is the first occurrence in Scripture of the word 'love') or from an antelope, commonly a kudu. The *shofar* is very important in Old Testament history.

The primary functions of the *shofar* are as a method of proclamation, or alarm, as a warning, or as an instrument of praise and prayer. It is one of the earliest musical instruments. For example in Numbers 29:1 we read: *In the seventh month (Tishri), on the first (day) of the month, a holy-convocation shall be to you; you shall do no work of service. It shall be to you a Day of Blowing (the trumpets).*

In Hebrew, this is a *Yom Teruah*, a day of blowing. It was a given day of proclamation.

The noun *holy-convocation* - *miqra-kodesh* - is derived from the root *q-r-a* - meaning to call out, recite (read out loud), proclaim, summons, and *k-d-sh* meaning holiness, apartness, sacredness. A *miqra* is therefore a vocalised statement, often calling on the Name of the Lord (Genesis 4:26, Psalm 34:6, Joel 2:32), naming a man (Exodus 2:20) or a summons (Isaiah 45:4). The nature of a convocation is thus: saying something in association with another (con-voc-ation), and this is the essence of the sound of the *shofar*. We remember that an angel of the Lord came to Joseph and commanded him to call Mary's son Yeshua, for *"He will save His people from their sins"* (Matthew 1:21, Psalm 80:2, 130:8). We may therefore use this 'Name above all Names' in preference to, or at least interchangeably with, the English version of the Greek word *Iesoun*, translated as Jesus. The three-letter root of the Hebrew word *Yeshua* (*y-sh-a*) is the same as that for *yeshua*, *yoshia*, and *teshua*, and means salvation, deliverance, healing, and a safe refuge through the action

of God's Spirit. Etymologically the Name *Yeshua* is a contraction of the name *Y'hoshua*, meaning 'YHWH saves', and is the masculine form of the word *yeshu'ah* which means salvation. So the Name *Yeshua* is explained by the Hebrew on the basis of His ministry - what He will do - He will save His people from their sins, the prophesied and anointed work of the Jewish Messiah.

Let us now look at this trumpet, this *shofar*. In Scripture there are four Hebrew words for trumpet, - *yovel* - a cornet, *taqoa* - a trumpet, (each used once in Scripture, Exodus 19:13 and Ezekiel 7:14), *chatsots'rah* - a trumpet, and *shofar* - a horn, (used 29 and 65 times respectively). *Qeren* - sometimes described as horn is better translated as 'rays' or 'shining' (Exodus 34:29, Habakkuk 3:4).

In Numbers 10:1-2 we read: *The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Make for yourself two trumpets of silver; you shall make them of beaten (hammered) work, and they shall be to you for the calling of the congregation, and for moving the camps.*

And in the following verses, we read of the functions of these trumpets:

v3 - blow (*t'k'au*) with them (two trumpets, *chatsots'rah*): gather the congregation (*ha-edah*) to you

v4 - blow (*t'k'au*) one trumpet: gather the rulers, the heads of thousands, to you

v5 - blow an alarm (*t'k'au teruah*) once: tribes on the east are to strike camp

v6 - blow an alarm (*t'k'au teruah*) twice: tribes on the south shall strike camp

v7 - blow (*t'k'au*) but no alarm (*teruah*): to gather the assembly (*ha-qahal*) to you

v8 - blow an alarm (*teruah*) with two trumpets (*chatsots'rah*): going into battle to be remembered by God

v9 - blow (*t'k'au*) the trumpets (*chatsots'rah*), in days of gladness, at the appointed times (*mo'ed*), at new moons (the beginning of each month), and over the sacrifices and offerings, as a memorial (*zikron*) to your God.

These silver trumpets were replaced later by the ram's horn, widely used through Old Testament history for a variety of purposes.

One of the clearest demonstrations of God's use of the *shofar* was His defeat of Jericho as the Captain of the Lord's Army (*Tsaba*) - hence *Tsaba'ot* (pl.) (and the anglicised form Sabaoth, armies) - Joshua 5:14. This Captain was *Yeshua* (Revelation 19:14). His instructions to Joshua may seem strange to us - the army was to walk round Jericho once each day for six days, in total silence, followed by seven priests blowing their *shofarot* (pl.), followed by priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant, followed by a rear-guard. On the seventh day, they were to march round the city

seven times. *Then when the priests blew the shofarot, the people gave a great shout, and the wall fell down flat* (Joshua 6:20). Studies on the ancient city mound (*Tel*) at Jericho have shown that the city ramparts were made of two stone walls with rubble between them, and that the inner wall fell inwards and the outer wall fell outwards (i.e. flat). But the literal translation of the Hebrew gives a deeper understanding - ‘the walls fell down under it’, that is, under the sovereign authority of God through the *shofar* blast and the shout of faith of the people.

Another demonstration of the power of God expressed through the *shofar* was when Gideon defeated the Midianites and the Amalekites (Judges 6:34) . *But the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet* (KJV). Again the Hebrew is interesting: *And the Spirit of YHWH clothed Gideon with Himself, and he blew (t'k'ia) with a ram's horn (shofar)*. Here we see the power of God through the blowing of the *shofar*, to achieve His purposes.

WHO BLOWS THE SHOFAR?

In over 80 descriptions of the use of the *shofar*, Scripture indicates that it was blown by a variety of people. There are several indications that God Himself (*YHWH*) blew the *shofar*, and these are some of the Scriptures used in the *Amidah* (standing) prayers used in the synagogue when the *shofar* is blown:

1- Exodus 19:16, 19 (and ref. 20:18). On Mt Sinai, before any man touched the mountain (v12), God blew the *shofar* to call the people to meet with Him (v17).

And on the third day, it was sounds (voices) and lightnings and a heavy cloud covered the mountain, and the voice of a ram's horn (shofar), very strong. And all the people who were in the camp trembled.

2- Isaiah 18:3. Part of the Lord's judgment against the Gentile nations who come against Jerusalem. *All inhabitants of the world and dwellers of the earth will see as One lifts a flag (banner) on the peaks (mountains), and you will hear the blowing of a trumpet (shofar).*

3- Isaiah 27:13. As YHWH gathers His chosen ones, a fulfilment of Isaiah 19:24-25. *And it shall be in that day that the great trumpet (shofar gadol) shall be blown; and those ... in Assyria, and ... in Egypt shall come and worship YHWH in the mountain of holiness, in Jerusalem.*

4- Zechariah 9:14. The appearance of the Lord in defence and saving of His

people. *The Lord YHWH shall blow the ram's horn (shofar) and go forth with the windstorms of the south.*

5- Revelation 1:10 and 4:1. God calls John to write letters to the seven churches. *I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet (phonen megalon os salpiggos; kol gadol b'kol shofar, (a great voice as the voice of a shofar) saying, What thou seest, write.*

Others who blow the *shofar* include *Yeshua* when He sends his angels with a great trumpet sound (*salpiggos megalos; b'kol shofar*, the voice of the trumpet) and gathers His elect from the four corners of the earth, and from one end of heaven to the other (Matthew 24:31), and when Balaam acknowledges before Balak that the shout of the King (*teruat melek*) is in him (Numbers 23:21). Also, angels, priests, kings, chosen watchmen, judges, soldiers, leaders and the people of Israel are called to blow the *shofar*.

The function of the watchman was especially important. It relates to God's warnings to individuals, communities and to nations when the Lord brings judgment upon the land. He must blow the *shofar* to warn the people and give them opportunity to turn from their ways (Ezekiel 33:11). If the warning is not given, then the Lord requires the blood of those lost from the watchman's hand. Ezekiel was such a watchman to the House of Israel (33:6-7). This is a crucial ministry for our time also.

There were strict qualifications for those sounding the *shofar* in the synagogue. Essentially they must be learned in Torah, God-fearing, with no ritual defilement, and be the best *shofar* blower available. They were called the *Ba'al Tekia*, the 'Master of the Blowing'. The sound must be clear and decisive, since the *mitzvah*, the commandment, concerning the use of the *shofar* is in the hearing, rather than the blowing.

HOW AND WHEN IS THE SHOFAR BLOWN?

Scripture has no instructions as to how to blow the *shofar*. Like the modern trumpet and other brass instruments, the sound is produced by blowing through pursed lips through a narrow aperture to produce a resonance, as one does through the vocal folds of the larynx in singing or speaking. This buzzing of the lips is controlled by the musculature around the lips (embouchure), and there are different forms of

contraction for different sounds and for different *shofarot*. As for any instrument, effective technique comes with practice, in particular for the production of harmonics. The *shofar* produces four basic sounds but there is much beauty and variety that comes from more advanced ‘playing’ of the *shofar*.

We are entering a time when the Lord is raising a new standard in the Gentile nations, a new sound. Jewish people have blown the *shofar* for 4000 years, but I believe that the Lord is restoring the *shofar* to Gentile believers in this prophetic season. He is doing a new thing, no longer just three or four traditional sounds, but He is now calling Gentile believers to play the *shofar* in the spirit as an instrument of prayer and praise, as well as a warning of His coming shaking of all things (Hebrews 12:26-27). We must follow the leading and promptings of the Holy Spirit of God in this for the edification of His Body.

In addition to the summary given in Numbers 10 of when the *shofar* was to be blown, i.e. to call the assembly or congregation together to worship, to move camp, to go to war, or cease battle, it was blown at the appointed Feasts of the Lord, especially the Feasts of the month *Tishri*, and at other occasions:

1. Just before the start of Shabbat each week (for the Shabbat was to be a day of rest).
2. At the start of every month, the new moon (*Rosh Chodesh* – the Head of the month).
3. During worship and praise in the Temple.
4. At the start of the synagogue morning services during the month of *Elul* – these letters being an acronym for the phrase *Ani L’dodi V’dodi Li*, meaning **I am my beloved’s and my beloved (*dodi*) is mine** (SOS 6:3), but not on the last morning to accentuate the importance of *Rosh Hashbanah* (the Head of the year) the following day.
5. On *Rosh Hashbanah*, (*Yom Teruah*, 1 *Tishri*, Leviticus 23:24), especially as a memorial of the *Akedah*, the binding of Isaac on Mt Moriah (Genesis 22:9), when God provided the ram as a substitutionary sacrifice, (v8, 13). It is also sounded for the Reading of Torah on the following day.
6. On *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement (10 *Tishri*) – *HaKippurim* = the coverings (Leviticus 25:9).
7. At the end of the fast of *Yom Kippur*.
8. During *Sukkot*, the Feast of Tabernacles (15 *Tishri*). Sephardi Jews,

particularly, also blow the *shofar* on *Hoshana Rabbah*, a *miqra-kodesh* on the eighth day of the feast (Leviticus 23:36, Numbers 29:12).

9. On other fast days (e.g. the 9 Av, when the Temple was destroyed), and at penitential rituals.
10. At the anointing of a king (1Kings 1:34, 2Kings 9:13).
11. As a warning from the watchman to the nation (Ezekiel 33:3).
12. At times of recalling God's deliverance of Israel from their enemies, and the freedom of Jubilee every fifty years (Leviticus 25:9-10).
13. At times of national rejoicing (e.g. bringing the Ark of the Lord up to the Temple – 2 Samuel 6:15, the reunification of Jerusalem in 1967), or of national distress (e.g. Tisha b'Av)
14. In the future, during the great tribulation the time of Jacob's trouble (Jeremiah 30:7, Daniel 12:1), and when the seven angels release the 'trumpet judgments' (Revelation 8, 9, 10).
15. As an expression of hope for the coming of the Messiah and the resurrection.
16. At Yeshua's return (1Thessalonians 4:16, 1 Corinthians 15:52)

In modern times, the *shofar* is only used in the synagogue during *Elul*, and on *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*, and rarely outside these times. It has also been used as an orchestral instrument in secular music (e.g. the Apostles oratorio, by Elgar, though this part is sometimes played by the flügelhorn).

THE AMIDAH SYNAGOGUE PRAYERS.

The daily synagogue prayers are called the *Amidah* (meaning standing). Jewish practice has long been to pray standing (Mark 11:25) and to teach sitting down (John 8:2). Through the year the *Amidah* starts and finishes with the same prayers, and the middle section – the most important part – changes with the occasion. Some of our church liturgy is based on these *Amidah* prayers. On *Rosh Hashanah* the middle section contains three blessings as the basic themes: to bless God as King (*melek*) and proclaim His sovereignty; to bless God for His remembrance (*zikron*) of His people and proclaim His faithfulness; and to bless God as Ruler and Judge of history and initiator of Redemption, and proclaim the freedom that this gives with soundings (*shofarot*). The *shofar*, in addition to being an instrument of proclamation or warning, is also an instrument of prayer, and is blown during each

of these three blessings.

The soundings of the *shofar* during these blessings contain a challenge for us also and invite us to reconsider the sovereignty of God, His provision of reconciliation through repentance and whether we walk in obedience to Him. They ask us:

- *Is God acknowledged as King in our lives?*
- *Do we avail ourselves daily of this mercy, this gift of repentance, this path to restoration?*
- *Is God the Ruler of our lives and do we follow Torah as Yeshua taught it, to walk with Him in faith and obedience, knowing that we shall all stand before Him to give account of our lives?*

TYPES OF SHOFAR SOUND AND THEIR MEANINGS

The three sets of *Shofar* soundings used on *Rosh Hashanah* contain four basic blasts (see Table 2):

1- *Tekiah* - Proclaiming Kingship

This is a single, plain, deep, bass sound, with a sharp ending. It is based on Deuteronomy 6:4-5.

Sh'ma Israel . . . V'ahavta et Adonai Eloheikha, b'khol l'vavkha, u'khol nafshekha, u'khol me'odekha. Hear, O Israel . . you shall Love (*ahavah*) the Lord your God, your King, with all your heart (*levav*), with all your soul (*nafesh*), and with all your might (*me'od*, your resources).

It says, '*Sh'ma! Listen, hear the sound, give attention, hear the message.*'

2- *Shevarim* - A call to repentance

This is three short blasts; the total length is twice the length of the *tekiah*.

It is based on God's forgiveness of sin (Psalm 130:3-4, Ephesians 1:7).

It says, *Come before your God with a heart full of Godly sorrow, seek His mercy, confess your faults, and come to a new place, a new heart attitude, a new obedience to the King.*

3- *Teruah* - An alarm or a broken spirit

This is three sets of very short sounds, nine in all. It is both a wake up call to be honest and objective about one's life and it has a broken sound symbolic of a broken spirit and a contrite heart. The total length is similar to the *shevarim*. It is based on a cry to God for deliverance and restoration (Ps. 51:3-4, 7, 12, 14b, 17 - a reminder of the *Akedah*, and *Yeshua's* fulfilment)

It says, *I acknowledge my transgressions; against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned. Deliver me . . . O God of my salvation (yeshuati)*. Yet it is also to encourage us to break away from every attachment that estranges us from God.

4- Tekiah-gedolah (the great Tekiah) - A shout of victory

This is a loud, very long blast (as long as you can!). It is a shout of victory, of completion, of welcome to the coming King. It is based on the voice of God in the end times (Isaiah 27:12-13, Revelation 1:10, 4:1).

It says, *In that Day (the Day of the Lord), I will gather you, My children, one by one, those perishing, and the outcasts, to worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem.*

THE MESSAGE OF THE SHOFAR AND THE INNER VOICE

So, what is the message of the *shofar*?

Some Sages (e.g. Ba'al Shem Tov) taught that it is an intuitive way of gaining access to the deeper recesses of our heart. As a picture is often better than a thousand words, the *shofar* speaks to us in a way that words cannot. Thus it is important to hear the *shofar* in order to sense its message. But there is an outer hearing, and an inner hearing. In like manner, salvation comes when there is an outer confession of *Yeshua* with our mouth – (the proclamation of faith in mission, as mentioned by Alex Jacob in his Olive Press Research Paper ‘A Covenant Keeping God’) - and an inner belief in our heart that God has raised Jesus from the dead. Salvation requires both (Romans 10:9). We need to hear the divine call with our outer ear, but also with our inner ear in our heart. This is the still small voice of God. That is why the command and blessing is phrased, ‘Blessed are you if you hear the *shofar (lishmoa shofar)*’, and not ‘Blessed are you if you blow the *shofar (lit' koa shofar)*’. We must listen for, and hear, this inner voice, the *kol p'nimi (pneem* is the Hebrew word for the interior, used for a pearl which grows inside the shell).

King David, however, in Psalm 89:15 does not say ‘Blessed are the people who hear the *teruah*’, but ‘Blessed are the people who know the ‘joyful sound’ - *teruah*’. The Hebrew word for ‘know’ - *yada* - is used mostly in the context of discernment and recognition, and in relationships between people and between man and God. So is the message emotional, or intellectual? True to the multi-dimensional meanings of Hebrew words, the answer is yes! We therefore need both a softness of the soul, and a mental preparation if we are both to hear and know the

message of the *teruah*. The breath through the *shofar* can thus transform a physical horn into an instrument of prayer that touches our heart and mind to proclaim His sovereignty, and call out to our Creator for the restoration of intimacy with Him, a fulfilment of Exodus 19:4, which is His desire to draw us ‘to Himself’, and to proclaim the freedom we have when we walk with Him in faith and obedience. God changed the name of our father in faith from Abram to **Abraham**, by the insertion of the letter *Heb*, the breath of God (Gen. 17:5). The breath of God calls, equips, anoints and commissions His servants, so let us pray for God’s breath, by His *Ruach haKodesh*, to blow into our lives and touch our hearts.

The *shofar* blast on *Rosh Hashanah* is primarily a *shevarim-teruah*, a call to repentance, the expression of a broken spirit and contrite heart before the Lord, and a wake-up call for His people. There is no better time for this than at a time appointed (*mo’ed*) by the Lord for such expressions. *Rosh Hashanah* and the ten days of Awe is the climax of the preparation through the month of *Elul*, the period of reflection, and a time for getting right with our neighbours, with our family, and with the Lord. This is appropriate for all the Body of Messiah, both Jewish and Gentile believers.

Yom Kippur, a fast day, has the injunction to ‘afflict your souls’, to humble yourselves – the Hebrew word *ani* means to oppress, afflict, and humble oneself in order to prompt repentance (Leviticus 16:31, 23:27 Numbers 29:7). The primary meaning is ‘to find a humble, lowly position’. This humility was demonstrated by *Yeshua* (Zechariah 9:9). Yet this day is, for all His covenant people who receive the forgiveness of the Lord, especially for those who know the Jewish Messiah, a glorious *tekiah*, an exultant shout of Jubilee freedom through the grace of God’s forgiveness to those who are cleansed from all unrighteousness through confession and repentance (1 John 1:9). Then, and only then, can we welcome the King’s Presence and acclaim the victory of Messiah through His death, burial and resurrection, and receive both His forgiveness, and our acceptance in the Beloved (Ephesians 1:6). This is a real *tekiah-gedolah*, a fulfilment of these *shofar* sounds on *Rosh Hashanah*, and worthy of a victory shout. And we all await the final *tekiah-gedolah*, the blast on God’s *shofar* announcing the revelation to His covenant Jewish people of their Messiah and then the return of our Lord Jesus with His saints. The *tekiah-melek*, the shout of the King, will be heard, and we shall see the promised life from the dead (Romans 11:15).

After the destruction of the Temple, the focus of prayers and worship was transferred to the synagogue and the home. The significance of blowing the *shofar* was then limited mainly to *Rosh Hashanah*, the first day of the civil calendar (1 *Tishri*) and to *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement. The word *Kippur* is from the root *k-p-r* meaning to cover over, to make atonement, reconciliation; *kippurim* (pl.) means coverings, under the Old Covenant, of the sins of the Jewish people for the following year – pointing to the finished work of *Yeshua*, and is related to the word *koper* (ransom). The *shofar* is thus blown at the start of times and seasons as a herald or proclamation, and also at the close of times and seasons as a statement of completion. In Hebrew, the number seven represents completion.

Tishri is also a special month in the sacred calendar because it is the seventh month. Just as *Shabbat* is the seventh day of the week, a time of completion of the week's work (symbolic of creation), and a time of rest and spiritual refreshment, so *Tishri* is also a time of completion, physically when the fruits are gathered in and the land given rest, and spiritually when we complete the Lord's cycle of Festivals and Feasts, and focus on Him in the major autumn *miqra-kodesh* that He calls us to observe. *Rosh Hashanah*, *Yom Kippur* and *Sukkot* are the Holy Convocations in this season, at His appointed times (*mo'ed*, the set times) prescribed by Scripture for the month of *Tishri*. The Torah portions in the one year cycle, read each week, are also completed at this time. For Gentile believers also, *Tishri* is a Biblical time of reflection and repentance, of a fresh receiving of the Lord's forgiveness through the precious Blood of *Yeshua*. It is a time to consider anew *Yeshua's* atonement, a time to re-establish our full armour for protection in the spiritual battle, to strengthen our resolve to listen to and obey the promptings of the Holy Spirit, and resolve to love the Lord in the sufferings that will come when persecution, even martyrdom (*u'vkol nafshekha*), reaches believers in the Western nations, as it has already in the Middle and Far East.

ITS APPLICATION TO BELIEVERS THROUGH THE FEASTS OF THE LORD

Finally, let us return to the Feasts of the Lord, set out in Table 1. The significance of the Feasts of the Lord for Gentile believers may be found through a careful study of Scripture:

- 1- First we may see the instructions God gave to the Hebrew nation for celebrating His given Feasts through the year (Leviticus 23, Numbers 28 and 29). At His appointed times, He seeks to draw us also into relationship with Himself (Exodus 19:4).
- 2- Then we may see in the New Testament how Jesus fulfilled (correctly interpreted) Torah and the spiritual realities of the Feasts and how they symbolise God's desire for all His covenant people (including the engrafted ones) to walk with Him (*Halachah* is our walk with the Lord, from the Hebrew word *yalach*, to walk).
- 3- Then we can learn to apply the way of *Yeshua* to our own walk with the Lord in the community of faith towards the Christian's maturity in receiving **His Peace** through *Pesach* (Passover), experiencing **His Power** through *Shavuot* (Pentecost) and entering **His Rest** through *Sukkot* (Tabernacles).
- 4- Then we can see the prophetic significance and fulfilment of the Feasts of the Lord and how God is bringing these truths to the Church, in the context of the golden thread of salvation, by deliverance, and atonement, that we may be overcomers, by His Blood, by the word of our testimony, and by our priestly sacrifices - a life laid down for God (Romans 12:1, John 12:24); by prayer, supplication, intercession, praise, and thanksgiving (Hebrews 13:15, 1 Thessalonians 5:18); and by service for others (Philippians 2:17, 4:18, Hebrews 13:16, 1 John 3:16).

The Lord's covenant promises to His chosen nation still stand, and through consideration of the purpose of His Feasts through the year, we may understand better our debt to the Jewish people, and pray (*sha'alu*, ask, enquire, beg, intercede) for their *shalom*, as we are commanded (Psalm 122:6).

Do you remember the two silver trumpets from Numbers 10? They were made from one piece of hammered (beaten) silver. Why two trumpets? I believe they are symbolic of the Church, one body comprising two groups, Jewish and Gentile believers, called out ones, separated ones, holy, anointed, beaten into a functional shape and purpose as a single covenant people of faith. They are commissioned and equipped to proclaim, announce, warn, celebrate, and share the Good News of the Gospel of God. This one body is described by Paul in Ephesians 2:16 and 3:6. Gentile believers are grafted into the root of the natural olive tree (Israel), contrary to nature, but both are members of the one covenant community of faith. The *shofar*

takes its place in this proclamation. In His time, ethnic unbelieving Jewish people will also be a witness to their calling to the Gentile nations. Gentiles tend to think of Israel as being different, separate, even irrelevant now, or rejected by God. If we think this, how little we know of God's covenant love. We stand by faith only if we continue in His goodness (Romans 11:18-24). Even while Israel was still in the wilderness, they were including Gentiles in God's provision (Leviticus 23:22), and offering sacrifices on behalf of the 70 Gentile nations, during the seven days of the Feast of *Sukkot* (Numbers 29:13-32), Only after this, on the eighth day did they offer one bullock, a sacrifice made by fire for themselves (v36) for they were not to vex or oppress a gentile because they too were strangers in the land of Egypt (Exodus 22:21, 23:9).

In summary the Feasts of the Lord are still a vital part of the Kingdom life of His Church (for both Jewish and Gentile believers) and are proclaimed in Scripture with the blast of the *shofar*.

Pesach, Passover, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were established to redeem and rescue the Children of Israel from slavery and bondage in Egypt. No Gentile was permitted to take part in this redemption except he be part of the covenant people through the covenant sign of circumcision (Exodus 12:43, 48). This Feast has been fulfilled in *Yeshua* once for all who, through His death, burial and resurrection, completed and finished His Father's plan of redemption for all people. Jewish and Gentile believers who receive Him by grace through faith enter His one covenant community and are both washed (cleansed) in His Blood and rescued from slavery to sin. For **He is our Passover Lamb**, for Jew and Gentile. The *shofar* proclaims Him as *Yeshua*, Saviour of the world, King of the Jews and of the Gentiles, King of the Universe (*melek ha'olam*), King of our lives.

He is the Sovereign King who brings Peace – *Shalom*.

Shavuot, Pentecost, the Feast of Weeks has seen partial fulfilment when God poured out His Holy Spirit as a rushing mighty wind (*Ruach haKodesh*) on devout Jewish people from every nation who had come up to Jerusalem for the Feast, 50 days after *Pesach* (Acts 2:5). The Holy Spirit continues by God's Grace to be given to all those Jews and Gentiles who will believe on the Lord Jesus by faith, all those whom the Lord will call (Acts 2:39). It will ultimately be fulfilled when the full number of the Gentiles shall have come in and then *Yeshua* will reveal Himself (as Joseph did) to His Jewish brethren as their Messiah (*Yeshua*

haMashiach). And they shall look unto Him whom they pierced, and be washed in that fountain for sin and uncleanness (Zechariah 12:10, and 13:1, 6). The *Shofar* proclaims Him as His Mighty Spirit who empowers believers to live for Him, to walk in His way and express their debt of love to His Jewish brethren.

He is the Life-giving Spirit who brings Power - *Koach*.

Sukkot, Booths, the Feast of Tabernacles, which reminds us of our transient life here as pilgrims, symbolised by a week living in a temporary booth with no proper roof, was partially fulfilled in the birth and life of Jesus, from the prophecy of Isaiah that *Yeshua* would be called *Imanu-El*, (God with us, Isaiah 7:14). John summed it up - The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14). His continuing Presence in the life of believers is confirmed by His statement **Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age** (Matthew 28:20). It will be completely fulfilled when the new heaven and the new earth are formed and the new Jerusalem comes down from God. Then it will be said that **the Tabernacle of God is with men and He will dwell with them and be their God** (Revelation 21:3). The *Shofar* proclaims Him as the covenant God who dwells with His people.

He is the Immanent God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who brings Rest - *Margoa*.

GLOSSARY

the meaning of some Hebrew words

<i>Abib</i>	the first month (green ear), now called <i>Nisan</i> (their flight)
<i>Akedab</i>	the binding (of Isaac)
<i>Amidah</i>	standing prayers; <i>musaf amidah</i> = additional silent standing prayer after the <i>Amidah</i>
<i>Ani L' dodi V' dodi Li</i> (E-L-U-L)	I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine, the sixth month
<i>Ba'al Tekia</i>	the Master of the Shofar
<i>chatsots'erab</i>	trumpet (29*, first ref. Numbers 10:2),
<i>edah</i>	assembly (witness - that part of the congregation that was a faithful witness to the Lord)
<i>ELUL</i>	from Song of Songs 6:3 <i>Ani L' dodi V' dodi Li</i> – I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine
<i>gadol</i>	great
<i>ha kippurim</i>	the coverings (of sin for a further year)
<i>halach</i>	walk; <i>halachah</i> = the way of walking
<i>Hallelu-Yah</i>	Praise <i>Yah</i>
<i>Hoshanah Rabbah</i>	the Great Hosanna
<i>Iesoun</i>	the Greek word for <i>Yeshua</i>
<i>kippur</i>	cover over, atonement, reconciliation
<i>kippurim</i>	coverings (pl.)
<i>koach</i>	power (of Shavuot)
<i>kol</i>	voice
<i>kol gadol, b' kol shofar</i>	the great voice, like the voice of a <i>shofar</i>
<i>kol p'nimi</i>	inner voice
<i>koper</i>	ransom
<i>lishmoa shofar</i>	hearing the <i>shofar</i>
<i>lit' koa shofar</i>	blowing the <i>shofar</i>
<i>margoa, shabat</i>	rest (of Sukkot)
<i>mashach</i>	to anoint
<i>melek - zikron - shofar</i>	king - remembrance – sounding
<i>malchiyot - zikronot - shofarot</i> (pl.)	
<i>melek ha'olam</i>	King of the universe (everlasting)
<i>miqra kodesh</i>	holy convocation [roots: <i>q-r-a</i> = to call out, <i>k-d-sh</i> = holy]
<i>mitzvah</i>	commandment, <i>mitzvot</i> (pl.)
<i>mo'ed</i>	appointed time – e.g. <i>yom mo'ed</i> , a set day
PESACH	Passover, with the Feast of Unleavened Bread (lasting seven days), and the Feast of First Fruits (the waving of a sheaf from the barley harvest the day after <i>Shabbat</i> during the Feast of Unleavened Bread)

phonen megalon os salpiggos Greek for a loud voice like a trumpet (11* - first ref. Matthew 24:31)

<i>pneem</i>	interior
<i>qahal</i>	assembly (the whole congregation)
<i>Rosh Chodesh</i>	the first of a new month
<i>Rosh Hashbanah</i>	the Head of the Year (1 Tishri)
<i>Ruach haKodesh</i>	the Holy Spirit, <i>ruach</i> = wind, spirit. A blowing wind (the Spirit of holiness)
<i>Sar</i>	Prince, Captain; <i>tsaba</i> = army <i>Tseba'ot</i> = armies (hosts) – hence Sabaoth
<i>sha'alu</i>	pray, ask for, enquire, desire, require, demand, request, seek, beg, work for
<i>Shabbat</i>	the seventh day of the week, under command to remember it, and keep it holy, separate
<i>shalom</i>	peace (of <i>Pesach</i>)
<i>shalom</i>	absence of war or hostility, but peace, prosperity, well, health, completeness, safety, calmness, quiet, wholeness
SHAVUOT	Feast of Weeks, the wheat harvest 7 weeks and one day (50 days) after <i>Pesach</i>
<i>shefer</i>	beautiful
<i>Shemini Atzeret</i>	the eighth day of assembly (a holiday on 22 <i>Tishri</i> , after <i>Sukkot</i>)
<i>shevah</i>	a cry for help; <i>shevarim</i> (pl.)– from <i>sheva</i> , a cry for help, mercy (root <i>sh-v-a</i> = cry out)
<i>shifra</i>	beauty
<i>shofar</i>	the trumpet made of horn, usually a ram or kudu (65*, first ref. Exodus 19:16), <i>shofarot</i> (pl.)
<i>shofar-gadol</i>	the great voice or sounding like a trumpet
<i>Simchat Torah</i>	the rejoicing over the Law
SUKKOT	Feast of Booths (Tabernacles); Feast of Ingathering
<i>t'k'au</i>	the command to blow (imperative)
<i>Tanakh</i>	the Hebrew Bible (Genesis to II Chronicles – the Old Testament in the Hebrew order)
<i>taqoa</i>	a trumpet (1*, ref. Ezekiel 7:14),
<i>tekia</i>	a sounding, (root <i>t-q-a</i> blow, strike, clap, sound)
<i>tekia-gedolah</i>	a great sounding (root <i>g-d-l</i> = become great, important, grow up, powerful, praise)
<i>tekiab, t'kia</i>	from 'teka', sound (root <i>t-q-a</i> = blow, strike, clap, sound) <i>tekiot</i> (pl.)
<i>tel</i>	ancient mound of a city
<i>teqa</i>	a sound
<i>teruah</i>	from <i>terua</i> , alarm, signal (root <i>r-u-a</i> = wind, shout, raise a noise, cry out. Note the root <i>Rua-ch</i>)

<i>teruat melek</i>	the shout of a King
<i>Tishri</i>	the seventh month
<i>Tsaba</i>	army <i>tsabaot</i> (pl.) armies
<i>uv'khol nafshekha</i>	and with all our soul - the Sages equate the soul with our life, so the time may come when we are called to love the Lord by releasing our life, in times of persecution, or martyrdom
<i>yada</i>	to know
<i>yalach</i>	to walk
<i>yasha</i>	save, deliver
<i>yeha, teshua</i>	salvation, deliverance
<i>Yeshua haMashiach</i>	<i>Yeshua</i> (Jesus) the Messiah (the anointed one)
<i>yit'ki shofar</i>	blew with a shofar, notice <i>t'ki</i> – has the same root as for <i>tekiab</i>
<i>Y'hoshua</i>	the Hebrew name for Joshua
<i>Yom Kippur</i>	the Day of Atonement (10 <i>Tishri</i>)
<i>Yom Teruah</i>	Day of Blowing <i>Rosh Hashanah</i> – the head of the year (New Year),
<i>yoshia</i>	saviour
<i>yovel</i>	a cornet (1*, ref. Exodus 19:13)
<i>zikron</i>	remembrance
<i>zman cheruteinu</i>	the season of our emancipation

**Number of times used in the Tanakh*

FEASTS OF THE LORD: (see Table 1)

SHOFAR SOUNDS: (see Table 2)

Sh'ma Israel, Adonai elohainu, Adonai echad; v'ahavta et Adonai Eloheikha, b'khol l'avavkha, uv'khol nafshekha, uv'khol me'odekha.

Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is One Lord.; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart (*levav*), and with and your soul (*nefesh*), and with all your resources (*me'od*, might, strength) – Deuteronomy 6:4-5

TABLE I: THE FEASTS OF THE LORD

FARMING SEASON	HEBREW MONTH	GENTILE MONTHS	FEAST	YESHUA (PROPHETIC)	BELIEVER (PERSONAL)	SEASONS
Barley harvest	<i>Nisan</i> (<i>Abib</i>) 14 15 * - 21 * 18	Mar/Apr	PESACH (Passover) 1 - Passover 2 - Unleavened bread *† 3 - First fruits *†	Crucified Buried Resurrected	New Birth Baptism in water Death of the old Put on the new ‡	SALVATION God's peace
	<i>Iyar</i>	Apr/May	50 days from Passover to Shavuot - Counting the Omer			
Wheat and early Fig harvest	<i>Sivan</i> 6 *	May/June	SHAVUOT (Pentecost) 4 - Feast of Weeks *	Exalted	Baptism in the Holy Spirit	REVELATION God's power
Grape harvest	<i>Tammuz</i>	Jun/Jul	No feast (dry months)			God's favour and attention directed towards the Gentiles (Jn. 1:11-12)
Olive harvest	<i>Av</i>	Jul/Aug				
Pomegranate and Date harvest	<i>Elul</i>	Aug/Sept				
Summer Fig harvest	<i>Tisbri</i> 1 * 10 * 15 * - 21 21 (7th day) 22 (8th day)* 23 24	Sept/Oct	SUKKOT (Tabernacles) 5 - <i>Rosh Hashanah</i> *† (Trumpets) 6 - <i>Yom Kippur</i> *† (Atonement) 7 - <i>Sukkot</i> *† (Tabernacles) <i>Hoshanab Rabbah</i> <i>Shemini Atzeret</i> * <i>Simchat Torah</i> Start of <i>Torah</i> readings	Defeat of the Enemy Purifying the Bride 2nd Coming	Awakening for full armour Baptism of Fire Life and Eternal Joy	FINAL IN-GATHERING God's rest End of the age - Return of Yeshua
Pomegranate, Fig and Date harvest	<i>Cheshvan</i>	Oct/Nov				
Sow Barley and Wheat	<i>Kislev 25 - Tevet 2</i>	Nov/Dec	<i>Hannukah</i> Feast of Dedication			
Early rains	<i>Tevet</i>	Dec/Jan				
Almond	<i>Shevat</i>	Jan/Feb				
Citrus fruits	<i>Adar 14</i>	Feb/Mar	<i>Purim</i>			
Latter rains	<i>Nisan</i>	Mar/Apr				

* *miqra kodesh* - Holy Convocations Exodus 12:16, Leviticus 23 and Numbers 28 and 29

† *Shabbat* - Unleavened bread (1st and 7th day) - First fruits - *Rosh Hashanah* - *Yom Kippur* - *Sukkot*

‡ Constantly renewed in the spirit of your mind (Ephesians 4:23-24)

TABLE 2: SHOFAR SOUNDINGS ON ROSH HASHANAH

<i>Tekiah</i> <i>Shevarim-teruah</i> <i>Tekiah</i>	----- ----- ----- 4 blasts	14 soundings
<i>Tekiah</i> <i>Shevarim</i> <i>Tekiah</i>	----- ----- ----- 3 blasts	5 soundings
<i>Tekiah</i> <i>Teruah</i> <i>Tekiah-gedolah</i>	----- ----- ----- 3 blasts	11 soundings
Totals:	10 blasts	30 soundings

TOTALS = 6+2+2 = 10 blasts and 6 tekiot, 6 shevarim, 18 teruot = 30 soundings

Teruah is mentioned 3 times in Scripture (Lev. 23, 25, Num.29), so on *Rosh Hashanah* the soundings are repeated three times during the *Musaf Amidah* (silent prayer), three times during the *Malkhiyot*, *Zikronot*, and *Shofarot* prayers, and three times after the responsive readings.

MEANINGS:

Tekiah – [from *teqa* = sound; root *t-q-a* = blow, strike, clap, sound] a shout, statement, call. Gather together. Search the heart. Proclaim God’s Kingship. **It says:** *Sh’ma!* Hear! Listen! Pay attention!

Shevarim (pl.) – [from *shevah* = a cry for help; root *sh-v-a* = cry out (for help)] a broken, trembling, intense cry of anguish, oppression; recognition of sin, a broken spirit, a cry for mercy; a call to repentance. **It says:** Help! Save! (*yasha’* = save, deliver – NB. *Yeshua*, the Saviour)

Teruah – [from *terua* = alarm, signal, blowing (trumpet), break up, strike camp; root *r-u-a* = shout, raise a noise, cry out] a praise of God, exaltation of the people in God’s presence; or a cry of complaint or distress; or an alarm and signal of attack or war, a trumpet in battle. **It says:** Awake (from sleep)! Prepare for action! Break every form of idol!

Tekiah-gedolah – the great *tekiab* – [*gadol* = great, long, loud] The *tekiab* calls for a new attitude, a new place to follow Adonai. A shout of victory, welcome, achievement, completion. **It says:** It is complete! It is ended! The King is coming! *Hallelu-Yah!*

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