

# “Trumpet in the Bible”

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**By David Cloud**

PORT HURON, Mich.—There are four Hebrew words translated “trumpet” in the Old Testament.

Two of them refer to the two types of trumpets used in Israel.

*Shofar* (shophar, sopar) is the most common word for trumpet. (It is translated “trumpet” 68 times and “cornet” in 1 Chronicles 15:28; 2 Chronicles 15:14; Psalm 98:6; and Hosea 5:8). The shofar was a curved instrument made of rams’ horns and perhaps of the horns of other animals. It was used on joyful occasions, for calling assemblies and for making war (Exodus 19:16; Leviticus 25:9; Numbers 10:4; Joshua 6:5; Judges 3:27; 6:34; 7:16; 1 Samuel 13:3; and 2 Samuel 2:28; 6:15; 15:10; 18:16; 20:1). The word for “horn” is *qeren* or *keren* in Hebrew (Genesis 27:13; Joshua 6:5; 1 Samuel 16:13).

The *chatsotserah* is the straight silver trumpet of Numbers 10:1-10. It is also used in Numbers 29:1; 31:6; 2 Kings 11:14; 12:13; 1 Chronicles 13:8; 15:24; 2 Chronicles 5:13; Ezra 3:10; Nehemiah 12:35; Psalm 98:6; and Hosea 5:8. Beginning in the days of David, there were many more trumpets (1 Chronicles 15:24; 16:6). At the dedication of the first temple, there were 120 chatsotserahs (2 Chronicles 5:12).

Two other words translated “trumpet” describe the sound of the shofar or chatsotserah rather than another type of instrument. *Yobel*, translated “trumpet” only in Exodus 19:13, is derived from “the blast of a horn (from its continuous sound).” *Teruah* (*terooaw*), translated “blowing of trumpets” in Leviticus 23:24, describes the trumpet’s attention-grabbing, quavering sound.

## **The Use of Trumpets in the Bible**

- (1) Israel was guided by silver trumpets (*chatsotserah*) (Numbers 10:1-10). The priests used these trumpets to call the assembly and to sound the alarm for war. The silver trumpets symbolize the guidance of God in the churches. The fact that the trumpets were silver reminds us that God’s guidance is predicated upon His redemption. He guides us because He has redeemed us. Silver spoke of the price of redemption (Exodus 30:11-16). As the priests determined God’s mind and communicated it to the camp, the churches are guided by God-called pastors who

sound out the mind of God to the assembly (2 Timothy 4:2). The church, in turn, is to respond immediately.

- (2) Trumpets (*shofar*) were sounded at the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:16, 19; 20:18; Hebrews 12:19).
- (3) The trumpet (*shofar*) sounded throughout the land on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 25:9). This points to Christ's great atoning sacrifice on Calvary.
- (4) Trumpets (*shofar*) were sounded at the feast of trumpets (*chatsotserah* in Numbers 10:10 and *shofar* in Psalm 47:5). This points to the coming of Christ to redeem Israel ("God is gone up with a shout, the LORD with the sound of a trumpet," Psalm 47:5; "And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet," Matthew 24:31).
- (5) The trumpet (*shofar*) was sounded at the beginning of Jubilee (Leviticus 25:9; *chatsotserah* in Numbers 10:10).
- (6) The trumpet was sounded for war (*shofar* at Jericho—Joshua 6:4-20; Gideon—7:16-18, 20; Saul—1 Samuel 13:3; *chatsotserah* in Numbers 10:9).
- (7) The trumpet (*shofar*) was sounded when the king was coronated (1 Kings 1:39, 41; 2 Kings 11:14).
- (8) The trumpet (*shofar*) was sounded when David brought the ark to Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6:15; 1 Chronicles 15:28).
- (9) Trumpets (*chatsotserah*) were sounded at the dedication of the first temple ("a hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets," 2 Chronicles 5:12) and the second temple (Ezra 3:10).
- (10) The trumpet (*shofar*) was used by Israel in praise of God (2 Kings 11:14; 1 Chronicles 13:8; 15:24, 28; 16:6, 42; Ezra 3:10; Nehemiah 12:35, 41; Psalm 98:6; 150:8).
- (11) Trumpets (*chatsotserah*) were sounded at the bringing of the ark to Jerusalem (1 Chronicles 15:24).
- (12) Trumpets (*chatsotserah*) were sounded at revivals during the reigns of Asa (2 Chronicles 15:14), Jehoshaphat (2 Chronicles 20:28) and Hezekiah (2 Chronicles 29:27-28).
- (13) Trumpets (*chatsotserah*) were sounded at the dedication of the rebuilt walls of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 12:35, 41).
- (14) The trumpet will sound at Christ's coming for the Church at the Rapture (1 Corinthians 15:52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16).

- (15) Trumpets will announce the day of the Lord and the last judgments on the world (Revelation 8:2–9:14). This is *shofar* in Joel 2:2—“Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is night at hand.”
- (16) The trumpet (*shofar*) will announce the repentance and conversion and deliverance of Israel (Joel 2:15-21).

### The silver trumpets

- The trumpets signify redemption. The fact that the trumpets were silver reminds us that God’s guidance is predicated upon His redemption. He guides us because He has redeemed us. Silver spoke of the price of redemption (Exodus 30:11-16).
- The trumpets signify the call of God. Only the priests were to blow the trumpets (Numbers 10:8), signifying the necessity of the call and gifting of God. Compare Acts 20:28; Romans 12:6-8; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; Hebrews 13:7, 17.
- The trumpets signify God’s guidance. As the priests determined God’s mind and communicated it to the camp, the churches are guided by God-called pastors and teachers who sound out the mind of God to the assembly (2 Timothy 4:2; 1 Peter 4:11). The church, in turn, is to respond with alacrity.
- The trumpets signify God’s call to assembly (Hebrews 10:25) for worship, education, training, discipline and service. Everything was done in good order (Numbers 10:5-6). Compare 1 Corinthians 11:2; 14:33, 40.
- The trumpets signify God’s call to warfare and the engagement of God’s people in warfare. Compare 2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Ephesians 6:10-19; 1 Timothy 6:12; 2 Timothy 2:3-4; 4:7; and 1 Peter 5:8.