

Lord of the Sabbath

Program #31

First Day of Seventh Month is Holy

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I pray that you are having a delightful Sabbath day. I am getting excited about the upcoming fall Holy days and the third and last pilgrim Feast of the LORD. I am so excited I feel like singing praises to the Lord of the Sabbath and how His holy days refresh my spirit. Actually, if I started singing, the next sound we would hear is that of your radios being switched off!

So, I have invited someone to sing my favorite Sabbath song whom I think you will enjoy hearing. The song was written by Ross Jutsom and is titled "Remember the Sabbath Day." Our singer is Melissa Ising. She is currently a music major in college.

Verse 1:

In six days God made earth and seas and heavens;
He sanctified and blessed the seventh day.
God hallowed it and rested from His labor,
So we can worship Him and follow His way.

Chorus:

Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy:
A rest for the people of God, a true delight.
The Son of Man, He reigns as Lord of the Sabbath,
And shows His brethren how to do what's right.

If you enjoyed Melissa's angelic voice singing praises to the Lord of the Sabbath as much as I did and would like to hear more of her Christian singing, please contact me and I will put you in touch with her.

The next annual holy Sabbath day of the Lord is on the first day of the seventh month on God's sacred calendar. We find the LORD'S command in Lev. 23: 23:

Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: "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. You shall do no customary work on it; and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD.

This is a somewhat mysterious and intriguing holy day of the Lord. I say that for a number of reasons:

1. There is no specific reference in Scripture to what is being memorialized.
2. Even its name is not very clear in Scripture.
3. There is no mention of Jesus, or any of His apostles, keeping this holy day.

4. It is a day that comes without any advance notice.
5. Even the fulfillment of it in Christ is not completely clear.

However, as we search the Scriptures we find many clues or inferences here and there that help us solve these mysteries. The answers will help complete the big picture puzzle of God's future prophetic plan for mankind and the world. It seems that understanding the Feasts and Holy Days of the LORD gives us prophetic understandings that we just can't get any other way. I can't help but wonder if that isn't one of the reasons He commanded His people to keep them?

Let's start with the first of the five items I said lend some mystery to this commanded day of rest and worship. If the LORD says the day is to be a memorial of blowing of trumpets, what event in the history of Israel is this commemorating?

We know, for example, that there is an historic reason for the Passover Feast and the first holy day, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It was the day that the children of Israel were delivered from slavery in Egypt by the very power and hand of God. Pharaoh let God's people go on the fifteenth day of the first month.

For the Day of Pentecost we recall God personally giving the Law to the children of Israel at Mt. Sinai fifty days after the passover. But, what happened to the children of Israel on the first day of the seventh month? Was God involved in a specific event that was to be thankfully remembered forever by His people?

Well if you know what that event was, how about contacting me and I will announce it next Sabbath. I have NOT been able to find any one historic event given in scripture that happened to the nation of Israel on the first day of the seventh month.

Why would the LORD institute a memorial day of rest and holy convocation for something He had never done, or at least had never told us in His Word that He had done? Well, I am going to make a guess. My guess is that the LORD wants us to remember what the LORD has said He will do IN THE FUTURE.

You will find in the fall holy days and Feast of Tabernacles a great deal of prophetic symbolism. There is some wonderful news for the believers in the Lord of the Sabbath about what lies ahead. While the first two Feasts of the Lord have been fulfilled in Christ, the third feast in Christ is yet to come. The first two Feasts clearly show how God brings to pass what He has promised. They should give us hope and confidence that what He has promised which has not been fulfilled will surely also come to pass.

The conclusion seems inescapable. The fall Feast and holy days have something to do with the return of Christ as King, His millennial reign and the remaining seventh-day rest for the people of God as kings and priests with Christ. My friends, this is all glorious and exciting. It fills your heart with hope and awe in the power of God and His living Word. And, isn't it marvelous that each year, on the first day of the seventh month, the people of God assemble to refresh their spirits and wait patiently with a joyful heart for the return

of the Lamb of God as King over all the earth. And, what a marvelous way this provides for us to teach our children about God and His plan of salvation for all who will believe in His Son whom He sent to save us from the wrath and eternal death He pledged to bring upon the unrighteous of this whole earth. Praise our Almighty Creator!

Now, although there may not be a specific historical event that God did for Israel connected with this first day of the seventh month, there are clear indications of what the “blowing of trumpets” means to the people of God. It is in this sense that we can learn the wonderful ways God can use to keep us alert and mindful of what God has in store for His people as we celebrate this holy day each year. While the world fills itself with doubts about God and concerns about our future, we can trust Him to bring about what He has promised. And, our news is not terrifying; it is all good news!

Now, let me turn to another somewhat mysterious aspect of this commanded holy day of rest and worship by the people of God. That is, what do we call it? Does it have a name given by God?

Well, my first inclination is to go to a Jewish calendar and see what they call this holy day of the Lord originally commanded to Israel. Surely, they would know. Right? Wrong! Modern Jews call this holy day of the LORD “Rosh Hashanah.” That is NOT what the LORD calls it though! The term is in the Torah just one time and IS NOT in reference to this holy day.

The term Rosh Hashanah means the head of the year. It is the New Years Day for Judaism. It is also a civil holiday in the nation Israel. Many Messianic Jewish groups also call this holy day Rosh Hashanah. This is a puzzle to me because most of these believers in Jesus as the Messiah are adamant about also being Torah observant. Yet, they call a holy day of the LORD by a name not given to it in the Torah.

So, what is behind this rather mysterious problem of what name to give to this holy day of the LORD? It is a teaching by the rabbis that the world began, or at least the creation of man (meaning Adam) took place, on the first day of the seventh month. Is this what Scripture states? NO.

So how did the rabbis come to this conclusion? Are you sitting down? This tradition is almost too incredible to mention. As I understand it, if you reverse the Hebrew letters of the first three words of the Torah, “In the beginning,” you get “on the first of Tishrei.” Tishrei is the Hebrew name for this month in the fall of the year. So, do you get it? According to Jewish tradition, the world began, or man was created, on the first day of the month called Tishrei. It is the birthday of the world! If you are not convinced by this reasoning of the rabbis, welcome to the club.

We know, of course, from Scripture that God says the first month of His sacred year is in the spring. I believe that Judaism also recognizes Nisan 1 (more properly called Abib 1) as a new year for the months and for counting the years that a Jewish king has reigned. If this has not confused you enough, I could tell you that there are two other “new year”

dates on the modern Jewish calendar. One is for the tithing of animals and the other is for the trees. Do you give up now?

Another popular name for this holy day of the Lord is the Feast of Trumpets. I have celebrated the holy day using this name many times. But, a little Bible study and you will find that this is not quite correct either. The holy day certainly does have something to do with hearing a loud noise, like a trumpet blast. But, to call it a “feast” is simply not correct. The names of the three Feasts of the LORD have the Hebrew word “chag” in them. This holy day has the Hebrew word “yom” in it. Yom is translated as day. The first day of the seventh month is a holy day of the LORD not a feast of the LORD.

Is it clear that we are referring to the loud sound made by a cheeks-puckered strong blast on a trumpet? Well, not necessarily. As is often the case, our English translations of the Hebrew can be misleading. I recall singing a hymn on this holy day titled “God Speaks to Us” written by George W. Warren. The hymn really had nothing to do with this holy day except that it had a short trumpet solo before each stanza. And, several trumpeters would boldly blast away on their trumpets as the congregation sung. It was a loud sound that captured your attention. It took a while to get used to stopping your singing at the end of a stanza to allow the trumpets to blast away before singing the next stanza. It caught me, and many others, singing out loud when the trumpets alone should be sounding.

Well, one thing is pretty clear from scripture. If a trumpet was to be blown on this day, it was not the silver or gold colored metal trumpet we associate today with a lively dance band. The trumpet that is generally commanded to be blown on holy days is a ram’s horn called a “shofar” in Hebrew. A shofar makes quite a different sound than a metal, musical instrument called a trumpet. If you have never heard the haunting sound of a shofar, I think it will intrigue you. There is a different Hebrew word used for the silver trumpets blown by the priests at designated occasions.

I have digressed a bit but I was trying to show that a more appropriate name for this holy day in Hebrew is Yom Teruah, not Rosh Hashanah. Teruah, however, has several meanings or usages so when we try to translate it into a precise English term, we again have difficulty. Teruah is translated in the Authorized Version of the Bible eleven times as “shout,” eight times as “shouting,” six times as “alarm,” three times as “sound,” and only two times as “blowing” or “joy.”

In both Numbers 29:1 and Leviticus 23:24 the word translated as “blowing” is “teruah.” If we associate this day with a trumpet or shofar blast, then blowing seems to fit best. There are a number of important uses in Scripture of blowing a ram’s horn for the people. One is from Psalm 81:3:

Blow the trumpet at the time of the New Moon,

The Hebrew word for trumpet in this verse is shofar, which generally refers to the curved ram’s horn. Since the first day of the seventh month is by definition a New Moon day, it

makes sense to me to consider that the teruah intended is from blowing of a ram's horn. Historically in Israel the shofar that was used to announce the arrival of Yom Teruah was preferred to be of a ram's horn.

But, we should not lose the idea that teruah can also mean a loud shout, a sound that is similar to a trumpet blast on a ram's horn or shofar. For example, one of the New Testament verses we have all read concerns the second coming of Jesus, the Lamb of God, as King. Look carefully at 1 Thes. 4: 16:

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God.

Here we see a combination of hearing a shout with the voice of an archangel but also with the trumpet of God. I don't know if God has a trumpet or ram's horn to blow. It may be that when an archangel of God shouts it sounds like a trumpet blown from heaven. But, whatever this sound is, I think it will be so loud and penetrating so as to awake someone who is sound asleep. Perhaps it would be greater than the loudest thunder you have ever heard.

I have seen several English words and phrases used to name this holy day. Besides the Feast of Trumpets, I have seen it called the "Day of the Awakening Blast," the "Day of the Sounding of the Shofar" and the "Day of Shouting."

Well, I warned you that even the name of this holy day is a bit mysterious. I suppose you thought I would solve the mystery. I can't. I personally am comfortable calling it Yom Teruah as I do not know what English name is most appropriate. Now to leave you even more to contemplate, I will also tell you that there are two other Hebrew names used in Scripture which refer to this day. I am going to save those until next Sabbath when I get more specific about the meaning and relevance to us Christians of this holy day of the LORD.

Now, I am moving on to what I listed as the third mystery about this day. There is no mention of Jesus or His Apostles observing this day. I have little doubt that they did keep that day holy. Attending or keeping the Sabbaths, holy days and Feasts of the LORD are mentioned a number of times in the New Testament. But, why Yom Teruah is NOT mentioned in the gospels or in Acts remains a mystery to me. If you have a possible explanation, please share it with me and I may reference your idea on the next program.

The fourth mystery on my list involves the difficulty of knowing in advance just what 24-hour day is the first day of the seventh month. This is caused by it being the only holy day of the LORD on a New Moon Day. Since for God's sacred calendar, you had to observe the new crescent moon to know if a new month had started it was basically unpredictable until it happened. The difficulty of letting the scattered Jews at the time of Christ know when exactly the 15th day of Abib occurred led to celebrating the holy days on two days, believing that one of them had to be the correct appointed time for worship.

You may not know that even in Israel itself with the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem there was difficulty getting a proclamation of the first day of the seventh month out to all the Israelites in time for its proper observance. This was solved by keeping two days instead of one. Even today on the modern Jewish calendar, you will see Rosh Hashanah shown for two days. It is tradition. According to the rabbis, this would strengthen the observation and importance of this holy day to begin a new civil calendar year. This two day celebration of Rosh Hashanah is actually referred to by the rabbis as “one long day.”

If you are willing to keep this holy day based on a local observation of the New Moon, I really do not conceive much of a problem. If you carefully noted the day of the prior New Moon, you can be pretty sure the next New Moon will be 29 or 30 days later. So you watch for the new crescent on those nights. If you see it the first night, the holy day is the next day. In a locality, it should be fairly easy to let everyone know whether a sighting was made the night before. If not, then you can be pretty sure it will be the next night.

Today, with our instant communication methods, even if you decide to go by the New Moon observations in Israel rather than locally, it is relatively easy to proclaim and observe the correct day.

The fifth mysterious aspect of this holy day is just exactly what will Jesus do to fulfill it? Some scriptures make it sound quite clear that the return of Jesus to the earth will be its fulfillment in Christ. Others are convinced that it is the appearing of Jesus in the heavens to call up His disciples, termed the Bride of Christ, to meet Him in the air and rise to be with the Father in heaven where Jesus went to prepare a place for us as His bride. Are these two events at different times or one event basically on the same day?

I have studied my Bible many times to try to find a key to unlock this controversy. I admit it was an “on one hand” and “on the other hand” dilemma within myself that I could not satisfactorily resolve. But, as I learned more about the commanded Feasts and Holy Days of the LORD, the fog began to clear away. I am going to share what I discovered and hope that it helps resolve this issue in your mind as well. If it does not, that is no reason to not stay brothers and sisters in Christ.

My conclusion is that the key reason for the dispute is a belief that the last trumpet of 1 Cor. 15: 52 is the same as the seventh trumpet of Revelation 11. Without a knowledge of the commandments of God regarding His holy days, and relying solely on our English versions of the Bible it would be quite logical to assume they must refer to the same trumpet and therefore the same day.

Let us look closely at the two trumpet experiences. First, in 1 Cor. 15: 51-52 we read:

Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed--- in the twinkling of an eye, at the LAST TRUMPET. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

Here is a reference to the first resurrection when the dead will be raised in new bodies and those still alive when this last trumpet is sounded will be changed so that their corruptible bodies made of flesh will also become incorruptible, not subject to decay or death.

Now, we need to compare this prophetic event to that described in Rev. 11: 15 concerning the seventh trumpet:

Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"

As we read further in Revelation, we find a description of what happens to various groups on the earth and how the wrath of God is poured out on those who have taken the mark of the beast. In Rev. 19: 11 we see that heaven is opened and Christ will return from heaven on a white horse followed by the armies of heaven, clothed in white linen following Him also on white horses to battle the armies of the beast.

Now listen closely to discern the three trumpets associated with the holy days of the LORD. The first trumpet is blown when the LORD comes down to Mt. Sinai to make the marriage covenant with Israel on what became the holy day of Pentecost. We find it prophesied in Exodus 19: 19:

And when the blast of the trumpet sounded long and became louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by voice.

Notice the connection between the voice of God and the trumpet blast sound. This is when God spoke the Ten Commandments to the people. It is a voice or sound heard from heaven likened to thunder. And notice in Ex. 19: 16 that the sound of this first trumpet was so very loud that all the people trembled. This first trumpet of God announced the old marriage covenant made between God and His chosen people Israel.

Now when is the next trumpet? Indeed, it is on the Yom Teruah. It is what is known as the last trumpet. This is indeed the time when Jesus will call up to heaven His bride at the first resurrection. It is an announcement of the new marriage covenant of Jesus, the Bridegroom, to be made with His bride the church which the Father has chosen for His Son. It is the time when the church of God will finally see Jesus as He is, face to face.

Have you read about the wedding ceremony that God gave in scripture for the Jewish people and how it relates to the wedding of the Lamb so aptly described in Rev. 19: 7-9:

Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Thus he said to me, "Write: Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!"

Do you see the connection of the first and last trumpets of God? They announce the first (also called the old) marriage covenant with God and the new or renewed marriage covenant (which will be the last marriage covenant of God) with the Son of God for all eternity. That last trumpet is literally the trumpet of God that the dead, often referred in scripture to those who are asleep in Christ, will hear and rise like the dead body of the slain Lamb of God rose. Don't believe me. Read Isaiah 26, especially Verse 19, and on, in your own Bible. If you still doubt that after this last trump of God, when the dead people of God rise to meet the Lord in the air, that they will be taken to heaven into the wedding chamber that Jesus has prepared for them, please write or contact me and we can discuss it further.

Then, what and when is the third trumpet? How can there be another trumpet if the last trumpet has already been blown? This third trumpet of God is called the great trumpet and is found described as such only one time in scripture in Is. 27:13:

So it shall be in that day: the great trumpet will be blown; they will come, who are about to perish in the land of Assyria, and they who are outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the LORD in the holy mountain at Jerusalem.

Now what is this day and why is this great trumpet of God blown? It clearly is NOT announcing a marriage covenant. It is announcing the coming judgment upon the earth, that great and terrible day of the Lord, when the wrath of God is poured out on the unrighteous who remain on the earth. That's right, it for those "left behind." It is also when that serpent, Satan the Devil, is bound on the Day of Atonement for 1,000 years.

I can hardly believe my time is already gone. This is Brother Kenny, praying that you will join me next Sabbath as we will wrap up the marvelous meaning of this somewhat mysterious and hidden holy day of the Lord to be observed each year by the people of God on the first day of the seventh month. Until then, may God be gracious to you.