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God's Alarm System

Alarms call us to action. We have fire alarms, weather alarms, alarm clocks, and personal electronic devices with alarms. During biblical times, Israel also sounded an alarm to rally its troops or remind people of special times, such as

the Sabbath. The first mention of making trumpets appears in Numbers 10:1–10. The Lord commanded Moses to make “two silver trumpets” for “calling the congregation and for directing the movement of the camps” (v. 2).

These straight, silver trumpets (Hebrew, *hatsotserah*) refer specifically to long, straight, metallic instruments, rather than to *shofars*, devices with a similar purpose but made from animal horns. Both instruments were used to warn of enemy attacks (Hos. 5:8) and to summon Israel to battle (Jud. 7:20–22). The difference between them involved who was to use them. Anyone could sound a shofar, but only priests could blow the silver trumpets (Num. 10:8).

The priests used the trumpets to signal tribes to set out from camp for festival days and to follow the *Shekinah*, the glory cloud (vv. 5–7, 9–10). However, they also signaled “you will be remembered before the LORD your God” (v. 9). This “divine alarm” was a type of national prayer, summoning God Himself to deliver Israel in its time of need. Consequently, blowing the silver trumpets was to be “an ordinance forever throughout your generations” (v. 8) because national Israel would always need divine salvation.

Israel’s greatest need for salvation will be during “the time of Jacob’s [Israel’s] trouble” (Jer. 30:7), the Tribulation. The Antichrist and Gentile nations will attack the Jewish nation (Zech. 12:3; 14:2; Mt. 24:15–21); and the angels in heaven will sound trumpets (Rev. 8:2) to signal God’s divine judgment on the Gentiles, deliver Israel (v. 13; 9:13–14), and regather the Jewish people for the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom (Mt. 24:31).

The Jewish priestly sect that resided at Qumran wrote an end-times War Scroll that spoke of using trumpets for “the vengeful remembrance at the appointed time of God” (1QM 3.7). This purpose echoes the Messiah’s purpose at His Second Advent: “to proclaim . . . the day of vengeance of our God” (Isa. 61:2), an

alarm He has been waiting 2,000 years to sound! We, too, in this Church Age, are waiting for the trumpet to signal the Blessed Hope of the Rapture and call us to heaven (1 Cor. 15:52; 1 Th. 4:16).

Archaeologically, the silver trumpets were part of the Temple treasures and were depicted on a silver denarius struck during the Bar Kokhba revolt and on the Arch of Titus, which is still standing today in the Roman Forum.

The Roman 10th Legion looted the silver trumpets from the second Temple; and the Arch of Titus shows soldiers carrying them, along with a placard that reads *Sacra Judaeorum* (“Jewish sacred objects”). Based on this information, craftsmen at the Temple Institute have built ritually pure silver trumpets that are used today by their “priests in training” during Jewish festivals.

How gracious of God to provide a divine alarm system for His people, not only to warn them but also to remind them that He is their great Savior and is coming again to deliver them from their enemies, to end all war (Isa. 2:4), and to reign forever as their Prince of Peace (9:6–7).



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