

The Shofar

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Shofar is the Hebrew term for a trumpet made from a curved ram's horn. To sound the ram's horn came from the root word "Teruwah" in Hebrew which means clangor of trumpets, acclamation of joy, clamor, rejoicing, high joyful sound, loud noise, wild shout, a battle cry, to announce forcefully or loudly. "Uwah" means to split the ears with sound. The ram's horn represents the ram caught in the thicket, when Abraham was about to sacrifice Issac. Likewise, it represents God's humble substitute for us, Jesus Christ. It is not considered a musical instrument but is blown for a variety of reasons.

1. Blown to herald the Lord's descent and the giving of the law at Mt. Sanai.

- **EXO 19:16** On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, with a thick cloud over the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast. Everyone in the camp trembled. 19 and the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder. Then Moses spoke and the voice of God answered him.
- **EXO 20:18** When the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain in smoke, they trembled with fear. They stayed at a distance

2. Blown to usher in the Feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hashanna). This was a call to "Sabbath rest, a memorial of blowing trumpets, a holy convocation." It marked the beginning of a ten-day period of self-examination and repentance culminating with the Day of Atonement. The one who blows the shofar recites the blessing: "Blessed art Thou, Lord or God, King of the universe who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to hear the sound of the shofar." The congregation responds with "Amen." It tells us to "Awake, ye sleepers from your sleep...and ponder your deeds."

- **NUM 29:1** "On the first day of the seventh month hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work. It is a day for you to sound the trumpets.

3. Blown to herald the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). A long blast is sounded to begin Yom Kippur.

- **LEV 25:9** Then have the trumpet sounded everywhere on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement sound the trumpet throughout your land.

4. Blown to announce the Year of Jubilee. Jubilee in Hebrew is "Yabel," meaning to flow and is rendered trumpets. Every fifty years slaves were freed, debts were forgiven and land returned to the original owner. (verse 10 says, "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land to all its inhabitants" and is inscribed on the Liberty Bell.)

- **LEV 25:9** Then have the trumpet sounded everywhere on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement sound the trumpet throughout your land. 10 Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you; each one of you is to return to his family property and each to his own clan.

5. Blown continually by seven priests before the Ark of the Covenant, as part of strategic warfare at the battle of Jericho. Joshua 6:4-20

- **JOS 6:4** Have seven priests carry trumpets of rams' horns in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets. 5 When you hear them sound a long blast on the trumpets, have all the people give a loud shout; then the wall of the city will collapse and the people will go up, every man straight in." 6 So Joshua son of Nun called the priests and said to them, "Take up the ark of the covenant of the LORD and have seven priests carry trumpets in front of it." 7 And he ordered the people, "Advance! March around the city, with the armed guard going ahead of the ark of the LORD." 8 When Joshua had spoken to the people, the seven priests carrying the seven trumpets before the LORD went forward, blowing their trumpets, and the ark of the LORD's covenant followed them. 9 The armed guard marched ahead of the priests who blew the trumpets, and the rear guard followed the ark. All this time the trumpets were sounding. 10 But Joshua had commanded the people, "Do not give a war cry, do not raise your voices, do not say a word until the day I tell you to shout. Then shout!" 11 So he had the ark of the LORD carried around the city, circling it once. Then the people returned to camp and spent the night there. 12 Joshua got up early the next morning and the priests took up the ark of the LORD. 13 The seven priests carrying the seven trumpets went forward, marching before the ark of the LORD and blowing the trumpets. The armed men went ahead of them and the rear guard followed the ark of the LORD, while the trumpets kept sounding. 14 So on the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp. They did this for six days. 15 On the seventh day, they got up at daybreak and marched around the city seven times in the same

manner, except that on that day they circled the city seven times. 16 The seventh time around, when the priests sounded the trumpet blast, Joshua commanded the people, "Shout! For the LORD has given you the city!" 20 When the trumpets sounded, the people shouted, and at the sound of the trumpet, when the people gave a loud shout, the wall collapsed; so every man charged straight in, and they took the city.

6. **Blown by Gideon to rally troops and by the 300 men in his army in battle. JUDG 6:34 and 7:8, 16, 20**
 - **JUDG 6:34** Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet, summoning the Abiezrites to follow him.
7. **Blown to usher in the ark of the Lord (His presence) as David danced with all his might. 2SA 6:15; 1CH 15:14**
 - **2SA 6:15** while he and the entire house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouts and the sound of trumpets.
8. **Blown when a king was anointed. 1KI 1:34, 39, 41; 2KI 9:13**
 - **2KI 9:13** They hurried and took their cloaks and spread them under him on the bare steps. Then they blew the trumpet and shouted, "Jehu is king!"
9. **Blown at the taking of an oath. 2CH 15:14**
 - **2CH 15:14** They took an oath to the LORD with loud acclamation, with shouting and with trumpets and horns.
10. **Blown to rally the troops. NEH 4:18, 20**
 - **NEH 4:18** and each of the builders wore his sword at his side as he worked. But the man who sounded the trumpet stayed with me. 20 Wherever you hear the sound of the trumpet, join us there. Our God will fight for us!"
11. **Blown to announce God's presence and to praise and worship Him. PSA 47:5, 98:6, 150:3; ISA 27:13, 18:3. REV 1:10**
 - **PSA 47:5** God has ascended amid shouts of joy, the LORD amid the sounding of trumpets.
12. **Blown to call people to repentance. ISA 58:1; HOS 8:1; JOE 2:1**
 - **HOS 8:1** "Put the trumpet to your lips! An eagle is over the house of the LORD because the people have broken my covenant and rebelled against my law.
13. **Blown to sound the alarm of war. JER 4:19, 21, 6:1, 17; 51:27; JOE 2:1**
 - **JER 4:19** Oh, my anguish, my anguish! I writhe in pain. Oh, the agony of my heart! My heart pounds within me, I cannot keep silent. For I have heard the sound of the trumpet; I have heard the battle cry.
14. **Blown to sound the warning of danger. AMO 2:2, 3:6; ZEP 1:16; HOS 5:8, 8:1; EZE 33:2-9; ISA 58:1 (The sound of the trumpet is compared to a prophet's voice.)**
 - **ZEP 1:16** a day of trumpet and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the corner towers.
15. **Blown to call the assembly together to repentance and fasting.**
 - **JOE 2:1** Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy hill. Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming. It is close at hand— 15 Blow the trumpet in Zion, declare a holy fast, call a sacred assembly.
16. **Blown by the Lord. ZEC 9:14**
 - **ZEC 9:14** Then the LORD will appear over them; his arrow will flash like lightning. The Sovereign LORD will sound the trumpet; he will march in the storms of the south,
17. **Blown by the angels. MAT 24:31; REV 8:2, 3; 9:1, 13-14; 10:7; 11:15**
 - **MAT 24:31** 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.
18. **Blown at His coming. ICO 15:52; ITH 4:16**
 - **1TH 4:16** For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.