

Feast of Trumpets



And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation. Ye shall do no servile work therein: but ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD. Leviticus 23:23-25

And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month. Nehemiah 8:2

At the time of the feast of trumpets, when many were gathered at the holy city, the people assembled in the street that was before the water gate; "and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded to Israel. And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month. And he read therein before the street that was before the water gate from the morning until midday." "And the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law." "And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands; and they bowed their heads, and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground." Certain of the priests and Levites united with Ezra in explaining to the people the principles of the divine law. "So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading."

The scene was one of mournful interest. The wall of Jerusalem had been rebuilt, and the gates set up; thus far a great victory had been achieved; but a large part of the city was still in ruins. On a pulpit of wood, erected in one of the broadest streets, and surrounded on every hand by the sad reminders of Judah's departed glory, stood Ezra, now an aged man. At his right and left were gathered his brother Levites, who were consecrated to the service of God, and whose presence lent dignity and solemnity to the occasion. With heavy hearts they thought upon the days of their fathers, when the royal psalmist had sung: "Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces." "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King."

Looking down from the elevated platform, the eye swept over a sea of heads. From all the surrounding country the children of the covenant had assembled; and as one man they were listening, intent and reverent, to hear once more the words of the Most High. But even here the evidence of their sin was apparent. In their mingling with other nations, the Hebrew language had become corrupted, and therefore great care was necessary on the part of the speakers to explain the law in the language of the people, and so present it that it might be understood by all.

As the law of God was read and explained, the people were convinced of their guilt and danger, and with

tender consciences and penitential tears they mourned because of their transgressions. But as this day was a festival, a day of holy convocation, a day which the Lord had commanded to be kept with joy and gladness, they were bidden by their teachers to restrain their grief, and to rejoice in view of the great mercy of God toward them. "For," said Nehemiah, "this day is holy unto our Lord; neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength."

Accordingly, after the earlier part of the day had been devoted to religious exercises, the people spent the remainder in gratefully recounting the blessings of God, and enjoying the bounties which he had granted them, remembering also to send portions to the poor who had nothing to prepare. And there was great rejoicing, because they understood the words of the law which had been declared to them.⁴⁶

The Feast of Trumpets was the first of the fall Festivals. It occurred on the first day of the seventh month. It began with the blowing of the shofar, the Jewish ram's horn trumpet, and was observed as a Sabbath of rest to the Lord. It was celebrated with a holy convocation, a sacred gathering, as was held on the Sabbaths of the other festivals. In Nehemiah's time the Book of the Law was read to the people. This was very appropriate because the trumpets were sounded to warn the people to get ready for the Day of Atonement, a day of judgment, that would come ten days later. The ten days between these two holy times were called the Ten Days of Awe or Ten Days of Repentance. It was a time of special heart-searching to know that all sins were confessed and forgiven through the blood of the Sacrifice.

What requirements did God give them for this day?
Leviticus 23: 24, 25

Why was the Book of the Law read to the people?
Nehemiah 8:2, 3; 9:2, 3

The story of Nehemiah takes place shortly after the Jews returned to Jerusalem from their time of captivity in Babylon. It was crucial at that time to read and explain God's law so the people would understand what sin was and what had brought about their captivity in Babylon. They confessed the sins of their fathers so that they would not repeat them.

It is important for us to recognize the "sins of our fathers" as well. There is an old saying that "the apple doesn't fall far from the tree" meaning that children tend to repeat the same behaviors and mistakes they saw in their parents. This does not have to be the case though. The Book of the Law showed the people their need of repentance and reformation. They confessed their sins and the sins of their fathers because they saw how those sins led to captivity and death. We can do the same. We do not have to repeat the sins of our fathers. Jesus wants to give us new hearts that no longer love sin. We might make mistakes sometimes but repentance is still available. Through Jesus power, we can change and start again.

What does God tell us about His mercy?
Lamentations 3:22, 23

What does He want to do with our sins?
Micah 7:18, 19

Each day we should search our hearts and repent of anything that is against God's will and His Law. Then He can throw our sins into the sea and give us a fresh start each morning.

Ezekiel was a priest, a servant of God, who was living in Babylon at the time of the Babylonian captivity. Some people were still in Jerusalem at this time. God gave him a vision of what was going on in his homeland and the sins being committed.

What was one of the sins that caused Israel to fall captive to Babylon?

Ezekiel 8:3-5 . . . and behold northward at the gate of the altar this _____ in the entry.

What did God say about images?

Exodus 20:4, 5

Do some churches have images that people bow down to today?

Does the world promote idol worship in the form of celebrities?

Can one make an idol of a car, a house, a bank account?

What idols might there be in your life?

What hidden sins were being practiced in the inner court of the Temple?

Ezekiel 8:7-11

Ezekiel saw all kinds of disgusting pictures on the walls of the Temple and men worshiping them by burning incense to them. Can God approve of the kind of pictures you have on your clothing or your walls? Do we worship things we shouldn't?

What sins did Ezekiel see next?

Ezekiel 8:12 . . . hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the

_____? for they say, The LORD seeth us not; . . .

These people were filling their minds and imaginations with evil thoughts. What did Jesus say about bad thoughts that come into the mind?

Matthew 5:22.

Matthew 5:27, 28

What sins was usually committed with this type of worship which Ezekiel saw?

Leviticus 18:22-24

All types of sexual sins—incest, pornography, homosexuality, bestiality—are great abominations before God no matter what the world tries to tell you. What does Paul say about those who do these things?

1 Corinthians 6:9, 10

Here it is in another version since some words in KJV are harder to understand. God has not changed one bit!

Don't you know that wicked people won't inherit the kingdom of God? Stop deceiving yourselves! People who continue to commit sexual sins, who worship false gods, those who commit adultery, homosexuals, or thieves, those who are greedy or drunk, who use abusive language, or who rob people will not inherit the kingdom of God. 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10 (God's Word)

Satan will flash bad thoughts into our minds, and we need to recognize them and immediately reject them. If we allow evil thought to stay in our minds, we have already committed those sins we think about in our hearts, and we are guilty. Even our emotions need to be purified by God's spirit. He wants us to honor him in our thoughts, emotions, and actions. These make up our character. Give Him your bad thoughts and emotions. Ask Him to put His good thoughts and feelings into your mind instead. Sing a Christian song. This will help keep Satan away.

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. James 4:8

We want Jesus in our hearts to help us change. He can and will help us with these things. Ask God to help you as soon as the first fleeting thought of sin comes into your mind. He will help. If you cannot seem to overcome alone, find a good, trustworthy, Christian friend who you can confide in. Tell that person your struggle and ask them to pray with you and hold you accountable, asking if you are staying away from this sin, and praying with you until victory is won.

What happened as a result of the sins that Ezekiel saw among the leaders of Israel?
Ezekiel 9:4-6

Judgment was on its way for all the wicked people in Jerusalem. Judgment is soon to come to this earth as well. God will put a stop to this terrible sin problem and all the evil that is being done. Study His Word like they did at the Feast of Trumpets. Try to conform your life to His Laws. Through Jesus' blood and His grace we are given the power to do just that.

We need to spend time searching our hearts and making things right so we will be ready for the Judgment that is coming. The Feast of Trumpets and the Ten Days of Awe are a very good time to do that. Take this time for God in obedience to His commands. Jesus is our perfect example. Try to live like He did while He was on this earth.