

I want to wish everyone a very happy *Rosh HaShana* (*L'Shana Tova*, and I hope that everyone had a very joyous season of the Fall Feasts of Israel. These Fall Feasts of Israel are a great time to discuss their prophetic significance. During this time of year, we can clearly see God's prophetic plan for us as believers, *and* for the nation of Israel and the Jewish people. Let's go through the feasts looking at scripture that definitely allows us to outline the sequence of events.

Yom Teruah (or the **Feast of Trumpets**). The Feast the Lord commanded in Leviticus 23:23

Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²⁴ "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.* ²⁵ *You shall do no customary work on it; and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD.*'"

This is the **first** of the feasts. It is clear from the text that the Trumpet or "*Shofar*" is blown. This feast is the prediction of the "Rapture" of the believers spoken of by Rabbi Paul in 1 Thessalonians 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. *And the dead in Christ will rise first.* ¹⁷ *Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.* ¹⁸ *Therefore comfort one another with these words.'* Why am I sure it is the "Rapture" and not the second coming of Yeshua at the **end** of the great tribulation? Because many of you will refer to the scripture that Yeshua (Jesus in Hebrew) outlines in Matthew 24:40-41, '*Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left.* ⁴¹ *Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left.* ⁴² *Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour^[1] your Lord is coming'.*

This chapter tells us that at the end of the Great Tribulation, God will send His angels and "*they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other*" (verse 31). These "elect" are the people who become believers during the Great Tribulation. This gathering together is not the Rapture. This gathering of Tribulation believers takes place at the end of the tribulation, whereas the Rapture of the Church occurs sometime prior to the beginning of the Great Tribulation when Antichrist sets himself up as "God" in the Temple. Notice that the angels "*gather the elect*" (verse 31), whereas, at the time of the Rapture, we go up to Yeshua ourselves. Why is the timing of the rapture so important to God's plan? It is because part of God's plan for his "Church" (rapture really means is called out ones) is that they will be CHANGED! (see below).

"I declare to you, brothers, that **flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God**, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery: **We will not all sleep [die], but we will all be changed--in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.** For the perishable must clothe itself with the **imperishable**, and the mortal with **immortality.**" (1 Corinthians 15:50-53). Now, what is so important about that? Well let's read this scripture concerning the disciple Thomas. If we remember Thomas was not with the other disciples the first time Yeshua appeared to them. When Yeshua appeared the second time Thomas was there and said: (John 20:24-29): "*Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it.*"

²⁶A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" ²⁷Then he said to Thomas, "*Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.*" ²⁸Thomas said to him, "*My Lord and my God!*" ²⁹Then Jesus told him, "*Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.*" Soon after this Yeshua returned to the Father. So here is my question...

Yeshua (Lord Jesus) gave a "Blessing" to those who have NOT SEEN and still believed. WHAT IS THAT BLESSING? When God commands a blessing, He means it, and doesn't take it back (read the story of Isaac and Esau). The blessing is that we who believe in Yeshua before His return, will be changed into incorruptible bodies. Nowhere in Yeshua's prophecy about the gathering of the elect does he mention that they will be changed into incorruptible bodies. All who become believers during the great tribulation will go to heaven, but not in glorified bodies. That blessing is reserved for us who are watching for Him (Rev. 3:10-12) and so, are worthy to be *caught-up* (harpazo). So, to summarize, the rapture is a distinct event meant for we believers who are looking for Him. When we go to witness to both our Jewish brethren and others, let's make it clear to them that believing on Yeshua NOW, and receiving an incorruptible body is FAR better than suffering through the great tribulation to come where God's wrath will be unleashed on the world.

I have focused so far on *Yom Teruah*. The next feast is *Yom Kippur*. Stay tuned for the next letter (next month), where I will discuss *Yom Kippur* and *Sukkot* together, and how they fit into God's prophetic plan for Israel. Shalom!

