

Week 2 – Trumpets (Shofar)

What's in a Word?

Before I go any further I'd like to clarify something. I'll refer to the trumpets by their Hebrew name "*shofar*". Not all trumpets in the Bible were called "*shofar*" and when I mention those I'll be certain to explain the differences. But I will use the term "*shofar*" to convey the word "trumpet" from this point on.

Let's look at the Hebrew word "*Shofar*" and I'll show you what I mean.

The Hebrew word "*Shofar*" is first mentioned in Exodus 19:16.

*So it came about on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunder and lightning flashes and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a very loud **trumpet** sound so that all the people who were in the camp trembled.*
Exodus 19:16 (NASB '97 emphasis is my own)

The Hebrew meaning of the word "*Shofar*" is somewhat of an oddity to English ears and understanding. It is a proper noun, meaning "*Shofar*" is a person, place or thing. However, the meaning of the word "*Shofar*" in Hebrew has an active verb meaning in English. It means, "to cut into, to incise, to burn into." I find that amazing in the fact that those are precisely the feelings I experienced when I first heard the ram's horn shofar sounded on September 9, 2018! The sound sliced through my soul, cut through my heart, burned into my spirit, and stirred something within me that I do not have the vocabulary to express. All attempt to do so have failed.

To understand the meaning of Hebrew words, and our Old Testament was written in Hebrew and Aramaic, we must understand how Hebrew words are constructed. To do that, we must delve into the Hebrew alphabet. Don't worry, I won't bore you with the finest of details. I'll hit the high points and, hopefully, you will understand and enjoy the process.

Week 2 – Trumpets (Shofar)

The Hebrew word “*Shofar*” is made up of four letters written from right to left. So, in Hebrew, the word “*Shofar*” is written:

שׁוֹפָר

First, there is the letter *Shin* שׁ, which is the twenty-first letter of the Hebrew alphabet. It is the signature of God, if you will. It also carries the meanings of “sharp”, “consume”, “destroy”, and “teeth”. It means that God, the Father proper, is in the mix of things.

The second letter, the letter *Vav* ם, which is the sixth letter of the Hebrew alphabet and indicates a “joining together”. It means to secure two or more things that are separated from one another as with a wooden peg or an iron nail. A wooden peg or iron nail is used as an example here because, back in the time and culture, those things were considered “unbreakable” by man. What the letter *vav* joins together cannot be broken by man.

The third letter, *Pe* פ, which is the seventeenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet means, quite literally, “Speak”, “open”, or “mouth”.

The fourth and final letter of the word “*Shofar*” is the letter *Resh* ר. It is the twentieth letter of the Hebrew alphabet and it indicates a “Person”, “Head”, “Leader”, “Master”, or “Prince”.

So, what do these four letters tell us about the word “*Shofar*”? Actually, quite a lot of information is conveyed.

Week 2 – Trumpets (Shofar)

First, with the letter Shin שׁ, God tells us that He is in the game. This is His signature and that He is first in this word. It gives us an indication that God has something to say in this word. We should listen.

The letter Vav ם tells us that God, to the far right of the word, wishes to connect himself to that which is on the left. It means that God has identified himself and wants to connect with Moses (man) and that He wants to connect with us. God's presence is announced by the voice of the Shofar and He wants to meet with us just as He did with the people of Israel at Mt. Sanai when He handed down the Law to Moses! However, today, He is not handing down the Law. No, God is handing out much, much more. I think you'll see in a moment just how relevant all this is even though it is conveyed in the Second Book of the Old Testament.

The third letter Pe פ indicates that not only does God wish to connect to us relationally, but that He wishes to "speak" to us. Indeed, it has been established that God speaks through the sound of the shofar to His people. What does God want to speak to us about?

The letter Resh ר tells us that God wishes to connect with us to speak to us about the person, the head, the leader, the master, the prince! God, the Father, wishes to connect with us to speak with us about the Son of God! The Messiah! Jesus! Yeshua Hamashiach!

Don't believe it? Consider these things then.

The Pe-Resh letters provide a form for the word "oxen" in Genesis 12:16 which were used as a sacrifice. Pe-Resh is the precise word (ר פ) used in Judges 6:25 for the second, seven year old

Week 2 – Trumpets (Shofar)

bullock, that Gideon sacrificed on the altar for the sins of His people. The structure of the word and how it is used in the Hebrew texts indicate that God wishes to connect to us and speak to us about the Master, the Prince, GOD'S perfect SACRIFICE for us! That is what is conveyed in the word "*shofar*" and the sound of the shofar! God's presence is announced by the voice of the Shofar! That's God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit!

The word "*shofar*", the Shin, the Vav, the Pe, and the Resh are the root word for the Hebrew word "*beautiful*". God speaks to us through the shofar! What does He speak to us about? His perfect, one-time sacrifice that He made on our behalf. How beautiful is that?

Wow! I'd say that's pretty significant. ALL that is woven into the meaning of one simple word! But wait! There is still MORE!

In the Hebrew alphabet, each letter is appointed a certain number and each of those numbers has a prescribed meaning or meanings that are indicated within the number itself. This is known as gematria.

The number of the letter Shin is 300 and signifies the final, atoning blood sacrifice made by the perfect Lamb of God. The number of the letter Vav is 6 and indicates the weakness of man in his enmity with God in his natural fallen state. The number for the letter Pe is 80 and indicates a new beginning or a new birth in the spiritual realm ordained in heaven, not of man but of God. The number of the letter Resh is 200 and indicates the insufficiency of man to save himself compared to the sufficiency of God to completely save and restore.

Speaking in terms of gematria, the word "*Shofar*" is woven into the blood sacrifice of Christ, the perfect Passover Lamb of God and His willingness to provide that blood to satisfy the enmity

Week 2 – Trumpets (Shofar)

between man and God to provide a new birth or a new beginning since man is clearly not capable of doing so himself.

How beautiful is THAT? This most ancient of instruments, a symbol of God's provision, is an instrument that God chose to speak through to us to announce His presence and speak to us about His sacrifice for us! Even in the Old Testament! Even throughout ALL the Law! Even throughout the Old Covenant! It speaks even into the New Testament and into the New Covenant! But there's more! Yes! There is more! It is an instrument in which we speak with God and in which God speaks through us to others through His chosen instrument. The shofar is an instrument through which God speaks in the spiritual realm directing battles.

Is it any wonder, now that we know what's in a word, that God chose the shofar from the time of Exodus, perhaps Genesis, to instruct, guide and direct His people? The amazing thing is that God will use the shofar to usher in the End of the Age at the end of the end times. Sounds scary? No. There is nothing to be afraid of. Curious? Just a little bit?

Good. I hope to see you next time. School is in session and we're just getting started!