

September 2017

Dear Brethren:

Greetings to our brothers and sisters in faith from all of us here in Mindanao, Philippines.

Most Christians find little meaning in these days, but could they hold an important message for you and your future?

The Bible speaks of a time before Christ's return when the earth will be engulfed in war, famine, disease epidemics, earthquakes and other massive disasters. This era, called "the great tribulation" (Revelation 7:14; Matthew 24:21), will bring humanity to the brink of total destruction—necessitating God's promised intervention in human affairs.

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 (Leviticus 23:24, *New King James Version* throughout unless otherwise noted).

But what about us as individuals? Do we know why we take the day off each Feast of Trumpets? Why do we attend special church services? Are we merely perpetuating an old, Jewish ritual or, is there really something special about the day? Just what is the Feast of Trumpets, anyway?

Perhaps we once again need to clarify the details of why and how we in God's church keep the Feast of Trumpets, particularly for our young people, as well as those who are new to the church.

What Is the Feast of Trumpets?

Simply stated, the Feast of Trumpets is one of God's Feast days. It is the fourth of the seven annual Holy Days, and it is the first of the fall Holy Days.

A glance at most calendars will show that it is, in fact, a day that is still observed by the Jews. They call it Rosh Hashanah, which means "Head of the Year" or "First of the Year." This is because it falls on the first day of the seventh month—the civil new year in God's sacred calendar.

Why Do We Keep the Feast of Trumpets?

The simple answer to this question is that we keep the Feast of Trumpets because God clearly commands us to:

And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "These are the feasts of the Lord, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at their appointed times. . . . 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. You shall do no customary work on it; and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the Lord" (Leviticus 23:1, 4, 24–25).

But God does not command us to do things just to show off His power. His commands are always filled with true logic and common sense; when He commands us to do something, it is always for a very good reason. He tells us to keep His Feast of Trumpets because He wants us to take a break from the routine tasks of our daily lives. Like God's other Holy Days, the Feast of Trumpets is like a twenty-four-hour stop sign. God wants us to stop!

And in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall also have a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work. For you it is a day of blowing the trumpets (Numbers 29:1).

On the Feast of Trumpets, God wants us to put aside our relatively unimportant daily affairs, and to concentrate for a mere twenty-four hours on what is really important, not on the physical things that are not lasting or eternal (2 Corinthians 4:18). Even the rocks and mountains of this earth eventually will be burned up (Psalm 102:25–27; see Hebrews 1:10–12). On this Feast, God wants us to stop in order to concentrate on the truly eternal things: the return of Jesus Christ, the resurrection of the dead, the end of the age of man, and the Kingdom of God.

Leviticus 23:24 tells us clearly: "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." The

appointed time for the Feast of Trumpets is on the first day of the seventh month of God's sacred year. Like other months, this seventh month has two names: Tishri, meaning "beginning," and Ethanim, meaning "strong" or "valiant," which may refer to the return and intervention of the supremely strong and valiant Captain of our salvation, Jesus Christ (Hebrews 2:10, *King James Version*).

The blowing of the trumpets on the first day of the month heralded a solemn time of preparation for the Day of Atonement. The trumpet sound was used as an alarm of sorts, and it can be understood as a call to self-examination and repentance.

Why Should Christians Celebrate the Day of Atonement?

The Day of Atonement is the fifth of God's annual Holy Days (Leviticus 23:26–32), following shortly after the Feast of Trumpets. Observed by fasting (verse 27; compare with Isaiah 58:3), which means not eating or drinking (Esther 4:16), this day portrays the human race finally becoming at one with God.

Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man. The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness (Leviticus 16:21–22).

The rituals God gave ancient Israel for the Day of Atonement included one involving two goats. The high priest was to present them before God, and God would show which one was "for the Lord" to be sacrificed (representing Jesus Christ) and which was for *azazel*. The goat for *azazel* was left alive.

And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel . . . and shall send him away by the hand of [an appointed] man into the wilderness: And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness . . . And he that let go the goat for [*azazel*] shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water (Leviticus 16:21–22, 26, *KJV*).

Leviticus 16 is a remarkable chapter portraying two of the major roles of Jesus Christ. The Old Testament high priest typified the role of Christ as our ultimate High Priest, and the

goat that was slaughtered was a type of the one great sacrifice our loving Father gave for the entire world, so that, in the words of John 3:16, "whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Let us think deeply about the details, the meanings, and the symbolism behind God's Holy Days. We should anticipate and prepare for them with eagerness and joy!

Your brother in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eduardo Y. Cambil', with a large, sweeping initial 'E'.

Eduardo Y. Cambil