

The trumpets were used within the camp of Israel to call the congregation to assemble. There were two silver trumpets which were used, these were made of one whole piece. This allowed a high sound quality as there was no seams or rivets to interfere with the vibrations. The Hebrew word translated whole is *miqshah* which means beaten. So, the implication that it was beaten gives the translation of one whole piece, as you don't beat out a work from two or more pieces. The stated words carry implications.

1 Corinthians 14v7,8 illustrates the importance of clear communication. *"And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for battle?"*

The responsibility of this was given to the priesthood, not even the Levites, they were central to so much of the wilderness life of the nation.

But it was not just at times of war that these trumpets were blown. They were also blown to herald the religious festivities of the nation. At the beginning of each month, so at the new moons, these trumpets were to be blown, as well as at the annual feasts of Passover, Weeks and Tabernacles.

The trumpets were not to be blown over the sin or trespass offerings though, but only over burnt and peace offerings. The atonement of sin was not to be emphasised as it was a sensitive delicate matter, which should not be publicly trumpeted. These were to be a memorial so that the importance of what was taking place would be heralded throughout the camp. Sound was therefore a unifier for Israel. We have no equivalent today, but we can avoid drawing additional attention to negative issues within the Ecclesia and celebrate the positives, in the spirit of 1 Corinthians 12v25,26.

The twelve princes of the twelve tribes are again highlighted. The leadership of the congregation did not stop at the Lawgiver Moses, nor the High Priest Aaron but devolved down to the tribal leadership also which was important. There was a plurality of eldership in Israel even with the inspired Moses, so it should be similar also with us.

One blow of the trumpet was to assemble the leadership together. Not just the twelve princes but to include the leaders of the thousands in Israel, some 603 of those so 616 in all, almost like an early parliament. Large enough to be inclusive, but small enough to be practical in conference, any larger and it would be unwieldy to operate as a collective assembly in communication. The purpose was however more likely to disseminate information than to obtain a consensus. Both trumpets were not to be sounded for this, the double blast was always an alarm.

ON the 20th day of the 2nd month of the 2nd year the cloud was taken off from over the tabernacle. This was the signal to change the site of the camp. And the cloud was observed to rest over the wilderness of Paran. Looking for the placement of the cloud reminds us that we need to pay attention to where the Spirit of God is to be found. This means that today we do not look for the physical Shekinah glory, but the presence of the Spirit of Christ, evidenced by the commandments of Christ understood and obeyed. Where are such people today?

Hobab, the son of the father-in-law of Moses, a Midianite, was persuaded to stay with the Israelites after originally seeking to go back to the place of his birth. However, he tied his fate to the blessings of the nation of Israel as other gentiles have also done, down through the ages. He fulfilled an important role as providing local knowledge in reconnaissance *“thou mayest be to us instead of eyes”*. *“It shall be that what goodness the LORD shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee”*. There was a personal promise by Moses to share the divine provenance Israel received with their allies.

The ark of the covenant was at the centre of the arrangements. The cloud directed it. The Levites carried it wherever the cloud took them. For three days they sought out a new resting place before the settlement was clear. Being ready to move at the behest of God's direction not our own preferences is again something that should mark out the Truth holders.

The benediction at the conclusion of the chapter is a memorable one *“Rise up YHWH and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee.” “Return O YHWH unto the many thousands of Israel”*. God treats the advancing host as representative of Himself! The enemies were to flee before the singular “thee”, not the plural “you”, one of the advantages of the KJV's use of thee's and thou's, being able to easily see the difference.

A Voice from the Altar

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