

Church of God, The Eternal

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The Feast of Trumpets Pictures the Return of Christ

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Dear Brethren:

Greetings once again and wishing you a happy and a meaningful Feast of Trumpets.

I am excited to write this letter—the fact that it coincides with our celebration of the Feast of Trumpets. Ever since we accepted our calling we have accepted the truth that the Feast of Trumpets foreshadows the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. To me it is a joyful part of the year as it is a time of our great anticipation of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ to establish His Kingdom here on earth. To the called-out ones it is a jubilant event, a time of rejoicing and a magnificent unraveling of a great mystery. Do you agree with me? I think the Apostle Paul felt the same when he said:

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead [in Christ] shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? (1 Corinthians 15:51–55).

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [precede] them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:15–17).

Indeed our celebration should be jubilant—a heartfelt anticipation, a rejoicing and a real hope of the coming "on earth peace, good will toward men." Just as the angelic host in heaven joyfully sang during the first coming of our Lord Jesus Christ the night He was born, we ought to rejoice in anticipation of His Second Coming, for our salvation is indeed nearer than most people think.

Not so with the rest of the world and those who are not diligent in making their calling and election sure (2 Peter 1:10). The event of the Second Coming is to them a time of gloom, a day of mourning, darkness, and judgment. (Please read Joel 2:11). It is indeed horrifying to one who is not prepared to meet his/her God. Add to that the worldwide turmoil and tribulations that precede the coming of the Son of God, which will be threatening and devastating so that even the mightiest of men will faint with feeble knees. The Feast of Trumpets could be a day of fear and anticipation of gloom, but our God "hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:9). Therefore we should not fear that event as the rest of the world does.

While the world rejoices with great mirth and jubilation in December—with lavish trappings and rich pagan symbolism to "honor" the first coming of Jesus Christ—it has no regard for the Feast of Trumpets which falls on the first day of the seventh month in the Hebrew Calendar (falling in the later part of September or early October). The Feast of Trumpets ought to be the rightful time and occasion for true Christians to rejoice. It is a commanded solemn assembly and yet this first of the fall festivals can coincide with the birth of Jesus—which day no one knows. I do not presume nor attempt a doctrinal assertion or discussion here, but please bear with me if I should point out a number of parallels in these two significant and joyful events—the First Coming and the Second Coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

The Apparent Parallels

First, the birth and the Second Coming of our Lord are both symbolized by the blowing of trumpets. The blowing of trumpets was a command to be done on the first day of the seventh month, the first of the fall festivals. This fall festival may coincide with that time (cannot be winter time) when shepherds were "abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night" and an angel came to them with "tidings of great joy." Afterwards, the multitude of heavenly host sang (perhaps with the sound of trumpets?), "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:8, 10, 14). Would it be a remote coincidence if trumpets were also sounded in Jerusalem by the Levites who were commanded to announce the Feast of Trumpets?

Second, the birth of Jesus was a joyous event among the angels in heaven, while the world did not notice the humble birth in the manger. In the same manner the Second Coming will be a joyous event in heaven while the whole world will be in turmoil.

And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand . . . And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, *The kingdom of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever* (Revelation 11:13–15) [Emphasis mine].

Third, the exact date of Jesus' birth was never known by mankind in spite of the prophecies; so it is with the Second Coming of the Son of God. No one knows, not even the angels. Yet in the fullness of time Christ was born of a woman (Galatians 4:4). In the same manner, in the fullness of God's time, Christ will come again. "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not [even] the angels of heaven, but *my Father only*" (Matthew 24:36). No wonder God commanded His Feast days to be observed in His appointed times. "These are the feasts of the Lord, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their [appointed times]" (Leviticus 23:4) [Emphasis mine].

Fourth, there are indications that Christ could have been born about midnight and Christ indicates in parable that His Second Coming is also about midnight. Notice the arrival of the bridegroom in the parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25:1–13) and also His warning that His coming is as a thief in the night (Matthew 24:42). But what really counts is, are we always prepared for that sudden event?

But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation (1 Thessalonians 5:4–8).

These parallel events both indicate a time of rejoicing that could enhance our expectation and heighten our spirit to wait for the Lord to come. His enduring admonition is for us to watch and pray and be able to overcome the trials and temptations that may precede the sound of the last trumpet ushering in His arrival. May the yearly observance of the Feast of Trumpets provide us that positive orientation that when He arrives we may appear before Him with faith and confidence, rejoicing forevermore.

Some Observable Attitudes

Brethren, what is our attitude toward the Second Coming of our Lord? We observe the Feast of Trumpets year after year. Inwardly, we are reflecting and/or outwardly foreshadowing the coming of the Lord. But what is our real attitude toward the actual coming of our Lord? Do

we earnestly yearn and desire to be with Him? Do we observe His Feast with eager anticipation of His soon glorious coming? Are we really waiting and watching for that grand event?

Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that *wait* upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint (Isaiah 40:30–31) [Emphasis mine].

Brethren, are we patiently and earnestly waiting for our Lord's Second Coming? I overheard someone say, "I hope He is not yet coming soon, I have yet many great plans to accomplish." Another retorted, "I think His coming is still far and remote, the world is still too good to live in." Apparently there are different attitudes among people, all waiting for something or for somebody. There are those who feel they have waited too long and so manifest some feeling of impatience or displeasure, and so sigh or groan in their hearts with repressed emotion. The Israelites felt weary while waiting for Moses to come down from the mountain and so made a molten calf to represent God which was an abomination to the Lord.

And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him (Exodus 32:1).

Again there are those who wait with uncertainty and so develop an attitude of *que sera sera*, come what may, or what will be will be. This attitude makes them careless and preoccupied with many other things. Because the day and the hour of His coming is unknown, many tend to carelessly scoff: "Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation" (2 Peter 3:4).

Still, there are those who are "absolutely mesmerized with prophetic fulfillment" (*Announcement Letter*, June 2003). Instead of simply awaiting with joy Christ's Second Coming at God's appointed time, they are fascinated with human logic and speculation, manifesting an attitude of superiority.

Brethren, let us be jubilant in this Feast of Trumpets; the Holy Spirit inspiring us to wait and expect the return of Christ in God's appointed time.

Yea, let none that *wait* on thee be ashamed: let them be ashamed which transgress without cause. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do *I wait all the day* (Psalm 25:3, 5) [Emphasis mine].

Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on the Lord (Psalm 27:14).

Let a jubilant celebration of the Feast of Trumpets be a motivating factor to stimulate us to wait with faith, confidence and steadfastness in the faith once delivered to us.

Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness (2 Peter 3:14–17).

May we all abound in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Yours in His Powerful Name,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Corsino C. Canta". The signature is stylized and cursive, with a large initial 'C' and a prominent 'C' at the end.

Corsino C. Canta