

# The Rapture in the Old Testament

Eric Michael Teitelman

Pastor • Teacher • Worship Leader



House of David  
MINISTRIES

## Introduction

The Apostle Paul told the church, *“Behold, I tell 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 trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. (1 Corinthians 15:51-52, NKJV).<sup>i</sup>*

This verse provides the strongest argument for an instantaneous future transformation of the believer from corruptible to imperishable bodies. The word commonly used to describe this mysterious event is “Rapture,” taken from the Latin verb *rapiō* meaning “to catch up” or “take away.” The Latin was translated from the Greek word *harpazō* (ἁρπάζω), and Koine Greek *rapiemur* (ἁρπαγησόμεθα), meaning “we shall be caught up” or “taken away.”<sup>iii</sup>

I have heard people say the word itself is not in the Bible; therefore, it is not an actual event. True, this precise word is not in scripture because the Bible was written in Greek, not Latin. But Paul tells us that a sudden *rapiemur* or *harpazō*, catching away of the believers, *will* take place at the time of the resurrection. And it will happen very suddenly without any prevenient warning or sign at the blowing of the *last* trumpet.

So, the question is not whether the rapture is an actual event. It is real. We should be asking, “when is it likely to occur?” I say *likely*, because Yeshua declared, *“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only” (Matthew 24:36)*. However, Paul gave us a bread crumb of information when he said, “the last trumpet.” So, a better question to ask is, “when is the last trumpet going to be blown according to scripture?”

To answer this question, we will first study the New Testament, specifically the book of Revelation. And then, compare verses in Revelation to the Old Testament, primarily the book of Daniel.

## Timing of the Rapture

It is written, *“Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!” (Revelation 11:15).*

This verse in Revelation could hint at the timing of the rapture, given there are no other trumpets mentioned after this chapter. This would place the rapture near, but not necessarily at the end of the tribulation.

However, there is no mention of the resurrection or the rapture. Therefore, I believe the seventh angel is merely declaring that Christ has taken His rightful possession of the kingdoms of this world. This verse in Revelation is commonly linked to the Festival of Trumpets and the return of Christ. Affirming this understanding, the rabbis tell us that on the Festival of Trumpets, we are crowning God as King of all creation—the coronation of our Messiah.

A few days later, on the Day of the Lord, Yeshua returns to the Mount of Olives to destroy the nations that came against His people, Israel. At that time, He will also establish His eternal Kingdom. We read, *“Behold, the day of the Lord is coming... For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem... And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, Which faces Jerusalem on the east... Thus the Lord my God will come, And all the saints with You... And the Lord shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be—The Lord is one, And His name one”* (Zechariah 14:1-9).

Post tribulation theologians surmise that the resurrection and rapture will occur immediately before the return of Christ, where the church will be instantly caught up to meet the Lord in the air and then nearly as quickly return with Him to Jerusalem.

At first glance, this sounds plausible. But other aspects of this timing do not appear to align with scripture. We read, *“Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man”* (Luke 21:36). *“Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth”* (Revelation 3:10). These verses imply that the true believers in Christ will escape some great hour of trial, a global calamity, likely the tribulation.

### **What Type of Trumpet?**

There is another question we need to ask: “What type of trumpet is being blown in the book of Revelation?” In the Old Testament, there are two types mentioned in the Temple's services, a ram's horn (*Shofar*) and two silver trumpets (*chatzo'tza'rote*), made per the instructions given to Moses.

The Hebrew English translation only uses the word “trumpet” to describe either a *Shofar* or a silver trumpet. In the New Testament, the Greek word used is *salpigx* (σάλπιγξ, ἰγγοσ, ἦ, origin *salpizó*, pronounced *sal'-pinx*) to describe any type of trumpet, trumpeter, or trumpet sound, including the trumpet of God.<sup>iii</sup> This lack of distinction in English and Greek creates confusion as there is an essential distinction in Hebrew between the *Shofar* and the silver trumpets.

## The Shofar

The *Shofar* was commanded to be blown on the Festival of Trumpets. It was also used at the commencement of the Shabbat, the beginning of the months (new moons), and the fiftieth year of Jubilee (*Yovel*). Finally, on the Day of Atonement, the holiest day of the year for the Jewish people, the last *Shofar* blast of the year was sounded as the high priest stood silently at the entrance to the Holy of Holies.

The sages tell us that on the Festival of Trumpets (*Yom Teruah*, the day of blowing), when the Lord hears the call of the *Shofar*, He rises from His throne of justice and sits on His throne of mercy and judges the personal accounts of each man and woman.<sup>iv</sup> This time of judgment is called the "*Shofar* blast of remembrance (*zich'ron teruah*)," as God is reminded of His covenant with Israel.

Additionally, the *Shofar* reminds us of the revelation of the *Torah* and the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai. It reminds us of our prophets, who warned the people of the judgment to come if we do not repent.<sup>v</sup> And it reminds us of the walls at Jericho that fell with the blowing of the *Shofar* and Abraham's great test of faith when he prepared to sacrifice his only son Isaac on Mount Moriah.<sup>vi</sup>

Lastly, the *Shofar* reminds us of the Day of the Lord and judgment at the end of this age. The ingathering of the Jewish people to their homeland. The assembling of the Gentiles to Jerusalem on the Feast of Tabernacles and the resurrection of the dead.<sup>vii</sup> As it is written, "*The great day of the Lord is near... A day of trumpet [blowing the Shofar] and alarm against the fortified cities and against the high towers*" (Zephaniah 1:14 & 16). "*So it shall be in that day: The great trumpet [Shofar] will be blown*" (Isaiah 27:13). "*All inhabitants of the world and dwellers on the earth: When he lifts up a banner on the mountains, you see it; And when he blows a trumpet [Shofar], you hear it*" (Isaiah 18:3).

At this final season of judgment, the rabbis believe that the *Shofar* will confuse *Satan* not effectively to serve as a prosecutor at Israel's Divine judgment, thereby, the Jewish people merit a merciful ruling from the Lord.<sup>viii</sup>

The Lord declared that in the fiftieth year, the *Shofar* of the Jubilee would pronounce Israel's freedom from all her debt and return the captives to the land of their inheritance. As it is written, "*Then you shall cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement you shall make the trumpet to sound throughout all your land*" (Leviticus 25:9).

## Two Silver Trumpets

Two silver trumpets were also blown on the Lord's Holy convocations along with the *Shofar*, as it is written, *"With trumpets [va'chatzo'tza'rote] and the sound of a horn [Shofar]"* (Psalm 98:6). But the sages tell us that the silver trumpets were blown abruptly, while the *Shofar* was blown for an extended time. The rabbis explain that the *Shofar* is considered the timely mitzvah, meaning it is the commanded blessing,<sup>ix</sup> as it is written, *"Blow the trumpet (Shofar) at the time of the New Moon, At the full moon, on our solemn feast day"* (Psalm 81:4).

However, the silver trumpets held their own unique purpose. They were used, exclusively, to call forth God's army for battle. As we read, *"When you go to war in your land against the enemy who oppresses you, then you shall sound an alarm with the trumpets (be' chatzo'tza'rote), and you will be remembered before the Lord your God, and you will be saved from your enemies"* (Numbers 10:9). Therefore, we conclude that while *Shofar* and silver trumpets are ritually connected, they also have a distinguishably unique application.

## Judgment and Mercy

Since the Greek language in the New Testament does not distinguish between the various trumpet types, we will need to compare the broader context of its vocabulary with the commanded instructions in the Old Testament. Exploring the Greek, we find that each variation of the word *salpigx* (*sálpigks*) correlates with a war trumpet that boldly announces God's victory over the vanquishing of His enemies. The *Shofar*, on the other hand, connects with the Law of atonement. Thus, while the silver trumpets announce God's wrath against His enemies, the *Shofar* declares God's mercy over His judgments.

With this understanding, is the trumpet that precedes the resurrection and rapture of the church an announcement of God's wrath or His Divine mercy, salvation, and redemption for His people? I would argue the latter. As such, we cannot align Paul's statements in First Corinthians with the seven trumpet judgments in the book of Revelation. They are not the same. Paul's is a declaration of redemption for God's people, and Revelation's is a battle call to the destruction of God's enemies.

These seven trumpet judgments *are*—exclusively—the wrath of the Lamb, as it is written, *"And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"* (Revelation 6:15-17). And while not distinguished in the Greek language, I surmise these angels are blowing silver trumpets, not *Shofars*.

Additionally, the seventh trumpet in Revelation announces the coronation and arrival of our King, Yeshua, and His great army and the heavenly host, His church, when He returns to Jerusalem, as it is written:

*"Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" (Revelation 11:15).*

*"These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful" (Revelation 17:14).*

*"Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in [f]fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (Revelation 19:11-15).*

## **God's Trumpet Call**

In Revelation chapters one and four, the Apostle John hears a loud voice "as of a trumpet." At first, he hears the voice from behind, which is analogous to the voice of God that many prophets of old heard coming from behind their head. As we read, *"Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, This is the way, walk in it" (Isaiah 30:21).* But then John hears the same voice again, this time speaking plainly, as one speaks to a friend face-to-face— *"Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this" (Revelation 4:1).*

This encounter is analogous to the descending of the Lord on Mount Sinai, where we read, *"And Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain... Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet [Shofar] was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled." (Exodus 19:3 & 16).*

Additionally, we read how the Lord has used the analogy of God's people being taken up and carried on Eagles' wings. We read, *"You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself" (Exodus 19:4).* *"As an eagle stirs up its nest, Hovers over its young, Spreading out its wings, taking them up, Carrying them on its wings" (Deuteronomy 32:11).*

There are two other inferences to the rapture in the Old Testament. The first is Enoch. We read, *“By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, and was not found, because God had taken him”; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God”* (Hebrews 11:5). And the second is Elijah, as we read, *“Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven”* (2 Kings 2:11).

In all these examples, we see God calling or trumpeting His people up to Himself—the redemptive calling of a *Shofar*, not a silver trumpet of war. As was promised to Israel, our time of redemption is the resurrection and rapture, as Paul declared in First Thessalonians. So, it will be with a shout, the *Shofar* voice of an archangel, and not a silver trumpet of war that will call us home.

Therefore, the rapture cannot occur at the end of the tribulation when God declares His final judgment on the inhabitants of the earth. No, our redemption will come before the tribulation, as we read, *“Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near”* (Luke 21:28).

### **The Last Trumpet**

The last *Shofar* commanded in the Old Testament, after the resurrection and rapture of the church, announces God’s final atonement for the Jewish people and their land. It is written, *“Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people; For He will avenge the blood of His servants, And render vengeance to His adversaries; He will provide atonement for His land and His people”* (Deuteronomy 32:43).

But this last *Shofar* is only sounded in Jubilee year when God brings back the remnant of His people that survived the tribulation. As we read, *“Then you shall cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement you shall make the trumpet to sound throughout all your land”* (Leviticus 25:9). *“For though your people, O Israel, be as the sand of the sea, A remnant of them will return; The destruction decreed shall overflow with righteousness”* (Isaiah 10:22).

While the church has been resurrected into eternal life in Christ, those who survive the tribulation (including Israel) will marry and have children. As we read, *“For as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, And My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain, Nor bring forth children for trouble; For they shall be the descendants of the blessed of the Lord, And their offspring with them”* (Isaiah 65:22).

This last *Shofar* blast in the year of Israel’s Jubilee will declare the final ingathering of the remnant of the Jewish people from all the nations where God scattered us. As it is written, *“Therefore, behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, that they shall no longer say, As the Lord lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt, but, As the Lord lives who*

*brought up and led the descendants of the house of Israel from the north country and from all the countries where I had driven them. And they shall dwell in their own land" (Jeremiah 23:7-8).* It is not the *Shofar* trump of God's voice declaring the resurrection and the rapture.

## **Daniel's Vision**

There is much ambiguity about the timing of the resurrection and rapture of the church. Will it occur before, during, or near the end of the tribulation? The Lord may have given us some clues in the Bible.

In the Book of Daniel chapter seven, we read about four beasts representing four kingdoms that will rule over the nation of Israel. The first beast was described as a lion, the second a bear, the third a leopard, and the fourth beast had ten horns. Traditional Jewish and Christian scholars agree these four beasts represent four kingdoms in this order: the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek, and lastly, Roman.<sup>x</sup>

In Daniel's vision, he then sees a small horn arise, a fifth kingdom that comes up from among the ten horns of the fourth beast. We read, *"I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words" (Daniel 7:8).* This little horn most likely represents the Anti-Christ as he is described speaking pompous and blasphemous words.

Suddenly, Daniel's vision changes from an earthly realm to a heavenly one. We read, *"I watched till thrones were put in place, And the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, And the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, Its wheels a burning fire; A fiery stream issued And came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, And the books were opened" (Daniel 7:9-10).*

Daniel sees a heavenly courtroom where thrones are set up, but they are empty. I believe these thrones are reserved for the church until the time of the resurrection and rapture. Paul said, *"Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?" (1 Corinthians 6:3).* And Yeshua said, *"To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne" (Revelation 3:21).* Therefore, these thrones are reserved for the redeemed of men, not the angels.

Daniel's vision suddenly changes back to an earthly realm. As we read, *"I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame. As for the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time" (Daniel 7:11-12).* Here, we read that the Anti-Christ is killed, and we know from other verses in Daniel this will



occur sometime before the end of the great tribulation, the last three and one-half years of the tribulation, and the time of Jacob's sorrow.

Daniel's vision ends with a view of the heavenly realm, as we read, *"I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed"* (Daniel 7:13-14).

This part of Daniel's vision is consistent with the Apostle John's, where we read, *"Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God"* (Revelation 19:11-13).

The order of Daniel's vision is significant as it gives us a window into the seven-year tribulation. In the beginning, we see the Anti-Christ rising to power. Paul said, *"Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition... For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming"* (2 Thessalonians 2:3-8).

Yeshua declared, *"For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark"* (Matthew 24:38). Here, the ark implies a place of divine protection, most apparently in the heavenly realm, as it is written, *"Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple"* (Revelation 11:19).

As we read earlier in Revelation chapter four, John is taken up into the heavenly realm, the Ark of His covenant, as it is written, *"Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this."* Therefore, everything we read in the book of Revelation after chapter three until the return of Christ on His white horse (chapter 19) is written from a heavenly perspective.

Circling back to Daniel's vision, when the lawless one is revealed, we read that the heavenly courts are seated. The seating of this court suggests that the resurrection and rapture will occur around this time, which should be near the beginning of the seven-year tribulation. Later, towards the end of it, the Anti-Christ is destroyed.

Then, shortly after his death, Christ returns to the earth with power and great glory to destroy the kingdoms of the earth who have come against Jerusalem. This order is consistent with Paul's writings, as he declared, *"And THEN the lawless one will be revealed [beginning of the tribulation],*



*whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming [end of the tribulation]."*

## **Conclusion**

While it is impossible to know with certainty the day or hour of the resurrection and rapture, we, the church, should be aware of the season. Therefore, Yeshua instructed us to watch continually, looking up and awaiting the last trumpet call (*Shofar*) of God that will raise the dead in Christ. Then, we, who are alive, will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air and forever be with Him.<sup>xi</sup>

And this trumpet call of God will announce the tribulation and the coming great and terrible day of the Lord. As we read, *"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet [Shofar] of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first" (1 Thessalonians 4:16).*

After our redemption, God's judgments will be poured out on the earth, beginning with six seal judgments, followed by seven (silver) trumpets of war, and ending with seven bowls of the accumulated prayers of God's people. As it is written, *"How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" (Revelation 6:10).*

The precise timing will remain a mystery, as we read, *"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only... Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming... Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect" (Matthew 24:36-44).*

We are called to watch with zeal for the return of our Lord. And I continue to believe the resurrection and rapture will occur near the beginning of the seven-year tribulation, likely before the Anti-Christ is revealed. But, regardless of the timing, one thing remains clear. The trumpet of God's voice, His *Shofar*, is not the same as the seventh (silver) trumpet of warfare blown by an angel in the book of Revelation. Because ours not a call to condemnation, but God's final call to redemption and eternal life in Christ Jesus.

Amen!

---

<sup>i</sup> All Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Bible (NKJV) unless otherwise noted, Thomas Nelson Inc., 1982.

<sup>ii</sup> Wikipedia.

<sup>iii</sup> Strong's Concordance & NAS Exhaustive Concordance. Bible Hub.

<sup>iv</sup> Vayikra Raba, 29:10.

<sup>v</sup> Sefer Kol Hakemach LeRabeinu BChai.

<sup>vi</sup> Gemara, Rosh Hashanah, 16:1.

<sup>vii</sup> Machzor Hameforash, R' Saadya Gaon.

<sup>viii</sup> Gemara, Rosh Hashanah, 16:1.

<sup>ix</sup> Rosh Hashana 3:3. Baal Shem Tov. The Trumpets and the Shofar. Chabad.org.

---

<sup>x</sup> Wikipedia.

<sup>xi</sup> 1 Thessalonians 4:17.