

Awake America

Pastor Joe Fuiten, September 16, 2001 (Feast of Trumpets)

Tuesday is the actual day of the Feast of Trumpets. It is known in the Bible as Yom Teruah or “Day of Blowing.” The word **Teruah** means **"an awakening blast."** A theme associated with Rosh HaShanah is the theme "to awake." **Teruah is also translated as "shout."** The Book of Isaiah, chapter 12, puts the shouting in the context of the thousand-year reign of Messiah. The Messianic era and shout is mentioned in Isaiah 42:11¹; 44:23; Jeremiah 31:7²; and Zephaniah 3:14. The first coming of Jesus is associated with a shout in Zechariah 9:9³. The ultimate shout is the rapture in First Thessalonians 4:16-17.⁴ Whether it is by the blast of a shofar or the force of a supernatural shout, **God's goal is to awaken us!**⁵

In Jewish literature there is this phrase:

Awake, you sleepers, from your sleep! Rouse yourselves, you slumberers, out of your slumber! Examine your deeds, and turn to God in repentance. Remember your Creator, you who are caught up in the daily round, losing sight of eternal truth; you are wasting your years in vain pursuits that neither profit nor save. Look closely at yourselves; improve your ways and your deeds. Abandon your evil ways, your unworthy schemes, every one of you! (Yad Hichot Teshuva 3.4).

The events of September 11th have awakened us to some extent. I see America as awakened but without knowing what it means. It is like being awakened from a dead sleep in the middle of the night but you can't figure out where you are.

In the midst of the evil, we see lots of good. The outpouring of love, concern, and finances is absolutely wonderful and heartwarming. We see a renewing of people's faith. We all felt very proud of the special prayer service in the National Cathedral on Friday and for all the local prayer services this week. These things are good and we are grateful to see so many right things being done.

At the same time, I am not at all sure that people know what to make of all this in their personal lives. People clearly want to do something. The hundreds who attended

¹ “Let the desert and its towns raise their voices; let the settlements where Kedar lives rejoice. Let the people of Sela sing for joy; let them shout from the mountaintops.” (NIV)

² “This is what the LORD says: "Sing with joy for Jacob; shout for the foremost of the nations. Make your praises heard, and say, 'O LORD, save your people, the remnant of Israel.'" (NIV)

³ “Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” (NIV)

⁴ “For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.” (NIV)

⁵ Adapted from Eddie Chumney.

prayer services here this week tell me that. All the candles that people lit on Friday night was very impressive. Yet at the same time, it seems to me that there is a lot of unfinished business in people's lives and in America.

President George Bush said this week that this war started on Tuesday but it will end when we are finished. I accept that as a strong statement of political and military will, and I applaud it. At the same time, I am not sure that anyone truly knows what is going to happen or how it will all end. Things sometimes get away from us and don't end how we plan.

On this day, over the last many years, you have heard me blow the shofar. This year, I would like to stand in front of the flag and blow it. I want you to give a shout in the waning moments of my blowing. Give a shout of faith that victory will be ours. Give a shout of hope, that matters will be brought under control. Give a shout to awaken America to the real issues. Give a shout that your own life will come into focus. If you are not right with God, God will speak to your heart. You will know what to do. If your life has lost its purpose, God will awaken you to reality and meaning. We blow it in front of the flag to represent our nation and all its people.

Blow the Shofar

Scripture Reading: Ephesians 5:8-20 Page 829

"For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) 10 and find out what pleases the Lord. 11 Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. 12 For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. 13 But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, 14 for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: "Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

15 Be very careful, then, how you live-- not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. 18 Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. 19 Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, 20 always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (NIV)

The beginning is known, but the end is unknown. This is no time to slack off or let up. I believe the outcome for the nation is still very much in question. Prayer is still going to be very important.

The devil meant it for evil, but God can turn it into good. There have been some pictures that the Associated Press has circulated that are astounding. They show the images of faces in the fire and smoke of Tuesday's terror. (For those of you reading this, they can presently be found at <http://9news.com/newsroom/13294.html>) People immediately noted the appearance of the devil himself. Jesus described the devil's style in John 10:10 "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they

may have life, and have it to the full.” Make no mistake, this was more than a military strike, it was more than a Moslem strike, it was a demonic strike.

We have been struck by evil, but we will overcome evil with good. Rededicate yourself to acts of kindness. Renew your participation in almsgiving. Lend a hand in the children’s program. Get involved in doing something good.

We are a Christian nation, but we also need to turn to God. Certainly, there is little doubt that in time of crisis we turn to God. I have never seen so much praying in all my life. Seeing that service in the National Cathedral was very reassuring to me. Yet, at the same time, we need to repent of our sins. People have used this crisis to loot in New York and to scam on the internet. There is still plenty of evil in the nation and in our own hearts. We need to pray. We need to ask God to forgive our personal and our national sins. There has been lots about our lives that do not measure up. Today is a good day to start going the right direction.

We were struck down as we worked, but we will rise up to do God’s work. I hope that all of you will participate in the Jammin Against the Darkness event at Safeco Field. We have changed that into a free event. There is going to be a little different emphasis. Our goal is for tens of thousands of Seattlites to gather there. I hope that Christian people will attend. I hope that the general population will be invited to attend. I believe that many will find Christ as their savior at that event. God knew all along. I expect this not only to be the first Christian event but also the largest in the City.

People are being drawn to God through all this. Our part is to come alongside of them and help them find the way. There is a cry in this community. People want to know God. They want their life to count. We need to give them opportunity to know the love of Jesus and his eternal purpose for their life.