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## **Blessed Is the People Who Know the Joyful Sound**

***By David Wilkerson***

October 13, 1997 The psalmist writes of a glorious secret to enjoying a fulfilled, joyful life: "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance" (Psalm 89:15). The Hebrew meaning of this verse suggests, "Those who have a revelation of the joyful sound will wake up every day with peace, strength and happiness. Their life will be filled with the joy of the morning sun."

In short, the psalmist is telling us, "There is a certain, joyful sound that is of such powerful significance, it is the very foundation of victorious living. And if you know and understand this sound, you will be changed from glory to glory."

"All who know the meaning of the joyful sound become self-assured, fearless. They walk through life with an ever-increasing sense of security. They are able to overcome depression, even when being sifted by Satan. Their hearts are steadfast and at rest - because the Holy Spirit has revealed to them the meaning behind the joyful sound!"

So, what is this joyful sound?

The Joyful Sound the Psalmist Refers to Is a Powerful Revelation Based on the Jewish Year of Jubilee! The history of the Jewish festival of Jubilee is found in Leviticus 25. This observance begins with the Lord's command that Israel allow the land to rest from cultivation every seventh year. The seventh year was to be a sabbath year, in which the land would lie fallow. During that year, the people were to do no planting, picking of fruit or harvesting of any kind: "Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof; but in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the Lord: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard" (Leviticus 25:3-4).

God was literally shutting down all agricultural activity for an entire year. And that meant Israel would have to live for that period without any visible means of support. They would have to put their lives completely in God's hands, trusting him for all supplies.

Of course, this required a lot of faith. Think about it: For an entire year there would be no intake of crops for food...no harvest of grain to feed cattle...no work for farmers...no labor for vineyard keepers. Most Christians today would panic after only a week of this, much less a year. Indeed, the Israelites wondered: "What are we going to do for food during the seventh year? How will we feed our families, our cattle? We'll use up everything we have in the sixth year. Are we supposed to sit idly by while our children go hungry? Does God really expect us to watch the grapes rot on the vine? Will he not even allow the poor to take what they can?"

Yet God had a clear purpose in commanding a sabbath year for the land. It was meant to reveal his faithfulness to his people! "If ye shall say, What shall we eat the seventh year? Behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase. Then I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years" (verses 20-21).

What an incredible promise - God was guaranteeing Israel a triple harvest! He was saying, "If you'll just step out in faith and trust me, I'll give you a harvest during the sixth year that will provide you with enough provisions for three years." "And ye shall sow the eighth year, and eat yet of old fruit until the ninth year; until her fruits come in ye shall eat of the old store" (verse 25).

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I believe the Lord is saying something important here. And that is, no matter what our circumstances, he always provides for those who trust and obey him.

Think for a moment about all the ways God has met the needs of his people throughout history:

When Israel was in the wilderness, they had no supermarkets or grocery stores. There wasn't even a blade of grass in sight. But God rained down manna from heaven, so the people would have bread. And he caused birds to fall by the bushel from the sky, so they would have meat. He caused water to gush from a rock. And he supernaturally kept their shoes and clothing intact, so that they never wore out in forty years of use.

In the Old Testament, we read that a hungry prophet was fed by a raven. A barrel of meal and a bottle of oil supernaturally replenished themselves. And an entire enemy army fled upon hearing a strange noise - leaving behind enough supplies to feed an entire city of starving Israelites!

In the New Testament, we read that water was turned into wine. Money was found in a fish's mouth to pay taxes. And five thousand people were fed with only five loaves of bread and two fish.

All these miracles of supply cry out to us, "God is faithful. He can be trusted!" And now, in Leviticus 25, we read of another supernatural phenomenon - a ripe harvest in the sixth year.

Next, God commanded that the people observe seven consecutive cycles of sabbaths for the land: "Thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years" (verse 8). In other words: "You are to celebrate this sabbath every seventh year, for a period of forty-nine years - seven sabbaths times seven."

In biblical terms, the forty-nine-year period would comprise a whole generation. The inference here is that such a period would provide enough time for an entire generation to learn to trust the Lord. Over that time, parents and grandparents would build up a history of faith, so they could tell their children:

"Yes, it's true! After the first six years, God supplied everything we needed. But when the seventh year came, many of us were afraid. Yet God's provision saw us through to the eighth year, and right up to the ninth. Sometimes it was frightening, but there was always enough. No one starved, and no one had to beg. Every need was supplied. God tested our faith - and he remained faithful!"

I'm sure that once the sabbaths were instituted, some people must have cheated. They probably thought, "I can't go through that kind of testing. I don't have the faith." And so they secretly went out to their fields at night and planted. But their harvests were diseased and bore little fruit.

And the people ended up going deeper into debt and having to borrow from their neighbors.

The point is, when God says, "Trust me," he means it!

The Fiftieth Year Was Called "Jubilee" - Which Means "the Sounding of Trumpets!" After a "sabbath of sabbaths" - that is, seven seven-year periods - the fiftieth year was to be a year of Jubilee. When this time arrived, there would be a sounding of trumpets (The word "jubilee" itself means "the clamoring of trumpets."):

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"Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land" (Leviticus 25:9).

Indeed, the Jubilee fell on the day of atonement - that is, the tenth day of the seventh month. And, at a predetermined hour - as the high priest entered the holy place to sprinkle the sacrificial blood - trumpets began to blare all across the land.

The trumpets' clamoring could be heard in every city, hamlet, village, mountain and valley. And every Israelite knew the meaning of the sound. What did it all signify? It heralded an incredible blessing of liberty and deliverance - by the Lord's decree!

"Ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family" (verse 10).

Such a decree was unheard of: The sound of the trumpets canceled all debts and restored all goods to the original owners. And it freed every servant from every form of captivity and bondage!

Needless to say, the trumpets' blaring was a joyful sound to every servant, prisoner and disenfranchised person throughout the land. It signaled the end of all bondage and a new start in life. Let me give you an example of this.

Under Jewish law, no man owned any land. Even though he may have inherited his property, and it remained in his family as long as the family survived, God owned everything. Every Israelite was to recognize that God possessed the hills, the valleys, the cattle, the wealth of this world - and that his people were only the lifetime leaseholders. They were to hold onto their possessions lightly.

Yet, if a person fell into debt - whether through mismanagement, disobedience, sloth or some kind of disaster - there was no provision for bankruptcy. Let's say a farmer owed someone a large sum of money. He might have to sell his own children and servants to pay off the debt.

Then, if the farmer fell further behind, he would have to hand over his land, forfeiting all profits from the harvest. And in an extreme case, the farmer might even have to sell himself to another farmer, just to provide a living.

But when the Jubilee came - in the fiftieth year, after a sabbath of sabbaths - every debt was wiped out. All leases and possessions reverted back to the original leaseholder. And that meant the farmer would get his land and his family back!

You can imagine the rejoicing that took place in Israel and Judah when the trumpets sounded. At that moment - on the tenth day of the seventh month, while the high priest was making atonement - every bondservant who'd been sold into slavery was set free. And every person who'd lost property was given back everything. Families were reunited. Homes were restored. It was a time of liberty, freedom, deliverance!

I picture destitute farmers standing along the demarcation lines of their old property, waiting to step over as soon as the trumpets sounded. They'd been waiting ten years...then five...then one...and now they counted the minutes to hear the joyful sound. They must have thought, "I'm getting back everything I lost. It's mine again - because this is the year of Jubilee!"

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There was to be no planting or harvesting during the year of Jubilee. Instead, it was a time to be spent rejoicing. Think of it: Jubilee was an entire year of Christmas every day - of praising God for his grace, provision and freedom!

Please understand - the liberty proclaimed at Jubilee was not some nebulous idea founded on faith alone. It was the law of the land. And all a debtor needed to do to have the law enforced was to stand on it. The Levites acted as monitors, or sheriffs, so that everyone was assured justice.

Occasionally, a master might say to a bondservant, "You're not leaving - you're still my servant! Get back to your labors." But that servant could laugh in the master's face and say, "We both know what that trumpet sound means. It's the joyful sound of my freedom! You have no legal rights to me anymore. I'm free!"

How the people waited and longed to hear that joyful sound. It meant having the freedom to say, "Nothing in my past can be held against me. I've been unshackled, delivered. And no one can rob me of my inheritance." Yet the person in bondage had to act in order to take possession of his freedom or his lost property. He could dance and shout in the synagogue all he wanted, crying, "I'm free! Everything has been restored!" But until he stepped out and claimed his rights, he couldn't enjoy any of it. Do you see the significance here? Most Christians have not claimed the Jubilee Jesus Christ has given them. Many think the "joyful sound" today is merely hand-clapping or dancing in an emotional time of praise. But it is so much more! God calls us to appropriate the freedom, peace and glory he has provided for us through the forgiveness of sins. We are to step out and claim it!

The Prophet Isaiah Declares Jesus Christ Is Our Jubilee! Isaiah writes: "...he hath sent me...to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord..." (Isaiah 61:1-2).

We're familiar with this passage as a proclamation of Christ's victory over death and sin. Yet Isaiah is using the language of Jubilee here. He's saying, "Let the trumpets blast - announcing the cheerful, joyous year of liberty our savior has given us!"

This passage also refers to the scene of Christ's ascension into glory. The heavenly father - after beholding the awful sufferings of his blessed son - prepared for Jesus a glorious entrance into heaven. Indeed, as Christ made his ascension, he was escorted by a host of angels and multitudes of chariots:

"The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place. Thou hast ascended on high..." (Psalm 68:17-18).

Our finite minds can't begin to conceive of this glorious event. As Christ approached the eternal city of God, riding on his white horse, he was escorted by this huge procession. And as he entered the gates, the trumpets of God began to sound: "God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet" (47:5).

This was the joyful sound - the trumpets blaring, announcing the believer's year of Jubilee! And the sound proclaimed to all humankind, "I have made provision for you - to walk out of prison, be restored to your family and have everything you need for a fulfilled life. You are free to live without fear of any enemy. Enter now into my joy!"

Paul writes of Christ's ascension: "Having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them

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openly, triumphing over them in it" (Colossians 2:15). That's right - staggering behind our Lord's triumphant procession was the prince of darkness himself, bound in chains! And behind the defeated devil - underneath the wheels of the heavenly hosts - were all the powers of darkness, bound and vanquished. They were being put to an open shame before all those who had died in faith before the cross.

And Jesus entered the gates carrying in his hand a scepter of righteousness - his "rod of iron" with which he rules all nations. Then, after his triumphant entrance, he took his rightful place on the throne, in full possession of all power, authority and dominion.

What a glorious picture! Satan is not in control. Communism is not in control. Atheism is not in control. No, the enemies of Christ exist only by his permission. And right now they only continue to fill up their cups of iniquity. Jesus is in control of all things - and one day, when he is ready, he will "...dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel..." (Psalm 2:9).

Beloved, our understanding of Christ's victory over Satan and the dominion of sin cannot be a vague, confused theology. We must know and understand the joyful sound! Satan is totally defeated; he cannot hold us prisoner. And Christ has freed us by his blood from every bondage. Now he sits on his throne with all power and authority - offering us peace, joy and freedom!

Christ Ascended Into Glory Not Only as Our Conquering King, but as Our High Priest - To Make Intercession for Us! Just as the high priest ascended the stairs to the holy place on the day of atonement, our high priest Jesus ascended into the heavenly tabernacle, "...a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands..." (Hebrews 9:11). Indeed, John describes seeing Jesus in his priestly robe: "...a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle" (Revelation 1:13).

Yet Jesus ascended not merely to enjoy the glory he deserves - but to do a work on our behalf. The apostle Paul writes: "...When he ascended upon high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men" (Ephesians 4:8). Paul is quoting from Psalm 68 here: "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men... Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation...." (Psalm 68:18-19). The psalmist is saying, "Our savior has given us every gift and benefit we need to live in freedom!"

And the writer of Hebrews reminds us that Jesus' work in heaven is all for us: "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Hebrews 9:24). "...he ever liveth to make intercession for them [us]" (7:25). Christ does it all for us!

Yet, what exactly does this phrase mean, "He lives to make intercession for us"? I believe Jesus intercedes for us in three ways:

Some of us imagine Jesus standing before the father, pleading with him to show us mercy when we fail. No! Christ's intercession for us has to do with Satan's accusations against us.

You see, the devil comes to God's throne to accuse us of every failure and transgression. He cries, "I want justice! And if you're a just God, you'll damn and destroy this person. He deserves it!"

But just then, Jesus steps in. He doesn't have to persuade the father of anything. Rather, he simply

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declares the victory of his cross. Then he turns to Satan and says, "Didn't you hear the trumpet sound, devil? You know you have no claim over this child of mine. Keep your hands off my property!"

Second, Christ's intercession for us means he makes sure we obtain and enjoy all the benefits provided by Jubilee. Just as the Levites enforced the law that provided every man with his just blessings, Jesus today enforces the privileges of Jubilee for us. He makes sure we know we are legally free!

Satan may try to circumvent the victory of the cross by telling us, "You're under my hold, and you know it. You'll be bound by lust all your life! You'll never get victory over your habits."

But the moment that happens, Jesus intervenes. He sends his sheriff - the Holy Ghost - to enforce his decree of Jubilee, saying, "The trumpets have sounded, devil. It's Jubilee time! Release your claim on this free child. You have no further rights to him!"

We may still struggle with sin - but we have been legally declared free from all bondage. And we are to claim our freedom and our full inheritance, no matter how condemned we may feel.

Third, Jesus intercedes in our own hearts, reconciling us with the father. He continually answers our doubts and fears, reminding us: 1. we are forgiven, 2. we must remember God's goodness and mercy toward us, and 3. we can trust in God's faithfulness to provide us with all the power and strength we need.

Because of Christ's intercession, we now can say, "I may have my battles with the flesh - but I know in my heart what Jesus did for me. Sin can no longer hold me. I've heard the joyful sound!"

Behold All the Blessings To Be Enjoyed If You Know the Joyful Sound! There is a reason so many Christians today live in fear and confusion. It is because they don't understand the joyful sound of Jubilee! Yes, they know Jesus died and rose again; they know his blood has power to save. But they have not yet understood the joyful sound of all that he has provided for us to live in freedom!

"Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound..." (Psalm 89:15). The joyful sound we hear today is the trumpet of God proclaiming our deliverance, through the blood of Jesus Christ. Now, here are the other blessings of Jubilee:

1. "...they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance" (same verse). The Hebrew meaning here suggests, "They shall walk in cheerfulness, secure in God's promises, at ease in his presence." Simply put, we no longer have to walk in darkness or confusion - because we will behold the light of his face!

2. "In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted" (verse 16). We know our own righteousness is as filthy rags. And so we are to take courage by rejoicing in his righteousness - which is ours by faith alone!

3. "For thou art the glory of their strength: and in thy favour our horn shall be exalted" (verse 17). We know that Christ alone is the source of all our strength. And we don't have to live under the devil's thumb anymore. All we have to do is look upon Satan's back, where we'll see the heel print of our savior. Jesus has crushed our enemy!

4. "For the Lord is our defence..." (verse 18). We are utterly helpless in our flesh. And so we trust totally in the victory of Jesus' cross. He defends us against every enemy!

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Dear saint, we are headed for one last, great Jubilee - signaled by the final trumpet blast: "...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 shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Corinthians 15:51-52).

"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 4:16-17).

When those trumpets sound, the dead shall be raised. There will be no more prisons, no more bondage, no more sin, no more sickness. And in that moment, we will have eternal Jubilee.

Hallelujah!

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