

Christian Perspectives

What is your favorite instrument? The answers will be as different and diverse as the people answering this question. Personally I would have a hard time deciding: so many choices. I had the privilege of growing up in a church with a genuine pipe organ. The organ was good enough that it would attract some well known organists and when those guys would start playing and pull out all the stops (literally) man! What a majestic awe inspiring and shivers down your spine experience. I think my personal favorite is still Tocatta and Fugue in D-minor by JS Bach... just awesome!

However I also grew up in the age of (classic) rock and roll: from the Beatles to Zeppelin, The Rolling Stones, Rush, The Eagles and many more. The soaring guitar solos, the thundering drum solo's and the out of this world (psychedelic) synthesizers. Let us not forget the most amazing instrument of all: the human voice. From the 'Three tenors' to Freddie Mercury (Queen). Of course this is a very personal and subjective list of possibilities. I am sure you have your own preferences and favorites. However, for me personally the instrument I like the best is the trumpet. It never ceases to amaze me how such a small piece of metal can produce such loud and crystal clear tone. I cannot imagine an Easter morning service without the bright and clear call of the the trumpet announcing the Risen Lord; There is very little that can stir my emotion as much as the lonely and forlorn sounds of the 'Last Post' during Remembrance Day.

This last observation is an especially important one. In the past weeks there were celebrations in Europe commemorating the end of the Second World War. It has been 70 years but emotions still run high in places like the Netherlands, which was liberated mainly by Canadian Armed Forces. The dutch people continue to be grateful and remember as evidenced by the many moving ceremonies throughout their small nation. The solemn 'Last Post' was sounded on several cemeteries where Canadian soldiers have their final resting place. Like our Remembrance day ceremonies, it is followed by a moment of silence, followed by 'Reveille'. The clear and upbeat notes call us to make the most of the freedom we now enjoy. We pause, remember and reflect on our lives and honour those who have made the ultimate sacrifice by the lives we now live.

Trumpets played an important role in biblical times as well. There was even a 'Feast of Trumpets' This was the beginning of 'Rosh Hashanah' the beginning of the Jewish holy holiday season and the start of the new year. At the feast of trumpets, people throughout the land would blow their trumpets or 'Shofars'. The blowing of the shofar was a reminder for the people of Israel that they had been set free from slavery by Almighty God. They also had received the ten commandments as rules for holy living. The blowing of the shofar also signified a warning: How have you lived your life? Have you honoured the God who has set you free by obeying his commandments? Are you ready to give an account of your life?

This was about the preparation to meet the God of justice and mercy on the day of Yom Kippur or day of atonement. On this day, the people of Israel presented themselves before God, confessed their sin and sought forgiveness. They atoned for their sins by making animal sacrifices at the temple in Jerusalem. For us as Christians we know that Jesus Christ came and made atonement for our sins: something we celebrated just recently during Easter. Jesus died and rose again to take away our sins. He set us free from the slavery of sin, He paid the price so we can live in freedom.

Perhaps you can appreciate my earlier observation that trumpets ought be part of our Easter celebration. It is like the upbeat notes of the 'Reveille' New life, a new beginning. How we live our lives should reflect our gratitude to the one who saved us from eternal death. How are you doing with that? Do our lives, especially as followers of Jesus, reflect what he has done for you? Are our lives characterized by Love, Grace, Mercy and Sacrifice? Do we 'do what is right, love mercy and walk humbly with our God?' (Micah 6:8)

There will be one more time that the trumpet or shofar will sound, loud and clear for all mankind to hear. This will be the day of Jesus' second coming, that day He will return in full majesty to his creation. This time the trumpets heralding his return will also mean that we will have to give an account of our lives: how we have lived will be on full display. Don't you long to hear Jesus's voice say: 'Well done good and faithful servant, let's celebrate together' (Matt.25:23)

No matter what instrument is your favorite, it is my prayer that the trumpet may always remind you of the price that was paid by Jesus. Let's follow Him and live lives filled with gratitude; so that when that second trumpet will sound we will celebrate with Him, for eternity.