

Hear the Sound of the Trumpet

This instrument can teach us about the role of prophets and how we should treat their words.



TRUMPET

Probably the oldest and most common instrument in ancient Israel (and certainly the one most frequently mentioned in the Bible) is a trumpet made of a ram's horn, called a *shofar* in Hebrew. Sometimes it was heated to soften it so that it could be straightened or shaped. Its sound was unusual and easily recognizable. As an instrument, it was simple, producing only two or three notes.

"If when [the watchman] seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people;

"Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head.

". . . But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul."

Ezekiel 33:3-5.



BIBLE FACTS

- In ancient Israel, the *shofar* was blown to send an alarm or signal a gathering of the people. This was done in times of war (see Judges 3:27; 6:34; Nehemiah 4:18–20) as well as at times of celebration, such as a feast or the anointing of a king (see Leviticus 25:9; 1 Kings 1:34; 2 Kings 9:13; Psalm 81:3).



WHAT WE CAN LEARN

A trumpet:

Has a simple, unmistakable sound. Nephi said, “I glory in plainness; I glory in truth” (2 Nephi 33:6). Prophets teach the Lord’s word with clarity. As the Apostle Paul said, “If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?” (1 Corinthians 14:8).

Calls the Lord’s people to gather. We gather to seek refuge and strength. Our meetinghouses, temples, and homes can be places of gathering to hear God’s word so that we can combat evil and rally around the “ensign on the mountains” (Isaiah 18:3).

Warns of coming danger. The watchmen of Israel would raise the alarm by blowing the trumpet. Prophets give us clear warnings of spiritual perils in our time. And we should also remember that “it becometh every man who hath been warned to warn his neighbor” (D&C 88:81), “in mildness and in meekness” (D&C 38:41).

Calls to remembrance, celebration, and praise. Prophets also invite us to remember the Lord and His goodness. They call upon us to praise and thank Him and to “make a joyful noise” (Psalm 98:6) through our own prayer and testimony.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY MARTIN HARGREAVES; TEXTURED BACKGROUND AND IMAGES OF SHOFAR AND RAM FROM GETTY IMAGES; RIGHT: BACKGROUND SYMBOLS BY EMILY CHIEKO REMINGTON



- A few Old Testament verses also mention a trumpet made of bronze or silver (*khatsothrah*). It was short and straight, with a four- or five-note range in a bright tone, and was played by the priests. Its purpose was to gather the congregation to the tabernacle or temple (see Numbers 10:2–10). It was among the sacred utensils of the temple (see 2 Kings 12:13–14).

