

NEW BEGINNINGS-Studies 1-3

The beginning of another year brings new opportunities to celebrate God's faithfulness and His loving care. It is also a time to reflect on the unfolding of His amazing plan of salvation, beginning with His people in the Old Testament and leading on to the revelation of Jesus as the fulfillment of that plan for all mankind.

However, it is also a time of expectation as, with the first disciples, we look forward to the unfolding of God's grace in our own lives to deepen our understanding of who Jesus is and the responsibility we have to share what we know with others.

Study 1

A New Year

Leviticus 23:23-25; Psalm 81:1-6

INTRODUCTION

10 MINUTES

AIM: To reflect and act upon the special opportunities of the God-given time of New Year.

Ask one or two people to tell about some of the special ways they celebrate this time of the New Year.

Israel was an agricultural society. The measuring and marking of their year with special times for celebration, thanksgiving, renewal and renewed commitment was God's provision for the spiritual, physical, and the emotional needs of His people.

The Feast of Trumpets is set in the midst of all the other Israelite feasts. At first, it was a religious feast only, but in time it came to mark the beginning of the Jewish New Year (Rosh Hashanah).

Take time during the coming week to read through the whole of Leviticus 23 in order to appreciate this one particular feast in its full context.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

20 MINS

Read Leviticus 23:23-25

The Feast of Trumpets:

1. This Feast of Trumpets:
 - a) how often did it take place (v. 24)?
 - b) how long did it last?
 - c) who took part?
2. What were the two main activities for that day (v. 25)?
What was God's purpose for His people in these activities? See also Gen. 2:2.
3. What do you think was the reason for blowing the trumpets throughout the day?
Note: This didn't happen at all the feasts.
4. What was involved in an offering made by fire (Leviticus 1:1-3)?
Why was there need for such an offering as the people gathered for this special day?

<p>DISCUSSION QUESTIONS CONT.</p>	<p>This feast also looked back to the commemoration of God’s deliverance from Egypt, and it looked forward to the Day of Atonement later that same month when their sin was dealt with specifically. The Feast of Trumpets stood as a memorial both to the past provision of salvation and the future intended salvation for Israel by their faithful and sovereign Lord.</p> <p>The people came away from this feast with hearts full of expectation. Further, they were challenged to reconsider the state of their spiritual lives and their response to such an awesome and gracious Lord.</p>
<p>Read Psalm 81:1-6 Sing for joy to God:</p> <p>5. What was the burden which God had removed from Israel (v. 6)? What problem had the “language” of Egypt caused for the people during the period of captivity (v. 5b)?</p> <p>6. What feelings does the psalmist express in these few verses? What three aspects of God’s character are remembered?</p> <p>7. Why would this feast be very suitable to celebrate the New Year? What is the focus of our attention in any New Year celebration today?</p>	<p>APPLICATION 20 MINUTES</p>
<p>TEACHING SUMMARY 10 MINUTES</p>	<p>Discuss for 5-7 minutes:- What New Year celebrations has your church prepared? In what way do they look back with thanksgiving for the gift of salvation and also look forward in expectation of God’s gracious provision?</p> <p>WORSHIP & PRAYER: Read Psalm 147:7-11 as an act of worship. Take a few minutes to celebrate God’s goodness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Ask three members to tell of one special thing for which they want to thank God. ◆ Ask three members to say what expectations they have of the Lord’s goodness in the coming months. <p>After each person has spoken, ask someone to lead in a short prayer of thanksgiving. Close with a praise song for example:</p> <p>Song: “I will sing of the Lord’s goodness..” MEMORY VERSE: Psalm 147:7-11.</p>
<p>7</p>	