**The Silver Trumpets**

A preacher was at an airport trying to get home as quickly as possible but was having a hard time finding a direct flight that did not involve a layover. He even tried several towns near his home thinking that he could rent a car to complete his trip instead of having to stop for several hours waiting on a connecting flight. Each time the story was the same, he would have to go through Atlanta and catch another plane. He asked further about other cities and was told they all went to Atlanta first. Finally in frustration he asked “What if I wanted to go to Hell, would I still have to go to Atlanta first?” The ticket agent replied “That sir is a Delta flight.” At the time of Numbers chapter 10, the Israelites had traveled a little over a year from Egypt to Mt. Sanai on their way to Canaan. Rather than taking a direct route which was about 250 miles, God had led them on a circuitous route because Mt. Sanai was an important layover for them. They could not go to Canaan without first going to Mt. Sanai.

In the beginning of chapter 10 God instructs Moses to have 2 trumpets prepared to signal to the Israelites. The trumpets were to be made of hammered silver and were to be used by Aaron’s sons. When the temple was completed and the ark brought into it, 120 priests announced its entrance with 120 trumpets (see 2 Chron. 5:11-14). After finally winning an important victory at El Alamein, Winston Churchill spoke to the House of Commons, saying “This is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end, but it is perhaps the end of the beginning.” The Israelites journey up to that point had been about the beginning, their preparation before going to their final destination and this could be considered the end of the beginning. God had them camp at the base of Mt. Sanai for about a month as he prepared them spiritually. The trumpets were new, they signified a call to start traveling towards the land that had been promised to them. The trumpets were used for multiple purposes. They could be a call for all the people or just their leaders to assemble or a call for them to leave the camp. They could also be used as a rallying sound in battle or rejoicing during feasts and festivals.

The remainder of the chapter is devoted to describing the order of departure as they broke camp and left by their divisions. As they left, Moses appealed to his brother in law Hobab to remain with them. He was a Midianite which was a tribe of people descended from one of Abraham’s 6 sons he had with Keturah after Sarah’s death. He had apparently accompanied his father Jethro who brought Moses’ wife and sons to him after they left Egypt. Since the Midianites lived in the southern part of the Sanai, it was natural that Hobab would want to remain in that area rather than moving north with the Israelites. Since Jethro was a Midianite priest, this tribe had remained faithful to God as children of Abraham. By the time the Israelites prepared to enter Canaan, the Midianites had sided with the Moabites in opposition to the Israelites. It is not known whether Hobab returned to his father or if he continued on with the Israelites on their journey to Canaan.

Prior to instructing Moses to make the trumpets, God used a loud trumpet blast to signal that He was about to deliver the 10 Commandments (presumably the trumpet was blown by an angel). Trumpets were used in the Old Testament to announce a new king (see 2nd Sam. 15:10, 1st Kings 1:34, 2nd Kings 11:14). The use of trumpets to herald the march toward the promised land has its equal in the New Testament as trumpets will announce the arrival of Jesus to rapture the church and lead His people to the eternal promised land (see 1st Cor. 15:51-52 and 1st Thess. 4:16-17). Trumpets will also be used to announce the seven judgements described in Revelation chapters 8-10. Just as the Israelites could not go to Canaan unless they first went to Mt. Sinai, we cannot go to the Father unless we first go to the Son (see John 14:6).