

Shofar Mountain: Mount Shapher

They journeyed from Kehelathah and camped at Mount Shapher, Numbers 33:23.

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ount *Shapher* is sixty miles from *Chazeroth* and fifty-five miles southwest of *Mount Hor*.⁴⁸ This was the nineteenth encampment of Israel in their trek from Egypt to Canaan. The word “*shapher*” means “bright, fair, beautiful, and pleasant.” It is the parent word, from which the Hebrew word “*shofar*” derives.⁴⁹ Thus, *Mount Shapher* is also known as *Shofar Mountain*.

As we have learned, the leaders of ancient Israel named their encampments based upon the events which they experienced during their stay at these sites. Consequently, the camp names themselves offer information about the lessons and tests faced by the Children of Israel. As these same lessons will be part of spiritual Israel’s experience on their way to the ultimate Promised Land, each campsite name and story holds end-time prophetic significance.

What is the prophetic significance of *Mount Shapher* or *Shofar Mountain*? To answer this, we need to discern the spiritual meaning of the *shofar*. The *shofar* was a trumpet-like instrument of a dual purpose. Fashioned out of a hollowed-out ram or antelope horn, it was used to call the people together to worship *Yahweh*. The sounds of the *shofar* also directed the Children of Israel to war. Thus, the various tones of the *shofar* signified peace and joy, or alarm and warning. Each tonal code of the horn proclaimed a specific message.



Significantly, this duality of meaning was present in this nineteenth campsite. At Mount *Shapher*, the Children of Israel were warned to fully repent from their rebellion at *Kehelathah*; they were also called into a renewed relationship with *Yahweh*, in which they would find long-lasting peace.

Shapher, “the beautiful mountain,” as it is rendered in the Septuagint, or “*shofar* mountain,” as the Hebrews prefer, is also referred to as the “bright mountain.”⁵⁰ Since “bright,” denotes fire, in Scripture as explained in the next section, this reference to the “bright mountain” suggests that there may have been volcanic activity while Israel traveled in this area. Certainly, modern geologists have found numerous inactive volcanos throughout this region.

SHADOWS OF SOON-COMING JUDGMENT

Throughout their wilderness journeys, the Children of Israel had been unstable in commitment, like a tumbleweed blown hither and yon. Time and again, they had wavered between doubt and faith, between rebellion and repentance.

As impossible to ignore as a *shofar* blast, *Yahweh*’s recent punishment of Korah and his associates, had captured Israel’s full attention. Thus, at Mount *Shapher*, the people had swung from full-blown rebellion to remorseful repentance. Finally, they were returning to the Most High in submission.

*"Shapher" means
"bright." What
does bright have to
do with judgment?
The wicked are
destroyed "with the
brightness of His
Coming.*

Warning against impending judgment and the call to repentance are also present in the end-time lessons of this encampment. The warning of coming judgment is not only present in the message of the *shofar* itself, it is also present in the meaning of the word “*shapher*.” As was mentioned previously, “*shapher*” means “bright.” What does “bright” have to do with judgment? Consider 2 Thessalonians 2:8, which says:

And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom (YAH) shall consume with the Spirit of His Mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His Coming.

How can Yah's "brightness" destroy the Wicked? Yahweh's glory, or brightness, is a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:29).

Understand therefore this day, that (Yahweh) thy YAH is He which goeth over before thee; as a consuming Fire He shall destroy them... Deut. 9:3.

On the Feast of Trumpets... there were four main (trumpet) tones given throughout the camp... Each tone was a sermon.

In light of the destruction at *Khelathah*, it might appear that judgment had already come upon the rebellious Children of Israel. Thus, at first glance, it might seem that the warnings of Mount *Shapher* were too late.

Actually, as is suggested by the Feast of Trumpets (*Yom Terruah*), the call of the *shofar* and trumpet are associated with a warning to repent while there is still time. As the Bible tells us plainly in Leviticus 23, the Feast of Trumpets precedes the Day of Atonement, the Day which foreshadows the final close of probation. It is

Judgment Day.

On the Feast of Trumpets, the clarion tones of the horns clearly called for repentance, promising atonement to all who would turn from sin unto salvation. There were four main tones given throughout the camp on this holy Day. In Hebrew, they were named: the *tekiah*, the *shevarim*, the *teruah*, and the *tekiah gedolah*.⁵¹ Each tone was a sermon. Each blast bore its specific message lending further depth of meaning to the overall message of the Day. On the Feast of Trumpets, according to Hebrew sages, the camp of Israel resounded with the following trumpet tones, in this order:

- *Tekiah* – a pure unbroken sound – this tone called the listener to search his heart, abandon his evil ways, and seek forgiveness through repentance.
- *Shevarim* – a broken, staccato, trembling sound – this tone typified the sorrow for sin, expressed in repentant hearts.
- *Teruah* – a wave-like sound of alarm – a warning of coming judgment, rousing *Yahweh*'s people to stand loyally by the Banner (*Torah*) of Heaven.
- *Tekiah Gedolah*– a prolonged sound in which the trumpeter blasts till his breath is gone – this is the promise of victory and forgiveness. It looks forward to coming atonement with assurance through the Lamb. In short, this tone means, “My Grace is sufficient for thee.”⁵²

The Hebrew word for "ram" is the same as one of the titles of our God: El, meaning "Mighty One."

Clearly, we may see a warning of *Yahweh*'s soon-coming judgment in this mountain lesson. In His infinite wisdom and mercy, *Yahweh* warns His people to prepare to meet their YAH (Amos 4:12).

The *shofar* also connects to the Saviour's role as Protector and Leader of His flock. Constructed out of a ram's horn, it points to *Yahshua*'s function as our Heavenly Ram. *Yahshua* had tenderly revealed Himself as the Lamb and the Oxen (Bullock). Now, as at Sinai, He appeared as the Ram, the El caught in the thicket that had saved Isaac on a similar mountain centuries before. The Hebrew



word for “ram” is the same as one of the titles of our YAH: El, meaning “Mighty One.”⁵²

It is from the horns of the Ram of Heaven that we have deliverance from death. His Horns, caught in a thicket (symbolizing sin), saved us from sin's penalty. The blowing of the ram's horn, *shofar*, reminds us that by His powerful Horn we are protected from the enemy, and by heeding His mighty Horn blast, we are delivered from death.

But, if we reject Heaven's offer of deliverance, the divine Voice trumpets our doom. *Yahweh's* Voice, likened to a Trumpet in Revelation 4:1, caused the Earth to shake at Sinai. Mount *Shapher* is the reminder that a greater Day is coming upon mankind.

Whose Voice then shook the earth: but now He hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven, Heb. 12:26.

Thus, in clear tones, at the foot of *Shofar* Mountain, the Children of Israel were being warned to turn from foolishness and rebellion, while there was yet time. They were being cautioned that mercy was not something with which to trifle. The day was soon coming when time would run out.

SHOFAR MOUNTAIN IN THE LAST DAYS

In the end of time, *Yahweh's* people will, spiritually, encamp at *Shofar* Mountain prior to Heaven's final Day of Judgment. The experience of the faithful will be like Elijah on Mount Carmel or John the Baptist at the Jordan River. We will call the self-proclaiming, end-time, wayward "Christians" to repent, turn their hearts to *Yahweh*, and put away their sins (sin is transgression of *Yahweh's* Law, see 1 John 3:4).



Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins, Isaiah 58:1.

In the Bible, the First Fruits of the final harvest is the group of saints who ripen first and give this *Shapher* "trumpet" call. The saved who are classed as "First Fruits" will also be called the 144,000, or the Bride.

And they sung as it were a new song before the throne... And no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth... These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto YAH and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the Throne of YAH, Revelation 14:3-5.

Each part of the Everlasting Gospel Message, which is next portrayed in Revelation 14, points to the Law of *Yahweh*. By finding the commands in the Everlasting Gospel (14:6-12) threaded through other parts of the Bible, their association with the Law becomes clear:

- **Fear YAH** – Keep *Yahweh*'s Law – Deuteronomy 6:2
- **Give glory to Him** – We glorify *Yahweh* through “good” works (which are Grace-filled thoughts, motives, and actions that are in obedience to His *Torah*) – Matthew 5:16 & Romans 7:12
- **The Hour of His Judgment is Come** – We are judged by the Standard of the Law of *Yahweh*; so once again, this is an indication that we are to live in harmony with it (by *Yahweh*'s indwelling Power and Grace) – Romans 2:12-13
- **Worship Him Who Made Heaven and Earth**—We honor our Heavenly Creator by keeping His Sabbaths – Ex. 20:8-11.

The first group to be evangelized is the “lost sheep of the House of Israel.” This is the same progression in which the Gospel Message was given during the time of the Apostles.

And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely, Revelation 22:17.

Go not into the way of the Gentiles (heathen, pagans)... But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand, Matthew 10:5-7.

According to these instructions, the Bible tells us how the disciples of Messiah started their saving work with the proclaimed people of *Yahweh*, the organized “Church” structure, in type. Many from among this class of “sleeping virgins” awakened, repented, and joined their voices with the disciples in calling other sinners to repent. Once the traditional “church” had been evangelized, the Early Christians took the Gospel to the lost in the world, scripurally called the Gentiles, meaning “heathens” or “pagans.”

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem (the heart of the organized "Church" structure), and in all Judaea, and in Samaria (could this represent Christians in the Sunday movement?), and unto the uttermost part of the earth (the spiritual Gentiles), Acts 1:8

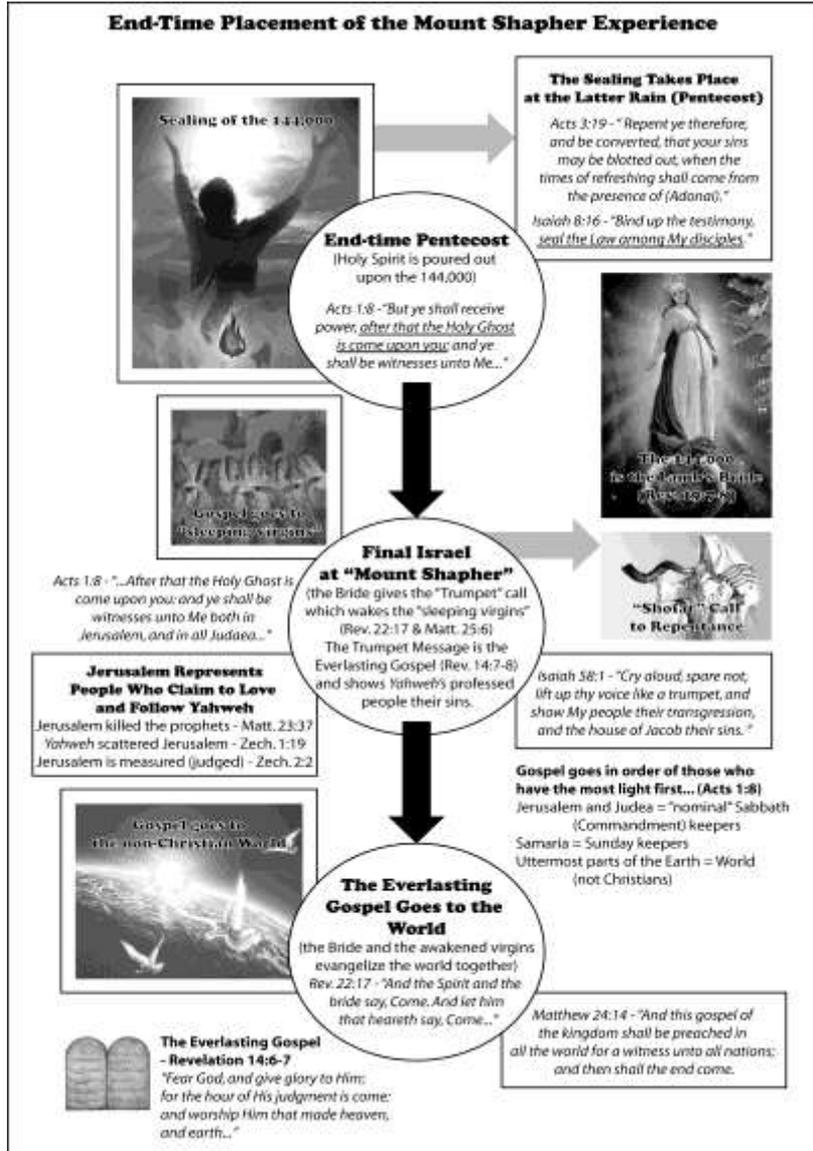
Understanding this progression of the final Gospel call helps us to accurately place the Mount *Shapher* experience in the timeline of final events experienced by *Yahweh*'s people. Since Isaiah 58:1 instructs the saved to “cry aloud” and “lift up” their voices “like a trumpet” showing the lost sheep of the House of spiritual Israel their sins, we see that the trumpeted warnings of Mount *Shapher* chronologically fit after the final fulfillment of Pentecost. See the diagram on the next page.

*The Everlasting
Gospel is Fear
God... Give glory
to Him... The hour
of His Judgment is
Come... Worship
Him Who made
Heaven and Earth.*

Because the region of Northern Arabia is riddled with volcanoes, all the way to Syria, it is proposed by some that the message of "brightness" at this mountain may also have been associated with the threat of an eruption there. *YAH* often uses the natural to call our attention to the supernatural. If a volcano did erupt, or did threaten to erupt, while Israel was camped at its base, that event would certainly have captured Israel's attention and sobered them as to their peril

before *Yahweh*. Truly, such an event would have compelled the unrepentant to submit their hardened hearts before their merciful *El*.

He will not always chide; neither will he keep his anger for ever, Ps.103:9.



A SUMMONS INTO YAHWEH'S PRESENCE

As was demonstrated at Mount *Shapher* and *Khelathah*, *Yahweh* often uses dramatic events to accompany the *shofar* for awakening His "sleeping" people. Similarly to the devastating earthquake and fire which devoured Korah and his rebel band, Isaiah warned that earthquakes and fire will again be used to get spiritual Israel's attention in the End. Furthermore, this warning sequence is found in the Trumpet Judgments of Revelation 8-9, which is yet another layer showing Mount *Shapher*'s End Time significance.

Moreover the multitude of thy strangers shall be like small dust, and the multitude of the terrible ones shall be as chaff that passeth away: yea, it shall be at an instant suddenly. Thou shalt be visited of (Yahweh) of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire, Isaiah 29:5, 6.

And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake, Revelation 8:5.

The shofar blast of Yahweh is... sounded for the good of the hearers... The "goodly words" of Naphtali come from the Hebrew root for Shapher.

As the Children of Israel discovered in their encampment at Mount *Shapher*, the *shofar* blast of *Yahweh* is truly a call to attention. Whether carrying a pleasant message or a warning, it was always sounded to command attention to a Heavenly message given for the good of the hearers.

Indeed, *Yahweh*'s *shofar* message in this camp experience is good. If heeded, this message brings salvation and a re-establishment of the lost Covenant relationship with *Yahweh*. In order to further reveal the

communicative dynamics of the *shofar* in the name *Shapher*, follow the Hebrew root through the Scriptures. The “goodly words” of Naphtali come from the Hebrew root for “*Shapher*.”⁵³

Naphtali is a hind let loose; he giveth goodly words, Genesis 49:21.

Another example is found in Psalms 16:6. Because *Yahweh* keeps His inheritance, they have come into a “beautiful and goodly” station.⁵⁴ Yes, the “goodly” message -the gospel of salvation- may grab the attention of the sinner in an appeal to holiness.

(Yahweh) is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup; Thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage, Psalms 16:5, 6.

Perhaps the most beautiful message in the trumpet’s tones is the invitation it carries. *Yahweh* uses the clarion call of a Heavenly Horn to invite His people into His Presence. This was how *Yahweh* called John the Revelator into communion with Him.

I was in the Spirit on [Adonai’s] Day, and heard behind me a great Voice, as the sound of a Trumpet, Revelation 1:10.

After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first Voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter, Revelation 4:1.

When we truly worship *Yahweh*, He speaks to us with such clearness, it may be expressed as “trumpet-tones.” In the intimate communion initiated in trumpet tones, He leads us into Truth and arms us for battle. The “beauty” found in the meaning of *Shapher* comes into expression in this communion. For the beauty of godly character shines from the one who frequents the “*shofar* mountain,” attentive to the Creator’s Instruction. There on the “mountain” we may worship in the “beauty of holiness” (Psalms 29:2). From such experiences we

come forth elevated for communion which displays the virtues of the Spirit:⁵⁵

Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report... think on these things, Phil. 4:8.

Alone with our Creator, He reveals to us the treasures of His love and gives us insights into His Plan for our lives. It is when we go up “into the mountain” to Him that we understand His purposes. There, in silence, away from the world, in the stillness of mind and calmness of soul, we come close to the Father's heart.

Within the sweet tones of the *shofar*, is the assurance that the Almighty desires personal communion with His people. The experience of Mount *Shapher* is a call to deeper communion with *Yahweh*.

LESSONS IN FAITH

Mount *Shapher*, as Israel's nineteenth camp, reveals the theme of this Divine Call. Nineteen, in Hebrew Gematria, means “faith.”⁵⁶ How beautiful to see faith blossom in the life of another; how pleasant to rest in faith. It brings all other blessings, when we are listening.

The word “listening,” is translated in the King James Version of the Bible as “hearkening” (once) or “hearing” (37 times; which is the number signifying the “Word of the Father”⁵⁷).

Fathers sometimes raise their voices to cause their children to “listen” and truly hear. The Hebrew word for “hear” is:

Nineteen in Hebrew Gematria means “faith.” ... Faith involves listening - shama (intelligent and obedient hearing).

שמע -shâma' - pronounced “sheh-mah”

To *shama* (hear) means “to hear intelligently... with attention, obedience... (to cause) to tell... declare diligently, discern, ...obey, perceive, (make a) proclamation...shew (forth)...”⁵⁸ In other words, the kind of listening *Yahweh* wants us to do is intelligent and obedient. We are to listen with an open heart, understand His Word, obey His Commands, proclaim them to others, and show forth His message in our own transformed lives.

Like the *shofar*, *Yahweh* sometimes speaks to us in warnings. When we fully hear (*shama*) *Yahweh*, we enter into His universal “congregation,” -His Church in the truest sense of the Word. But, without *shama* hearing, our claim to belong to *Yahweh* is but a sham.

Bless (Yahweh), ye His angels, that excel in strength, that do His Commandments, hearkening unto the Voice of His Word, Ps. 106:20.

He that turneth away his ear from hearing the Law, even his prayer shall be an abomination, Proverbs 28:9.

WHAT TURNS YOUR EAR?

Are we like rebellious children at Mount *Shapher*? Must *Yahweh* trumpet to get our attention? Some listen to His “still, small Voice,” but, most need the “earthquake and fire” (1 Kings 19:12) to command their attention.

The blast of the *shofar* is also the call to Judgment. *Prepare to meet thy YAH*, Amos 4:12. There is the blast of the trumpet that called Moses, trembling up Mount Sinai, while the congregation fled. That sound will raise the dead at the “last trump,” 1 Thessalonians 4:16.

The “first trump” had awakened the sleepy Isrealites at Sinai and, perhaps, any remaining nappers at Mount *Shapher*. The first trump had sounded on Pentecost (Ex. 19:19); the last trump, will sound on the final Day of Atonement.

The Hebrew root for “trumpet” and “shout” are the same; both come from the Hebrew word, *shofar*. It was the shout and the trumpet blast that brought down the walls of Jericho, a type of the final fall of Babylon in Revelation. In that last shout will be release for the righteous and destruction for the wicked.

We cannot imagine that human shouting could ever bring down Jericho’s walls, thirty feet thick. It would take the “shout of the King,” to release that much power, as is suggested in Numbers 23:21. In the End, it will be the shout and trumpet of the King of Kings that brings down the walls of Babylon and raises the dead!

We are told that the human shout is between 80 and 90 decibels. If heard often enough, it can damage hearing. But, compared to other louder sounds, the human shout, or the blowing of a trumpet, is rather mild in the world's advancing technology.



Take, for example, the launching of a rocket. Spectators must remain at least three miles from the blast site, as the 170 decibels of sound rumble through the earth. Louder still is the blast of a one-ton TNT bomb with a deafening roar of 210 decibels - enough to kill a man instantly.

The epicenter of an earthquake, at 235 decibels, is enough noise to kill a person without anything falling upon him.⁵⁹

With these milder human inventions generating such intense sounds, it is easier to envision *Yahweh's* “great trumpet” (Isa. 27:13) that will shake opened the graves, change the righteous in the “twinkling of an eye” (1 Corinthians 15:51) and destroy the wicked by the “brightness of His coming” (2 Thes. 2:8)? “Brightness,” (Gr2015) includes much more than a bright light. It includes the thunder and lightning in its highest magnitude. Remember, to the righteous, the display of *YAH's* power is protection and mercy; while to the wicked, it is destruction and eternal death.

HE VALUES YOU ENOUGH

Yahweh's love for us is great enough that He will do anything to get our ears tuned to hear. But, He doesn't really want to have to use earth-shattering situations to get our attention.

Our Saviour longs for us to turn our eyes and ears toward Him out of awe and love. He wishes for our loving focus to remain upon Him. Like a sheep ever listening to its beloved shepherd, He wishes that our ears would ever be tuned to hear His Voice.

A legend is told of a wealthy man and his son, who loved to collect rare works of art. They had everything in their collection, from Monet to Renoir to Picasso, and they would often sit together and admire these great works of art.

When war broke out, the son enlisted. He was a courageous soldier, and died in battle while rescuing a "brother" from his unit. The father was notified and grieved deeply for his son.

About a month later, there was a knock on the door. A young man stood at the door with a large package in his hands. He said, "Sir, you don't know me, but I served with your son. He saved many lives

that day, and he was carrying me to safety when a bullet struck him in the heart and he died instantly. He often talked about you and your love for art." The young man held out his package. "I know this is not much. I'm not a great artist, but I think your son would have wanted you to have this."



The father opened the package. It was a portrait of his son, painted by the young man. He stared in awe at the way the soldier had captured the personality of his son in the painting. The father was so drawn to the eyes that his own eyes welled up with tears. He thanked the young man and offered to pay him for the picture.

“Oh, no sir, I could never repay what your son did for me. It’s a gift.”

The father hung the portrait over his mantle. Every time visitors came to his home he took them to see the portrait of his son before he showed them any of the other great art works he had collected.

When the man died, there was an auction of his substantial art collection. Many influential people gathered, anxious to obtain a great work of art. On the platform sat the painting of the son. Clearly, this portrait was to be auctioned first.

The auctioneer pounded his gavel. “We will start the bidding with this portrait of the son. Who will bid for this picture? There was silence.



Then a voice from the back of the room shouted impatiently, “We want to see the famous paintings. Skip this one.”

But the auctioneer persisted, “Will someone bid for this painting? Who will start the bidding? \$100, \$200?”

Another voice shouted, “We didn’t come to see this painting; we came to see the Van Goghs and the Monets. Get on with the real bids!” But still

the auctioneer continued, “The son! Who’ll take the son?”

Finally, a voice came from the back of the room. It was the longtime gardener of the man and his son. “I’ll give you \$10 for the painting.” Being a poor man, that was all he could afford.

The auctioneer said, “We have a bid of \$10, who will bid \$20?”

“Give it to him for \$10. Let’s see the masters.”

“\$10 is the bid, won’t someone bid \$20?”

The crowd was becoming belligerent. They didn't want the picture of the son; they wanted the famous paintings to add to their collections.

The auctioneer continued, "Going once, going twice...SOLD for \$10."

A man sitting in the second row blurted, "Good! Now, let's get on with the auction."

The auctioneer laid down his gavel. "The auction is over."

"What about the other paintings?" The buyers were visibly agitated.

"I'm sorry. When I was called to conduct this auction, I was told of a secret stipulation in the will. I was not allowed to reveal that stipulation until the painting of the son was purchased. Only the painting of the son would be auctioned.

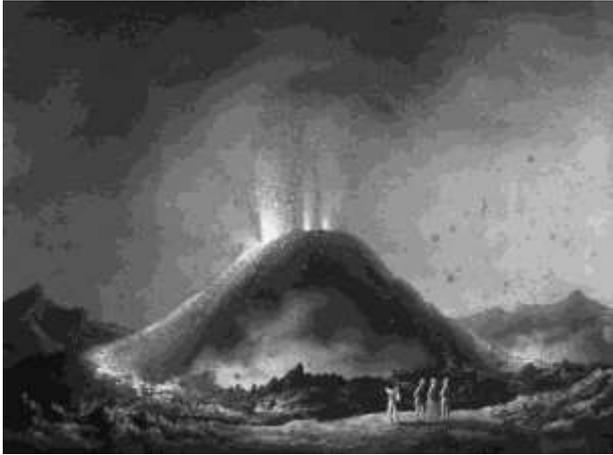
Whoever bought that painting would inherit the entire estate, including all the paintings. Whoever takes the son gets everything."⁶⁰

Whoever takes the Son gets everything!

Like Israel in the desert and the art collectors in this story, how often do we seek what we think will advantage us toward our personal goals? Such motivation is not appreciation for the Master, but "elevation of self." And without the impulse of love for *Yahweh*, we fail to *shama*. Like dominoes cascading down one after another, this failure causes us to miss the Master's stipulation (your inheritance is in the Son), and His conditions (*seek Him first and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you*, Matt. 6:33). In a state of loving *shama*, we seek only Him, and yet inherit all. Are we "listening" for the Master's softest whispers as well as His trumpeted shouts? What turns our ear is what holds our heart.

When the mighty "Trumpets" of Heaven blast the final message of the Mighty *El*, those whose hearts are turned in love and repentance will be listening as to a joyful sound, and they will heed. Not for want of Heaven, nor yet to escape imminent destruction will they accept the

offer of Grace; but for the love of the Son. *Yahshua*, the Heavenly Ram caught in the thicket by Whom Isaac was saved. How will you respond to the Heavenly *Shofar*? Are you listening?



SUMMARY OF CHAPTER FIVE

- Mount *Shapher*, was Israel's nineteenth encampment. This name means "bright" or "beautiful" mountain. *Shapher* is the root word for *shofar* (an animal-horn trumpet). Thus, Mount *Shapher* is also *Shofar* Mountain.
- The tones of the *shofar*, blown on the Feast of Trumpets, signified a call to repentance, sorrow for sin, a call to battle on *Yahweh's* side, and a promise that His Grace is sufficient. These messages are the heart of the lesson *Yahweh* wants His end-time people to gain in their spiritual experience of Mount *Shapher*.
- Nineteen is a number which signifies "faith" in Hebrew Gematria. Faith comes by "hearing" or more specifically, *shama*, this Hebrew word for "hear," includes listening with a receptive heart, hearing with understanding, obeying what was heard, and proclaiming it to others).
- At spiritual Mount *Shapher*, we learn that *Yahweh* wants His people to *shama* the message of the Heavenly *Shofar*. Whether loud or soft, His purpose is to get our attention that we might humble our hearts before Him.
- In order to *shama*, we must be eager to hear *Yahweh's* Voice. Like sheep with ears ever tuned to the call of the shepherd, we must be listening for His Call.
- Rather than focusing on the blessings we will gain or for any other selfish motivation, our ears our tuned to *Yahshua* out of love. The Bible teaches us to seek first the Kingdom of *Yahweh* and His Righteousness. And whoever takes the Son gets everything.