



Links Players

The Sounds of a Shofar

With trumpets and the sound of the horn, make a joyful noise before the King, the LORD! (Psalm 98:6, ESV)

“It stands as the saddest day in golf,” writes Guy Yocum in a recent Golf Digest article remembering Payne Stewart. Twenty-five years have passed since he and five others perished in a tragic airplane accident.

Several months before that dreadful day, Payne raised the U.S. Open trophy after his iconic fist and one-leg raised pose to capture the win.

Yocum depicts Payne as a man with a complex nature. He had a big personality, an athletic and explosive swing, spontaneous and gregarious reactions, and a deep love for his family. He struggled with ADD, moodiness, and small addictions.

What Yocum did not mention in his October 24, 2024, article was how Payne had put his faith in God and had been experiencing a changed mind, body, and spirit. Payne was a Christ follower.

The sounds of sorrow and praise enfold Payne and his legacy.

In the Hebrew Text, the shofar was a simple ram’s horn used to make complex sounds to signify something meaningful was at hand. A single, long blast represented joy, happiness, and a call to attention. A series of three short, abrupt sounds represented sadness, pain, and suffering.

In Ancient times, the shofar was blown on Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, and Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, as a wake-up call to reflect on one’s actions and seek repentance. At other appointed times, it was blown for celebration and praise to the Lord.

The sounds of a shofar are guttural and elegant, disruptive and inviting. A sound that connects the soul to meaning, reflection, and remembrance.

The different sounds remind us that life holds a spectrum of experiences, from extreme happiness to times of distress. As you read the scriptures, can you imagine the sounds resonating through your five senses...do they draw you to reflect on your life and seek God more wholeheartedly?

One of my most treasured experiences occurred when I had an opportunity to blow a shofar in the middle of the Mount Sinai Mountains in Egypt. As the words, “When the trumpet sounds a long blast (Exodus 19:13b),” were recited, I blew a long crescendo sound.

The sound echoed, reverberating awe and wonder through all my senses. I felt like a character in the actual story of God’s people being called up the mountain.

The sounds of the shofar are an invitation to be humble during good times and not lose faith during the difficult seasons of life. It seems like Payne Stewart's life grew into a living shofar, blasting a joyful noise before his King, the Lord. Might we live in such a way that does the same.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for the stories about the sounds of the shofar and using them in my life as a call to pause, find meaning, reflect, and remember. Help me be a living shofar.

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The Links Daily Devotional appears Monday-Friday at linksplayers.com.