Numbers 10:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

> When ye blow an alarm, then the camps that lie on the east parts shall go forward.

Analysis

The alarm signal 'when ye blow an alarm' (Hebrew teruah—sharp, staccato blast) differed from the sustained gathering call. The alarm signaled movement or danger, requiring urgent response. The distinction between ceremonial gathering (long blast) and urgent alarm (short blasts) taught Israel to discern different divine calls. This parallels spiritual discernment between regular means of grace and urgent calls to action, repentance, or defense against error. The church must recognize when circumstances demand immediate action versus patient endurance.

Historical Context

The alarm (teruah) was a broken, rapid succession of notes creating urgency. This same signal announced war (verse 9), the Year of Jubilee (Leviticus 25:9), and accompanied shouting in victory (Joshua 6:5). The sound conveyed emotional intensity—joy, warning, or celebration—versus the solemn, sustained gathering call.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How do we discern between regular Christian duties and urgent spiritual crises requiring immediate action?
2. What spiritual 'alarm signals' should prompt the church to urgent prayer or action?
3. How can we avoid confusion between routine obedience and crisis response?

Interlinear Text

וּתְקַעְתֶּ ם	תְּרוּעָ ה	וְנָסְעוּ	הַמַּחֲנ וֹת	הָחֹנ ים
When ye blow	**an alarm**	**shall go forward**	**then the camps**	**that lie**
H8628	H8643	H5265	H4264	H2583

קֵדְמָה:
on the east parts
H6924

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 10:14 (Parallel theme): In the first place went the standard of the camp of the children of Judah according to their armies: and over his host was Nahshon the son of Amminadab.