The Binding of Isaac

In the book of Genesis there is a very special story about our forefather Abraham and his son Isaac. God commands Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, his son. Just before Abraham sacrifices him, he hears a voice from Heaven say to him: “Do not raise your hand against the boy.” Isaac is saved. Instead of sacrificing Isaac, Abraham sacrifices a ram. The ram’s horn is made into a shofar, and so each time we sound the shofar we remember the story of Abraham and Isaac.

Questions:
1. During what period did this event happen?
2. What was the role of the shofar?

Six blasts of the shofar by the priest on Shabbat eve, in the Temple

When the Temple stood, the priests would sound the shofar six times each Shabbat eve in order to let everyone know that Shabbat would soon begin. The first three blasts were to let people know to stop working and prepare for Shabbat, and the last three blasts were sounded in a row and meant that Shabbat had begun.

Questions:
1. During what period did this event happen?
2. What was the role of the shofar?

The Capture of Jericho

After Moses passed away, Joshua led the Jewish people into the land of Israel, and they began to conquer it. They captured the city of Jericho in a special way. God commanded Joshua to walk around the walls of Jericho for six days, once each day. On the seventh day, after the priests sounded the shofar, the Jewish people cheered and the walls of the city fell. Due to the shofar blasts, the walls fell and the Jews captured the city.

Questions:
1. During what period did this event happen?
2. What was the role of the shofar?
Sounding the Shofar During the Holocaust

During the Holocaust, it was forbidden for the Jews to keep mitzvot. Still, Jews in the concentration camps took every opportunity to keep mitzvot. One mitzva that was especially important to them was sounding the shofar on Rosh Hashanah, and they found all kinds of ways to obtain a shofar. Although they couldn't keep the mitzva in the proper way, sounding the shofar in such a terrible situation reminded them that they are Jews and that one day, they would be free to keep all of the mitzvot.

Questions:
1. During what period did this event happen?
2. What was the role of the shofar?

Sounding the Shofar at the End of Yom Kippur in the Jubilee Year

The Jubilee Year occurs every fifty years. The count began at the creation of the world, according to Jewish belief. In ancient times, Jewish people worked as “Hebrew slaves” for rich Jewish people. In this way they could save themselves from poverty or pay back debts from theft. Every Jubilee Year, the slaves had the right to be freed from their masters. At the end of Yom Kippur each Jubilee Year, the shofar was sounded to symbolize freedom and release from slavery.

Questions:
1. During what period did this event happen?
2. What was the role of the shofar?

The Coronation of Solomon

King Solomon was the son of King David. When it was time to crown Solomon as the new king, the priest, the prophet, and David's strongest soldiers took Solomon to the Gihon spring and sounded the shofar to declare Solomon the new king.
Many years ago, when the Temple still stood, there was no calendar. Every month the Sages had to look at the moon and decide when the new month (Rosh Chodesh) would begin. When they set the day of Rosh Chodesh, they declared it by sounding the shofar, and so everyone knew when the new month began.

Questions:
1. During what period did this event happen?
2. What was the role of the shofar?

In 1967, the Paratroopers liberated the Western Wall. They were joined by Rabbi Shlomo Goren, the chief rabbi of the IDF. Rav Goren ran with the soldiers toward the Western Wall, sounding the shofar the whole way in order to encourage them and give them the strength to fight. When they reached the Wall, Rav Goren sounded the shofar in order to let everyone know that the Western Wall was now in Jewish hands.

Questions:
1. During what period did this event happen?
2. What was the role of the shofar?