



# **The Festivals of the Seventh Month**

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Despite what many assume, the months of the Biblical calendar never were changed. I hear all the time people saying that although the first month is in the Spring according to the Bible, Judaism has changed it to the Fall. This simply is not true. The first month remains in the Spring and the seventh month is still in the Fall. It was simply decided that the new year for such things as preparing legal documents and the accounting of time, would now be according to the first day of the seventh month. Previously, when there were Kings in Israel, it was the first day of first month when the king was given an additional year and people would reckon time according to the year of the king.

Despite this issue, the Festival which is on the first day of the seventh month is known as the **Day of Sounding** (of the Trumpet) or the **Day of Remembering the Sounding** (of the Trumpet), according to the Bible. There is no Scriptural verse that relates to this festival with the concept of New Year (Rosh HaShanah). Although one of the primary messages of the shofar (the ram's horn) is remembering what G-d has provided for victory, there also is the concept of judgment associated with this festival. In several places in the section known in the Bible as the Prophets, judgment is linked to the sounding of the shofar (trumpet). It would seem that the announcing of judgment which is related to this festival is a call to respond to what is approaching just nine days after, the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). In other words, it is the message of judgment which motivates people to seek forgiveness from their sins.

What is most significant about Yom Kippur is that the children of Israel did not do the work of atonement for themselves, but it was the one who was anointed, i.e. the high priest, who performed all the work which was required for atonement to be made available to all the people. All the people had to do was to receive the work of the anointed one with a repentant heart. In the same way that the **Feast of Sounding** and the **Day of Atonement** work together to prepare one to receive G-d's mercy in light of His judgment, so too is there a connection between the first two festivals and the final two.

The last two festivals of the seventh month are the **Feast of Tabernacles** and the **Eighth Day Assembly**. Much is known and discussed about the Feast of Tabernacles and observing it for seven days; but many people, both Jews and Gentiles, do not even know that there is another Festival called the **Eighth Day Assembly**. The primary message of the Feast of Tabernacles is dependence upon G-d. It is not enough to remember that one is dependent upon G-d for all things, but also to demonstrate this dependence in one's decisions and actions. This fact is frequently ignored by many believers. We put such an emphasis on believing that often times we forget that true faith produces results. Again, one is not saved by these results, but these results demonstrate our faith to others.

One of the primary observances of the Feast of Tabernacles is taking the lulav and etrog and waving them in six directions. This symbolizes the L-rd's call upon Israel to proclaim His grace and lovingkindness to the nations. The lulav and etrog are related to the Biblical commandment found in **Leviticus 26:40**,

***“And you shall take on the first day, the fruit of a beautiful tree, palm branches, and branch of a leafy tree and of willow tree and you shall be glad before the L-rd your G-d seven days.”***

When one takes this vegetation, it serves as a reminder that it is G-d Who provides the Land and what grows upon it. Without this produce, life could not be supported; therefore, it is incumbent upon all people to recognize G-d as not only the Creator, but the Sustainer of life. This is not only necessary in this world and for this life, but all the more so concerning the Kingdom. Judaism properly teaches that all the Biblical Festivals have a Kingdom connection. This means that one can learn about the Kingdom of G-d by studying the L-rd's appointed times.

We have seen that the first festival relates to G-d's judgment and the second expresses the G-d Who will make forgiveness possible to His people. After receiving G-d's provision, one is expected to proclaim and demonstrate the forgiveness through faith in a gracious loving G-d. This is a brief summary of how the first three festivals work together to express a very important message to humanity. The final festival, the **Eighth Day Assembly**, also has great significance. Very little is stated in the Bible concerning this festival, but what is revealed does provide the reader with some important clues in assisting one to comprehend its primary message. In the Bible it is called **שמיני עצרת** Shemini Atzeret, which translates to (the) eighth (day) assembly.

The number eight has a meaning of newness, kingdom, redemption, and because a male infant is circumcised on the eight day and circumcision relates to a covenant, the concept of covenant also relates to the number eight. Hence, this special assembly will consist of a new experience for the people of G-d, which will relate to the outcome of Messiah's work of redemption which is the establishment of the Kingdom of G-d. It is when one enters into the Kingdom that he can expect to receive the promises of G-d which are contained in His Covenant with those who experience redemption through the grace of G-d. It is the forgiveness which grace provides that removes G-d's judgment from falling upon those who have been redeemed. The word assembly in Hebrew is **עצרת** and it relates to a stopping that brings about a change or in response to a change which has just occurred.

The idea here is that those who have truly been recipients of G-d's provision for Kingdom life will demonstrate this by walking in dependence upon the L-rd until G-d's judgment comes. Those who are true believers in Messiah by His Name (Yeshua, Jesus, Yesus, etc.) will not experience G-d's wrath and will not be present on earth when HIS wrath begins. With the end of G-d's judgment upon the earth, there will be a significant stopping of the world as is. This stopping of the world will be the beginning of a great assembly of Israel.

This is the *Israel of G-d* that Paul wrote about in Galatians 6:16. This is also to whom Paul was referring in Romans 11:26 when he stated, “...and thus all Israel will be saved...” It is very important that one understands what Paul is teaching. He is **not** saying that every Jewish person will be saved. If one reads this passage in context, he will learn that Paul is speaking about the time immediately after the fullness of the Gentiles have all come to faith. Then G-d will turn His attention to saving a **remnant** of the Jewish people. It is when the Kingdom people (Israel) consisting of the fullness of the Gentiles and the remnant of the Jewish people have all been saved, then the **Eighth Day Assembly** will begin.

The more one studies about these four fall festivals, the more this person can learn about the Messiah's work in the end times. It is most unfortunate that many believers ignore the

Biblical festivals, as these are the L-rd's appointed times and are revealed in the Scriptures for a reason. As Paul says,

***“All Scripture is inspired by G-d and profitable for instruction, for conviction, for correction, for training in righteousness. In order that the man of G-d should be complete for every good work, having been fully equipped.” 2 Timothy 3:16-17***

Encourage a friend or have a small group in your home for the expressed purpose of studying these important Biblical holidays. Observe them upon the proper date for special times of worship. It is most proper to inquire from the Holy Spirit on how one should celebrate these festivals of faith.