

# Rosh HaShanah

יום זכרון תרועה Yom Teruah

The Feast of Trumpets



Many people have heard of the holiday Rosh HaShanah. But did you know that the Biblical name for this special holiday is Yom Teruah? This means the day of sounding and it relates to the blowing of the shofar. It is the first of the High Holy Days and it is mentioned in Leviticus 23:23-25. Here we find that we are to celebrate this Festival of the Lord on the first day of the seventh month. On the Hebrew calendar, the seventh month is called "Tishrei."

This day is considered a Sabbath, which means that no work is done. There is a blowing of the trumpet (shofar) and it is a holy convocation. Rosh HaShanah begins what are called the Ten Days of Awe. These are the last 10 days leading up to Yom HaKippurim (Day of Atonements). This is the most important festival of the Lord. Therefore, it is a time of reflection and repentance.

The Feast of Trumpets instructs those who believe in the G-d of Israel, and of course His Only Begotten Son Yeshua, to remember what G-d has provided so that His people can receive the Promise of G-d. The primary commandment associated with this Festival is the sounding of the Shofar (Ram's Horn). The purpose of hearing the Shofar directly relates to G-d's provision, so His people can inherit His promise of the Kingdom.

In the Torah, Yom Teruah is a one day holiday. Judaism today celebrates it as a two day holiday, with both days observed as a "high" day, which is similar to the seventh day Shabbat. The narrative in the Book of Genesis describing the announcement of Isaac and his subsequent birth is part of the Torah readings in synagogues on the first day of Rosh Hashanah, and the narrative of the sacrifice and binding of Isaac is read in synagogue on the second day of Rosh Hashanah. When studying the traditional readings for the **Feast of Trumpets**, there is an emphasis on Isaac, the son of promise (See Galatians 4:28). When reading from Genesis chapter 22, God looks for and provides a substitute for Isaac, that he might live.



Before the death, burial and resurrection of Yeshua, God's people were to fast, afflict their souls and the High Priest went into the Holy of Holies (on Yom HaKippurim) to make sacrifices for all the people. Today, we do not do this because Yeshua is our sacrifice and also there is no Temple standing.

Yeshua died on the cross so that those who accept His sacrifice may live with Him forever. Even though we have eternal life, while we live in our bodies, we will continue to sin. We are forgiven and that will not change our eternal life with Yeshua, but we should still be sorry for our sins and seek to live a life pleasing to God.

This is a Biblical time of year for us to focus on repentance. We should pray for God to reveal our sins to us so that we may ask for forgiveness and not have sin in our lives.

# New Testament Study

What is repentance? Repentance is agreeing with the standards of God (moral, ethical, etc.). It is required for salvation and will lead to bearing fruit worthy of repentance. (see Matthew 3:8). Even after being saved, we will struggle with sin and commit sins. But we must confess those sins and turn away from those behaviors in order to restore a proper relationship with God. Acts 26:20 speaks of repenting and turning to God, performing deeds in keeping with repentance. This means that when we repent of our sins, we should turn to God and then this restored relationship will cause us to want to live in a way which is pleasing to God. This includes following the commandments of God and loving our neighbor as ourselves.

Let's focus on one passage from the Bible which will help us understand more about living a life for Yeshua.

Titus 2:11-12 states:

11For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men,  
12teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.

What does this mean? The same grace through which God brings salvation to us also teaches us how to live. God tells us in His Word how we should live. We read in the Titus passage that we should deny [reject] ungodliness and worldly lusts. That means we should say no to the things of the world which are in conflict with God's will.

So, then, how should we live? God says we should live soberly. This means to behave in a serious, sensible and solemn manner. It also means showing moderation and self-restraint.

We should not live by our emotions or in a thoughtless or shallow way. We are representatives of the Lord here on earth. We should reflect His character.

## How We Celebrate Rosh HaShanah Today

**Blowing the Shofar:** One of the most important rituals of Rosh Hashanah is the blowing of the shofar. This is a Biblical command.

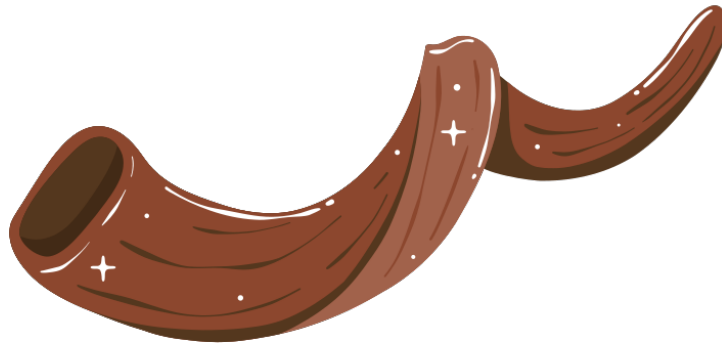
The shofar is made from a ram's horn. It is blown during the Rosh Hashanah prayers to remind us of what God has provided for victory. We remember the ram being caught in the thicket and that God

provided him for victory. He was substituted for Isaac in the same way that Yeshua died on the cross for our sins. He took our place.

The shofar is blown 100 times each day of Rosh Hashanah, except on Shabbat. The blasts of the shofar are meant to remind us of God's provision. Because He provided Yeshua in our place, we have life and blessings. We should also repent of our sins and remember God's expectations for us.

Rosh Hashanah is a time for new beginnings, a time to think about how we can obey and serve God. The blowing of the shofar is a powerful reminder of this. It tells us to wake up from our slumber and think about the things that are important in life. Living a life pleasing to God, through the help of the Holy Spirit, will then lead us to live in a way which shows His Character to others and will cause us to be a blessing to those around us.

As we listen to the shofar, let us think about Yeshua, who provided the victory for us over sin and death. This should cause us to give thanks and to seek how we can make a difference in the world. Sharing what Yeshua has done for us with others is the most important way we love our neighbour as ourself. It is also important for us to be kind, honest, and to treat others with respect. We need to reflect upon what God's expectations are for us and how we are to demonstrate His character in our lives.



**Tashlikh:** Tashlikh is a special ritual that many Jewish people do on the first day of Rosh Hashanah. It's a time to reflect on our sins from the past year and let them go. This ritual is performed near a flowing body of water, like a river or a lake.

During tashlikh, we say prayers and think about the ways we have sinned. Then, we symbolically cast our sins into the water. Some people even throw bread or pebbles into the water to represent letting go of their sins.

If Rosh Hashanah falls on Shabbat, the ritual is postponed until the second day. The traditional service for tashlikh includes special prayers that remind us of God's forgiveness and mercy.

One prayer that is often recited during tashlikh says, "Who is like unto you, O God. And You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." This reminds us that God is there to help us let go of our sins and start fresh.

We also read passages from the Bible, like Isaiah 11:9, which talks about a time when there will be peace and harmony in the world, Psalm 118:5-9, Psalm 121 and Psalm 130, as well as personal prayers. These passages give us hope.

Tashlikh is a meaningful ritual that helps us let go of our past sins and look forward to a new beginning. It's a time to ask for forgiveness and start again with a clean slate.



**Special Foods:** During Rosh HaShanah, there are some special food which are traditionally eaten. These include apples and honey (symbolizing a happy New Year) and also pomegranates. Did you know that each pomegranate contain 613 seeds? This is the same



number of commandments God gives to us in the Torah! It is a great reminder for us to strive to more wholly obey God.



As we remember this special festival of the Lord, let us repent of our sins, spend time contemplating how to live in a way which is obedient to God and remembering what we read in Titus 2.