

Rosh Hashanah: A Trumpet Call for God's People

Bread crumbs floating on water, ram horns used as trumpets, and prayers of repentance represent responses to God's holiness on *Rosh Hashanah*.

How Did this Observance Originate? The Jewish observance of Rosh Hashanah originated in the Book of Leviticus. In His infinite wisdom and love, God provided His chosen people a calendar of "appointed times" or "holy convocations" (Lev. 23:1-2) of which *Rosh Hashanah* is but one. Amazingly, these God-ordained biblical holy days of Leviticus 23 still provide identity to the Jewish people today despite the passage of several millennia.

Biblical Perspective. *Rosh Hashanah* has only three verses assigned to it in Leviticus 23 (vv. 23-25), yet this Feast starts a great season both biblically for the Jewish people and prophetically for all mankind. It's also mentioned elsewhere in Old Covenant Scripture (Num. 29:1-6, Ps. 81:3-4, Ezra 3:1-6, Neh. 8:1-12).

The Jewish people were to blow the *shofar* (ram's horn) on the first day of *Tishrei* (v. 24) as a *holy convocation*. They were to do no *laborious work* and *present an offering by fire to the Lord* (v.25).

According to Scripture, the Feast of Trumpets is the first of three Fall Feasts. The theme of *Rosh Hashanah* is repentance in preparation for the other two feasts: *Yom Kippur* (the Day of Atonement, the most holy day of the Jewish calendar) and the Feast of Booths (*Sukkot*).

Rabbinic Traditions. The traditional name *Rosh Hashanah* means "head of the year." This holy day begins the Jewish civil calendar year and is observed in *Tishrei*, the seventh month of the biblical Jewish calendar.

The main command for observance is to blow the *shofar*, but no reason is given in the Bible. As a result, concerned rabbis have come up with many explanations as to how, what, when, how long, in which order and by whom the *shofar* should be blown. The rabbis believed that there were to be one hundred blasts of the *shofar*, culminating in the final *Tekiah Gedolah* meaning "the last blast" or "last trump" to be held for as long as the blower had breath. Today, some believe this last trumpet blast symbolizes the hope of the national redemption of Israel.

Such importance is attached to the blowing of the *shofar* that the ninth century rabbi Saadia Gaon codified his own "Top Ten Reasons" why the trumpet was blown on *Rosh Hashanah*. Top reasons included heralding Redemption, Resurrection, and the Messianic Age (Isaiah 27:13).

Responding to rabbinical teachings, Jewish people around the world empty bread crumbs from their pockets into a body of water on the first day of *Rosh Hashanah*. Known as *Taschlich*, meaning "the casting forth," the tradition is based on Micah 7:18-20, a prophecy that God was going to cast the Israel's sin into the sea. This also marks the start of the "Ten Days of Awe" or *Yomim Noraim*, a non-biblical obligation of prayer and penitence in preparation for *Yom Kippur*.

God's Grand Plan Revealed. Many Messianic believers agree that each of the Levitical holy convocations has been or will be fulfilled by a specific event, in a specific order, in the prophetic career of the Messiah. As the Spring Festivals were all fulfilled by

the First Coming of the Messiah, they believe the Fall feasts will be fulfilled by His Second Coming.

Biblical Holy Day	Fulfillment
Messiah's First Coming	
Passover (<i>Pesach</i>)	Messiah's sacrificial death
First Fruits	Messiah's victorious resurrection
<i>Shavuot</i>	Birth of the Body of Messiah
Messiah's Second Coming	
<i>Rosh Hashanah</i>	Trumpet Blast heralding End Times
<i>Yom Kippur</i> (The Day of Atonement)	The Great Tribulation
<i>Sukkot</i> (Feast of Booths or Tabernacles)	The Thousand Year Messianic Kingdom

Not everyone agrees what the Rapture of believers is all about, but it is mentioned in the Bible (I Thess. 4:13-18 and I Cor. 15:50-58), though not by name. These references predate and should not be confused with the trumpet judgments of Revelation. Paul's audience was familiar with the rabbinic tradition of the last trump or *Tekiah Gedolah* and would naturally have associated it with the last trumpet blast of the Feast of Trumpets. Scripture tells us no one knows the date this event will occur (Matthew 24:36). However, all are warned to be ready for the End Times trumpet blast.

The Fall Feasts remind the world that God has not forgotten His Jewish people and they have not forgotten Him. As Jewish people around the world prepare to blow animal horns and pray, Messiah longs for His people to know that He did, can, and will provide for them when they put their trust in Him.