

## Yom Teruah Devotional

**Numbers 29:1 HCSB** "You are to hold a sacred assembly in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, and you are not to do any daily work. This will be a day of jubilation for you.

Tonight begins one of the highest holy days of all the feasts of the Bible, Yom Teruah (Feast of Trumpets) or as it is often called in modern times, Rosh Hashanah (Head of the Year). The start of the New Year is a particularly important time on God's calendar. This day was so important that He called it one of His "appointed times".

- **Leviticus 23:2 HCSB** "Speak to the Israelites and tell them: These are My appointed times, the times of the LORD that you will proclaim as sacred assemblies.

He then proceeded to list the seven feasts of Israel, including Yom Teruah.

Many cultural Christians have forgotten the importance of Yom Teruah. They seem to have forgotten that God Himself declared that the commemoration of this day was to be a "permanent statute" (Leviticus 23:21). It's a day to be remembered forever!

Why is this so important? This is God's annual reminder for all of His people: We are to consider that we will give an account to Him for everything we say and do (Matthew 12:36; 1 Corinthians 3:13). We are to humble ourselves before Him and ask Him to search our hearts and cleanse us from any sin, unclean thoughts, impure motives, and pride.

Where Pesach' begins the liturgical calendar, Yom Teruah begins the civil calendar but note that God cared so deeply even about the beginning of the civil (business) calendar that He directed that all normal activity was to stop. Instead of gearing up for a materialistic, self-centered splurge as the goyim do January 1, God's people are to spend time in reflection and prayer. They are to look seriously at their lives - to think about what they have done in the past, about their attitudes and behavior, about their possessions and priorities, and about their relationships with other people and with God. They are to think about His holiness, humble themselves before Him, and turn away from sin and anything that displeased Him.

According to Jewish tradition, Yom Teruah is the Day of Judgment, the day when the righteous have their names inscribed in the Book of Life and the wicked are judged for their transgressions. This is because it introduces the Ten Days of Awe that lead up to Yom Kippur but I'll explain the greater importance of that traditional view in a moment.

Traditionally Yom Teruah is also a day to commemorate the creation of the world, the creation of mankind, and the *Akedah*, the binding of Isaac to the altar. On this day only the ram's horn (or the shofar) is blown in synagogues all over the world to commemorate the ram that was provided in lieu of Isaac's life and call us to repentance.

After the sound of the shofar, many eat apples dipped in honey and say "*shana tova u-metuka*" (to a good and sweet new year)! Why is this season particularly sweet for us?

Consider the seven feasts that we just saw were included in Leviticus 23:

1. Pesach' (Passover)
2. Ch'ag Hamotzi (Unleavened Bread)
3. Yom ha Bikkurim (First Fruits)
4. Shavuot (Pentecost),
5. Yom Teruah (Trumpets),
6. Yom Kippur (Atonement)
7. Sukkot (Tabernacles).

The Messiah literally fulfilled the first four. He was the Passover Lamb (1 Corinthians 5:7). He was the Bread of Life (John 6:35). He is the first fruits of them that have fallen asleep (1 Corinthians 15:20). It was at Pentecost that He sent the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4). To say that the biblical feasts are important in the lives and minds of the believers would be the understatement of the year.

However, if the first four were all fulfilled literally, wouldn't the following ones be expected to be fulfilled literally too? What is the next feast on God's holy calendar that remains unfulfilled? The one we are celebrating today – Yom Teruah. The next feast that Jesus will literally fulfill will be the Feast of Trumpets.

Listen to

- **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 HCSB** We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, concerning those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve like the rest, who have no hope. (14) Since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, in the same way God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep through Jesus. (15) For we say this to you by a revelation from the Lord: We who are still alive at the Lord's coming will certainly have no advantage over those who have fallen asleep. (16) For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the archangel's voice, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. (17) Then we who are still alive will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will always be with the Lord. (18) Therefore encourage one another with these words.
- **Revelation 11:15 HCSB** The seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven saying: The kingdom of the world has become the *kingdom* of our Lord and of His Messiah, and He will reign forever and ever!

For us, Yom Teruah is a time of celebration. However, it introduces the period of time called *Yamim Noraim* ("Days of Awe"), or *Asseret Yemei Teshuva* (Ten Days of Repentance), a time of reflection and introspection that lead up to Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, the day of repentance and sorrow for sin.

Interestingly, in the Book of Revelation we are told that there will be a series of trumpets, each announcing yet another judgment on the earth. The final trumpet announces the arrival of the Messiah, a time of great rejoicing for the saints, but a time of terrible judgment and suffering for those who remain in the rebel camp – a day of sorrow and contrition but one that is far too late to be of any help. Immediately after that time our King returns to Earth to establish His throne in the New Jerusalem and "Tabernacles" with us.

So Yom Teruah is bittersweet. We celebrate our King with the sound of the shofar. We express our hope that this will be the year of His coming through the blowing of our little trumpets, anticipating the great Trumpet of God that will someday blow from heaven.

We celebrate not only the creation of the world but we look forward to the day when a new heaven and earth will be created by our God/King.

We obediently turn our hearts toward confession and repentance of our sins over the next ten days, so that we don't have to face judgment when the King DOES return.

We blow the ram's horn because as Isaac was passed over and a ram was offered in his stead, so we have had the perfect holy Lamb of God offered in our place.

Let me close this by sharing a beautiful Psalm with you.

- **Psalms 47:1-9 HCSB** ...Clap your hands, all you peoples; shout to God with a jubilant cry. (2) For the LORD Most High is awe-inspiring, a great King over all the earth. (3) He subdues peoples under us and nations under our feet. (4) He chooses for us our inheritance--the pride of Jacob, whom He loves. Selah (5) God ascends amid shouts of joy, the LORD, amid the sound of trumpets. (6) Sing praise to God, sing praise; sing praise to our King, sing praise! (7) Sing a song of instruction, for God is King of all the earth. (8) God reigns over the nations; God is seated on His holy throne. (9) The nobles of the peoples have assembled *with* the people of the God of Abraham. For the leaders of the earth belong to God; He is greatly exalted.