



Erev Rosh HaShanah/Yom Teruah 5786

September 22, 2025

Shalom aleichem, Mishpacha! You are here tonight because you responded to ADONAI's call. In His *Torah*, He gave *Moedim*, Festivals, to teach *B'nei Yisra'el*, His ways. We who have trusted in Yeshua are members of the New Covenant with ADONAI and belong to *B'nei Yisra'el* today, the Commonwealth of Israel, which also includes our Jewish brothers and sisters who have not yet met Yeshua. And He has commanded us to assemble ourselves in His presence on the days that He designated. *Yom Teruah*, which we also celebrate as *Rosh Hashanah*, is one of these *moedim*, a special Sabbath, and it began at sunset today, bringing in the new Hebrew year of 5786. We will look at some basic information tonight. Sometimes, we must revisit and reflect on some of the numerous topics we have discussed about *Rosh Hashanah* over the past twenty-three years. There are some things we've discussed in recent years that we will think about tonight.

There are seven *moedim*, special Sabbaths ADONAI has given, that each of us should be able to recall in order. We start with the spring festivals in the month of *Nisan*, the month ADONAI declared to be the beginning of the months (Exodus 12:2). This month's original name was *Aviv*, which means "young barley" or "spring season." For some reason, ADONAI only chose to give names to four months: אֲבִיב *Aviv*, whose modern name is *Nisan*, the 1st month, זִיב *Ziv*, now *Iyar*, the 2nd month, אֵתָנִים *E'tanim*, the 7th month, now *Tishrei*, and בּוּל *Bul*, the 8th month, now *Cheshvan*. Originally, the other months were only known by their number in the year. *Nisan*, *Iyar*, and the others of the current calendar are names borrowed from the Babylonian and Sumerian calendars while Israel was in exile. One of these months, *Tammuz*, is the name of a Babylonian god, but ADONAI has allowed it, and I'm sure He has a purpose for doing so, and I don't hesitate to use this name.

Here are ADONAI's seven special Sabbaths and when they occur in the year.

The Seven Shabbatot

1. First Day of *Chag HaMatzot* (the Festival of Unleavened Bread). *Nisan* 15.
2. Seventh Day of *Chag HaMatzot*. *Nisan* 21.
3. *Shavuot* (Festival of Weeks). The 50th day counted from *Nisan* 16.
4. *Yom Teruah/Rosh HaShanah*/Festival of Trumpets. *Tishrei* 15 (the seventh month).
5. *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement). *Tishrei* 10.
6. First Day of *Sukkot* (Festival of Tabernacles). *Tishrei* 15.

7.The Eighth Day Concluding festival, *Shemini Atzeret*. *Tishrei* 22.

Sukkot is a seven-day festival, and *Shemini Atzeret* concludes it, but is considered a festival itself.

Technically, the weekly *Shabbat* is also a *מועד* *moed*, and actually the first and primary one, while the other seven are *moedim*, and special *Shabbats*. A *moed* is an “appointed time,” a time which ADONAI has set for Israel to appear before Him. We are here tonight because He has told us, “This is a *moed* for you.” Passover is not in this list because it is not classified as a *moed*, but rather an event occurring in the late afternoon of *Nisan* 14, the designated time for the slaughtering of the *Pesach* lamb.

Tonight and the 24 hours that will end at sundown tomorrow are the special Sabbath of *יום תרועה* *Yom Teruah*, the Festival of Trumpets, which is also known as *ראש השנה* *Rosh Hashanah*, the Head of the Year. The Festival, *Yom Teruah*, was celebrated as such for several thousand years, but around the year 200 CE, the rabbis made a change and formalized *Tishrei* as the head of the secular year. The name, *Rosh Hashanah*, meaning “head of the year,” came into being, becoming the primary name for *Yom Teruah* for the Jews of the world. Whether ADONAI approved of this change or not, it does draw attention to this special time of the year. We accept *Rosh Hashanah* as tradition, but base our core beliefs upon the Scriptural foundations of *Yom Teruah* in the *Torah*. Thus, as Messianic Jews and Gentiles, we also honor and celebrate this day as *Rosh Hashanah*, the name by which Jews have celebrated it for centuries. Tonight, *Rosh Hashanah* marks the start of the Fall Festivals of 5786.

We often describe the Festivals as rehearsals, rehearsals for something that ADONAI plans to do for us at a future time. When Israel celebrated Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread in Egypt, they were unknowingly preparing for the coming fulfillment of that day and that festival. The fulfillment of Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread occurred in the 1st century when ADONAI sent His Son Yeshua to be sacrificed as our Passover Lamb on the *צֶלֶב* *tzlav*, the cross. Before He died, He told us He is the “Bread of Life” (John 6:35) and became the unleavened (sinless) Bread of Life for us. As long as the Temple stood, Israel rehearsed the festivals with real lambs, eating them in fulfillment of ADONAI’s words. In 30 CE, Yeshua and His disciples gathered for their Passover meal. It was a day when lambs were being slaughtered at the Temple for the celebration (Luke 22:7-8), and lamb was on Yeshua’s menu for the Passover meal. At the table, after breaking *matzah* and offering the *b’racha*, Yeshua likened His body to the lamb. Lifting the *matzah*, He said: 19 ..., “*This is My body, given for you.*” (Luke 22:19b TLV). His disciples ate the unleavened *matzah* of Passover, representing His body, and we, His Messianic disciples, continue to eat it in remembrance every Passover until He returns.

According to Hebrew tradition, fifty days after Israel left Egypt, they were at Mount Sinai on the day of *Shavuot*, the Festival of Weeks (Pentecost), and the

events there were a rehearsal of a future Festival of Weeks. At Mount Sinai, ADONAI's *Torah* was written on stone, the two tablets, and given to Israel. More than a thousand years later, after His death on the cross in 30 CE, Yeshua sent His *Ruach HaKodesh* to dwell in the hearts of the Jews worshiping at the Temple on the Day of *Shavuot*. *Chag HaShavuot*, the Festival of Weeks, was fulfilled when Yeshua's Spirit was given. Simultaneously, the *Torah* was inscribed in the hearts of the three thousand who placed their trust in Him on that day, as they were welcomed as covenant members of Israel's New Covenant. What had previously been inscribed on stone at Mount Sinai was now engraved upon human hearts (Jeremiah 31:32).

Our celebration of *Rosh Hashanah* tonight is a rehearsal, a festival awaiting its fulfillment, as are the other fall Festivals, *Yom Kippur*, *Sukkot*, and *Shemini Atzeret*. Here is ADONAI's command for tonight: 23, 24 "Speak to Bnei-Yisrael, saying: In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you are to have a *Shabbat* rest, a memorial of blowing (*shofarot*), a holy convocation. 25 You are to do no regular work, and you are to present an offering made by fire to Adonai." (Leviticus 23:23b-25 TLV). Tonight at sunset, it became the first day of *Tishrei*, the seventh month, a special *Shabbat*. But the words, *a memorial of blowing (shofarot)*, require explanation. This is translated from the Hebrew, זְכוֹרֹן תְּרוּעָה, *zikron teruah*, which actually means a "memorial of shouting." *Teruah* literally means to make a loud noise, a shout of joy, or an alarm, but through tradition, it has also come to refer to the sound of a *shofar*, a ram's horn, a loud sound signaling excitement, used as a battle cry or joyful shout. As a festival, *Yom Teruah* mainly represents a special Sabbath dedicated to remembrance and the blowing of the *shofar*. *Teruah* is the name of the third of the four different blasts which Johnathan sounded tonight, and is the name we use for this day: *Yom Teruah*, the Day of the *Shofar* Blast. The first sound is *Tekiah*, a blast lasting 2-3 seconds. The second is *Shevarim*, a wailing, mournful sound of three short blasts. *Teruah* is the third, and consists of nine staccato notes. The fourth blast is *Tekiah Gedolah*, the "Great Tekiah," a very long blast held as long as possible.

Jews have been "rehearsing" this day for centuries and have developed numerous traditions, one of which is a day for remembering. Because the word *zikron* in *zikron teruah*, means "memorial," the memorial indicates that there are events connected with this day for us to remember. Certainly, we recall ADONAI's goodness to His Jewish people, along with the fact that He selected them, Israel, as His cherished nation. He liberated us from Egypt, bestowed upon us the *Torah* and *Eretz Yisra'el*, the Promised Land, freed us from Babylonian captivity, and most importantly, He granted us His Son, our Messiah Yeshua. These are just some of the wonderful things that we remember tonight. But in and through all of this, ADONAI also remembers. He remembers each of us as individuals, the hair of our heads individually numbered, and He

has kept a relationship with us, giving His angels charge over us, watching over and responding to the prayers of each person who loves and fears Him.

Another Jewish remembrance observed on *Rosh Hashanah* is the *עֶקְדָה* *Akedah*, the binding of Isaac, a story associated with *Rosh Hashanah* for many hundreds of years. ADONAI instructed Abraham to take his son Isaac to a specific mountain top and sacrifice him, and build an altar on that mountain, *הַר הַמֹּרִיָּה* *Har HaMori'ah*, Mount Moriah. According to tradition, this was the same place where the Temple would be built many years later: *9 Then they came to the place about which God had told him, and Abraham built the altar there, laid out the wood, bound up Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood.* (Genesis 22:9 TLV). *עָקַד* *Aqad* means to tie or bind, and Isaac was tied with cords before being placed on the altar. The usual image of Isaac at this age is as a young boy, but he was actually a man in his mid-thirties who could have easily overpowered his elderly father if he wanted to. But he did not, and he was a willing participant, fully obedient to his father, Abraham. As Abraham raised his hand to strike him, the angel of ADONAI stopped him, convinced that Abraham would have carried out ADONAI's command. Then Abraham saw a ram caught in some bushes, and it became the burnt offering in place of Isaac.

The horn of the ram sacrificed in place of Isaac serves as a connecting symbol, reminding the ancient rabbis of *Rosh Hashanah* because ram's horns were used to make the *shofarot*, sounded on *Yom Teruah*. The *Akedah* has also been related to the Messianic promise of a coming Messiah through an ancient rabbinic tradition that states that the sacrifice of Isaac was actually carried out, with Isaac being sacrificed and afterward brought back to life by ADONAI. In that tradition, Isaac's death was seen as an atonement for Israel, in a sense, a Messianic sacrifice. The *Torah* doesn't say that, but whether or not Isaac was in fact sacrificed and then resurrected, he did rise from the dead. He came back from the dead because his father, Abraham, believed he was dead after receiving the instruction from ADONAI to perform the sacrifice, knowing he would carry it out.

After this, Abraham named the place "*Adonai Yireh*," meaning "ADONAI will see." A possible meaning is that ADONAI sees the coming of the Messiah in the future, an event that Israel has been waiting for thousands of years. Over thousands of years, Isaac, Moses, Joseph, and others have served as types of Messiahs, offering relief for the struggles they faced in their own time. But there is only one Messiah who can provide eternal relief, *Yeshua HaMashiach*, the anointed Son of G-d, who died as a substitutionary sacrifice for every human who would trust in Him. The broader meaning of *ADONAI Yireh* "ADONAI will see to it," is understood as "ADONAI provides," in that a substitute was provided for Isaac.

Reflecting on that ancient rabbinic tradition about Isaac, we see that the early rabbis believed in a substitutionary sacrifice to atone for Israel, something

current Jews do not. We don't believe in human sacrifice either. Still, we acknowledge that there is an authority in the universe Who can approve a sacrifice, אֵל עֶלְיוֹן *El Elyon*, the Most High G-d, the Almighty King of the Universe. He who created the heavens and the earth had always planned to send a Messiah who would die for Israel.

Through Him, the *Mashiach*, the Anointed One who would die for Israel, forgiveness would be available for any sins that were sincerely repented of. In His pre-existing plan, ADONAI foresaw that the Temple in Jerusalem, which succeeded the Tabernacle, would be destroyed, and the sacrificial system He established would no longer be available for Israel's repentance. Around six hundred years before this destruction, He told Israel about a new covenant that was to come in the future. Speaking through *Yirmiyahu HaNavi*, Jeremiah the Prophet, ADONAI said: 32 *"But this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days" —it is a declaration of Adonai— "I will put My Torah within them. Yes, I will write it on their heart. I will be their God and they will be My people. 33 No longer will each teach his neighbor or each his brother, saying: 'Know Adonai,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest." It is a declaration of Adonai. "For I will forgive their iniquity, their sin I will remember no more."* (Jeremiah 31:32-33 TLV). And in 30 CE, the New Covenant was established through Yeshua's sacrificial death on the cross, replacing the bulls and goats and becoming the perfect sacrifice for sin.

In the early centuries, some rabbis saw a suffering Messiah pictured in Scripture and called him *Mashiach ben Yosef*, Messiah, son of Joseph, because Joseph faced hardship in Egypt. But they also recognized another Messiah figure, whom they called *Mashiach ben David*, Messiah, son of David, because the Scriptures depicted him as a deliverer king—a heroic figure who defeated Israel's enemies and brought lasting peace. The rabbis believed these were two different individuals, not realizing they were both the same Messiah. The one they saw as *Mashiach ben Yosef* was Yeshua, Who suffered and died for us, while the king they are waiting for, *Mashiach ben David*—the Messiah King—is also Yeshua. Yeshua, who came to earth as "the suffering servant," will soon return as the conquering king, Son of David.

The *shofar* of *Rosh Hashanah* reminds us of Yeshua as *Mashiach ben David*. There is a medieval Judeo-Persian writing that envisioned a future Messiah and was set forth as the *midrash*, *Ma'ase Dani'el*. *"Messiah ben David* (Son of David), *Eliyahu* (Elijah), and *Zerrubabel*, peace be upon him, will ascend the Mount of Olives. And *Mashiach* will command *Eliyahu* to blow the *shofar*. The light of the six days of Creation will return and be seen, the light of the moon will be like the light of the sun, and Adonai will send full healing to all the sick of *Yisra'el*. The second blast, which *Eliyahu* will blow, will make the dead rise. They will rise from the dust, and each man will recognize his fellow man, and so will husband and wife, father and son, brother and brother. All will

come to the *Mashiach* from the four corners of the earth, from east and from west, from north and from south. The children of *Yisra'el* will fly on the wings of eagles and come to the *Mashiach*.” Much of this is similar to our current understanding of what is to happen and shows that Jews have been having visions of and looking forward to the coming of the Messiah for centuries.

But there is more to remember. The *Hallel* (Praise), Psalms 113-118, are sung during Passover, but also on *Shavuot* and *Sukkot*. The “Gate of ADONAI” is a persistent theme in Judaism, and these verses have drawn attention to it three times each year in the festivals, but also at the *Rosh Chodesh* service, the celebration of the New Moon, twelve times per year. *19 Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and praise Adonai. 20 This is the gate of Adonai— the righteous will enter through it.* (Psalm 118:19-20 TLV). The righteous will enter ADONAI’s gates, symbolically the “gates of heaven,” a scene envisioned by the rabbis. Jewish tradition holds that this gate is open on *Rosh Hashanah*, and during the 24 hours of this festival, ADONAI is especially receptive to *teshuvah*, repentance. Jewish tradition speaks of three books that are opened on *Rosh Hashanah* and sealed on *Yom Kippur*: the book of the righteous, the book of the wicked, and the book of remembrance. We will explore this further in our message tomorrow.

Tonight, what should our reaction be as we consider the meaning of *Rosh HaShanah*? It should not be a time of fear of what is to come, but one of anticipation and looking forward to the coming of our redemption. *Mashiach ben David*, whom we know is *Yeshua HaMashiach*, will return soon. Those of us who have trusted in Yeshua have experienced personal redemption, but there is also corporate redemption coming for us, a time when the wicked things of this world will be put under Yeshua’s feet, and we will live in the paradise of perfect government under our eternal King. But we must also remember that even though we know the Messiah and have the promise of eternal life, regular repentance is necessary. Repentance, *teshuvah* in Hebrew, is a central spiritual theme of *Rosh Hashanah*. The next ten days are known as “The Days of Awe,” the days between *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*. As we approach *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement, *teshuvah* should continue to be our daily meditation.

For us, the most important prophetic significance of *Rosh Hashanah* is the return of the Messiah, and we will develop that idea more fully tomorrow, along with its possible prophetic fulfillment. Tonight, it is the new year 5786, and we are fortunate to be able to celebrate two New Years each year. Tonight, it is the Jewish one, and I close with the wish, *L’shanah Tovah*, “for a good year,” but also, *L'Shanah Tovah Umetukah*, “for a good and sweet year.” *Chag sameach*, “happy holiday!” Happy New Year 5786!