



Erev Rosh Hashanah

September 11, 2026

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L'shanah Tovah! At sundown tonight, the Hebrew calendar entered the year 5787, prompting this greeting, one used for almost two thousand years. It's a New Year greeting that literally says, "for a good year," but we usually shorten it to just *Shana Tovah*. Another year has come and gone in Israel's history since G-d called Abraham and made the Jewish people his special nation. Each year has been important in its own way since that time, and each year brings us closer and closer to the event for which we're all waiting: the return of our Messiah, Yeshua. This year, the worldwide events of 2026 continue to cause concern for almost everyone, and we find ourselves in a situation that requires more answers. The event known as 9/11, which occurred 25 years ago today, was a major wake-up call for those of us living here in the United States. We had lived our lives free from the wars that took place around the globe until we experienced aggression and death on our own soil. But over the past 25 years, we settled back into a more normal way of life until recent months. Looking back on this year and the recent years, we have experienced many disturbing events. Life in the idyllic United States is no longer what it used to be.

Around the world, the Russo-Ukrainian War has been going on since February 24, 2022. It's hard to grasp, but Ukraine is entering its fifth year of full-scale war, and the humanitarian crisis remains immense, with an estimated 10.8 million people in need of humanitarian assistance. Recent long-range missile strikes from both sides continue to inflict a heavy death toll on the civilian populations. Peace talks have not yielded any results. In the Middle East, the United States' war against Iran has been ongoing since February 28th, six months and fourteen days, with no end in sight. And Israel has been experiencing attacks from Hamas and Hezbollah for decades, including a devastating attack on October 7, 2023, and missile attacks from Iran and the Houthis. In addition, there is ongoing, almost daily Palestinian violence against Israeli citizens within the country. Turkey has recently entered the war of words, siding with Iran, which has also received physical assistance from Russia and China in their war with the United States, bringing to mind the prophesied Gog and Magog War. There are many other conflicts going on in the world, many of which have been and continue to be directly caused by militant Islamic groups. Not the least of the worrying developments is the viral rise in anti-semitism. Even our own Rabbi Jonathan Cahn has been featured in world news as a victim of an antisemitic attack: From Worthy News, September 10, 2026, entitled: "Antisemitic Midair Attack Forces American Airlines Flight 618 to Divert." It states: "Jonathan Cahn, the bestselling Messianic Jewish rabbi and author, has stated that he was the previously unidentified passenger who was the target of a violent incident on American Airlines Flight 618, adding that the confrontation involved an explicit antisemitic threat, attacks on his faith, and a physical struggle which in the end led to the flight being diverted to Baltimore." Jeremiah told Israel: "We cry peace, peace, when there is no peace!" (Jeremiah 6:14; 8:11). It was the giving of false hope in a world that was failing, one much like ours today. But what would we expect? Yeshua said: 6 *"You will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must happen, but it is not yet the end. 7 For nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. 8 But all these things are only the beginning of*

birth pains.” (Matthew 24:6-8 TLV). He said that almost two thousand years ago, and we have seen wars and rumors of wars over the years, building to a crescendo, with the climax seeming near.

Each year, since the Messianic Jewish Movement began in the 1960s and we began to learn more about the *Torah* and its Jewish background, we ask ourselves, “Will this be the year?” The year we’re thinking of is when Yeshua returns for His bride, those who have trusted in Him since His first coming. In 50 or 51 CE, Sha’ul was thinking about it and wrote his first letter to the Thessalonians, including these verses: *13 Now we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who are asleep, so that you may not grieve like the rest who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Yeshua died and rose again, so with Him God will also bring those who have fallen asleep in Yeshua.* (1 Thessalonians 4:13-14 TLV). Sha’ul was a Pharisee, a member of a group that believed in bodily resurrection at the end of the age. They had probably relied somewhat on Isaiah, where he said: *2 It will come about in that day, Adonai will thresh from the channel of the River to the Wadi of Egypt, and you will be gathered one by one, Bnei-Yisrael. 13 It will also come about in that day, a great shofar will be blown. Those perishing in the land of Assyria and the exiles in the land of Egypt will come and worship Adonai on the holy mountain in Jerusalem.* (Isaiah 27:12-13 TLV). He also encountered Yeshua, who we believe gave him more information. Just about twenty years after Yeshua’s death, His followers were beginning to ask, “Will it be soon?” Six or seven years later (53-57 CE), Sha’ul wrote to the Corinthians: *22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Messiah will all be made alive. 23 But each in its own order: Messiah the firstfruits; then, at His coming, those who belong to Messiah; 24 then the end, when He hands over the kingdom to God the Father after He has destroyed all rule and all authority and power.* (1 Corinthians 15:22-24 TLV). But this time Sha’ul was prompted by doctrinal error. Some in the Corinthian congregation were saying, “There is no resurrection from the dead.” We find this true today, especially among Jehovah’s Witnesses, liberal mainline Protestants from several denominations, and others. Surveys indicate that about 25% of self-identified Christians do not believe in the resurrection from the dead. But we do! We are Bible-thumpers, those who strictly hold to the truth of ADONAI’s Word as we best understand it.

But in writing these letters, wasn’t Sha’ul also thinking of *Yom Teruah* (Leviticus 23:23-25), the Festival of Trumpets and the *shofar* call? The term *Rosh Hashanah* had not yet come into use, and it would be another 150 years before this phrase was commonly used. I believe he was thinking about *Yom Teruah*, and that his Pharisee beliefs likely stemmed from ADONAI’s command in Leviticus 23 to observe the festival. We Messianics believe that this festival is a figurative prediction of what Sha’ul wrote about, actually a rehearsal for an event that will occur at the end of the age. To the Thessalonians, he wrote: *15 For this we tell you, by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord shall in no way precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself shall come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the blast of God’s shofar, and the dead in Messiah shall rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left behind, will be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air—and so we shall always be with the Lord.* (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 TLV). This makes it clear that those who have died in Messiah will rise first, and this will happen after a shout from the archangel and the blast from G-d’s *shofar*. To the Corinthians, he had written: *50 Now I say this, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, and what decays cannot inherit what does not decay. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last shofar. For the shofar will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed. 53 For this*

corruptible must put on incorruptibility, and this mortal must put on immortality. (1 Corinthians 15:50-53 TLV). The time is near when we will rise to meet our Messiah in the air. *Sha'ul* may have used these words metaphorically, but until we have more evidence, we continue to hold to the physical interpretation that we will rise to meet Yeshua. But we have no doubt that we will be physically changed and receive resurrection bodies. (Philippians 3:20-21). Whether a group of Yeshua's followers views this as physical or symbolic, both groups generally agree on the ultimate theological meaning: these passages promise Yeshua's ultimate triumph, the resurrection of the dead, and the eternal unity of believers with ADONAI. We believe in the resurrection from the dead and that it is near, a time when we will receive bodies much like Yeshua's after rising from the dead, bodies that will enable us to live with Him for eternity. The world is growing increasingly evil.

How much more can this world take? As *Sha'ul* told the Thessalonians: *18 Therefore encourage one another with these words* (1 Thessalonians 4:18 TLV), words that remind us that our resurrection is near. The message of *Yom Teruah/Rosh Hashanah* is a message of hope. In its most basic sense, it says another year has passed on the Jewish calendar, but spiritually, it offers encouragement and hope to those who truly believe. And you and I do. So, be encouraged! Yeshua is coming soon. Today, we frequently ask Him, as stated in our *Torah* Service, "When will you reign in Zion? May it be soon, and in our day!" Three times in the final chapter of the Book of Revelation, Yeshua said, "*I am coming soon*" (Revelation 24:7, 12, and 20). So, be encouraged! Our redemption is near! *Shana Tovah!*