



Rosh Hashanah

September 12, 2026

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L'shanah Tovah! Last evening, we reflected on the state of the world and the rise of antisemitism, yet held fast to the hope that we will soon be united with Yeshua, as *Sha'ul* reveals in 1 Corinthians 15 and 1 Thessalonians 4. Despite all the negative things we reported last night, we know that ADONAI has not forsaken the Jews of the world who do not know Yeshua. We, His Messianic body, are connected to them as *mishpacha*, family. Through *Sha'ul*, ADONAI spoke of the group called the “Commonwealth of Israel” (Ephesians 2), the complete body of those who love ADONAI, both Jew and Gentile, some who have trusted in Yeshua and others who have not. We in Messianic Judaism love, bless, and pray for our Jewish brothers and sisters who do not yet know Yeshua, especially at this time of year, as many are seeking G-d and spiritual answers for the new year.

This season and the New Year remind us of the events ADONAI has placed in His *Torah* to show us what He requires of us. They are His *moedim*, His annual festivals, which He has set at various times throughout the year. References appear throughout Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, but they first appear in the *Torah*, the five books of Moses. As Messianic disciples of Yeshua, we understand that commemorating His festivals matters in several ways. Through these annual observances, we remain united with ADONAI's Spirit, the *Ruach Kodesh*, as He leads us on our life pilgrimage while we await our Messiah's return, and we understand that observing these days does not save us. No one can be saved by keeping laws. But the *Torah* is much more than a set of laws. Although laws are included, the definition of *Torah* is “teaching” or “instruction.” Studying and observing ADONAI's festivals is how we learn what ADONAI wants us to do and how to worship Him. Worship is one of the most important purposes of the *moedim*.

ADONAI has given us five major *moedim*: two in the spring and three in the fall. The spring festivals are the Feast of Unleavened Bread (*Matzah*) and Pentecost (*Shavuot*). Associated with and a part of the Feast of Unleavened Bread are Passover and Firstfruits. As followers of Yeshua, we can see that He has already fulfilled these spring festivals. The Feast of Unleavened Bread and Passover, which took place in Egypt, were fulfilled by Yeshua when He died as our Passover lamb. *Shavuot*, which occurs 50 days after Passover, was fulfilled 10 days after Yeshua ascended to His Father, when His *Ruach HaKodesh* was poured out on his disciples. According to Jewish tradition, the first *Shavuot* occurred at Mount Sinai, when ADONAI gave Israel the *Torah*, His Word written on stone tablets. But rather than passing away, the *Torah* originally written on stone has been written on the hearts of those who have trusted Yeshua and become covenant partners in the New Covenant. (Jeremiah 31:32).

Moed in Hebrew מועד, (plural, *moedim*) means convocation, assembly, and appointed time. It is a time when G-d has commanded us to assemble before Him. We also believe that “rehearsal” can be derived as well, meaning that the festivals performed in ancient Israel according to the *Torah*, including the sacrifices, are types or shadows of a coming or final fulfillment. The sacrifice of a lamb in Egypt, with its blood placed on the doorposts of the houses, caused the Death Angel to pass over the people inside. This was a shadow of the fulfillment of Yeshua's death as our Passover Lamb, with His blood bringing permanent atonement to those who trust. In the same way, *Shavuot* at Mount Sinai, 50 days after leaving Egypt, when the *Torah* was given to Israel, was a shadow of the *Shavuot* following

Yeshua's death on the cross in the first century. At the first-century fulfillment, the believers received the Holy Spirit, and the *Torah* was written on their hearts.

Can you see the importance of appearing at ADONAI's appointed times, as He commanded us in Scripture? If we understand that committing to follow Yeshua and being saved is only the beginning, not the end, we can enter the "servanthood" He requires of all His followers. During our servanthood, Yeshua teaches and guides us throughout our life with Him. In Leviticus 23, ADONAI calls the festivals "My appointed times." They are His way to remind His people that He is L-rd of the calendar, the King of creation, and the Ruler over time, past, present, and future. He established His special times to meet with us in a particular way to commemorate events in His dealings with humanity. When we commemorate the festivals, we reinforce the relationship He established with us and honor His sovereignty over us.

We are gathered before ADONAI today for *Yom Teruah*, the Festival of Trumpets, also called *Rosh Hashanah*, the first of the three unfulfilled fall festivals. The upcoming holy days are *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement, and *Sukkot*, the Festival of Tabernacles or Booths. All of these days fall in the 7th month, a number that is highly significant in ADONAI's symbolism, representing completeness. We also know that we can't keep these festivals according to the *Torah* because this can be done only when there is a functioning Tabernacle or Temple, and then only in Israel. And of course, we are not in Jerusalem, where these festivals are to be held. They are not commanded to be performed anywhere other than in Jerusalem. But even though we are not in Jerusalem, our presence here today commemorates this festival, *Yom Teruah*, even though it is not an actual observance. Still, it is a very important event for us because it rehearses an upcoming event whose spiritual fulfillment we eagerly await, as *Sha'ul* describes in 1 Thessalonians 4 and 1 Corinthians 15.

One of the primary Scriptures for this festival is found in Leviticus 23. It is given no name, but is described this way: 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.*" (Leviticus 23:24 TLV). The TLV translators put it this way, but the Hebrew actually reads *zichron teruah*, זִכְרוֹן תְּרוּעָה, "a memorial of blasting," understood to mean a trumpet or *shofar* blast. From this description, it has been called *Yom Teruah*, or "Day of Shouting," with shouting meaning the *shofar* blasts. The question is asked: Is this festival a foreshadowing of *Sha'ul*'s words in 1 Thessalonians 4, where he writes: 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 4:16-17 TLV). We believe it is. May it be so, and may it be soon!

Rosh Hashanah, meaning "head of the year," is not mentioned in the written Scripture. If it was heard in the 1st century CE, it came from the Oral *Torah*, which Yeshua and His disciples rejected. We use it today as Jewish tradition. Historically, the name *Rosh Hashanah* appears in writing only after 200 CE, when the *Mishnah* was written down, and it became the Head of the Year for Jews. ADONAI set *Aviv* as the starting month of His calendar year (Exodus 12:1-2). The name was later changed to *Nisan* during the Babylonian Captivity. The understanding of *Rosh Hashanah* as the head of the year does not change that, but designates 1 *Tishrei* as the beginning of the Hebrew civil calendar, a time when certain business transactions occurred, an addition to the calendar made by the rabbis. The civil calendar of ancient Israel also had two other new years: the new year for the tithing of fruit trees in the month of *Shevat* (January/February) and the new year for the tithing of cattle on the 1st of the month of *Elul*, the month preceding *Tishrei*. The word "shout" in Leviticus 23 is the Hebrew word *teruah*, and over the centuries it has come to be understood as a *shofar*

blast, actually nine or more short, staccato blasts. For centuries, this day has been announced with *shofar* blasts, and its future fulfillment seems to be intimately related to the sound of the *shofar*.

In addition to this day's importance as a *moed*, an annual festival, it also has added importance every seven years. The *Shemittah* (the Sabbatical year) is the seventh year in repeating cycles of seven years. In the current cycle, today marks the beginning of the 5th year, with the next Sabbatical year beginning on *Rosh Hashanah*, 2028. It is first mentioned in Exodus 23, where it says: 10 *"For six years you are to sow your land and gather the increase. 11 But during the seventh year you are to let it rest and lie fallow, so that the poor among your people may eat. Whatever they leave behind, the animals of the field may eat. You are to deal with your vineyard and your olive grove in the same way."* (Exodus 23:10-11 TLV). More information is given in Leviticus 25:1-7, and Israel is commanded not to sow crops or prune their fruit trees during the seventh year, as this is to be a year of complete rest for the land. It is also called a *Shabbat* to ADONAI: 4 *"But in the seventh year there is to be a Shabbat rest for the land—a Shabbat to Adonai. You are not to sow your field or prune your vineyard."* Leviticus 25:4 TLV). Then, in Deuteronomy 15, verses 1-11, further instructions are given, with the main point that debts are forgiven. These instructions apply only within the Land of Israel. It is made clear by this: 2 *"Speak to Bnei-Yisrael and tell them: When you come into the land which I give you, then the land is to keep a Shabbat to Adonai."* (Leviticus 25:2 TLV). If we are not in the Land and are not farmers there, what importance does this day have for us, as followers of Yeshua living outside the Land of Israel? We will answer this question.

Those of us who have worshipped within Messianic Judaism for some time have learned that much spiritual understanding comes from G-d's calling of Abraham, the ongoing story of his descendants, and a Hebraic understanding of the Scriptures He gave to Israel. Many in Yeshua's body of followers do not understand this concept, yet it is essential to understanding how ADONAI wants each individual believer in Yeshua to relate to Him. *Shemittah*, the 7th-year Sabbatical, is an important *Torah* principle that helps us understand ADONAI's plan for mankind. He has given each of us free will, and we are free to choose Him or to reject Him. For those who choose Him, He gives even more information and helps them understand the Scriptures, which He has given through His chosen Nation, Israel. The principles of the *Shemittah* are primarily about ADONAI's mercy toward His people, so that their lives would be made easier when they were obedient to His Word. Even allowing the land to rest for a year directly affects future fertility and good harvests. This is a spiritual principle even for those of us who are not in Israel and not directly required to carry out the *Torah* commands of agriculture. We must realize that obeying Him brings benefits: the responses of a loving Father. The cycle of seven we find in the *Shemittah* repeats many other times in ADONAI's instructions to us. A Google search shows that the number seven, seventh, and sevenfold appear from Genesis to Revelation 860 times. In the Body of Messiah, "seven" is understood to be the number of both physical and spiritual completeness and perfection. First found in Genesis, it is directly tied to ADONAI's creation of all things. Just as He created for six days and rested on the seventh, we are commanded to work for six days and rest on the seventh. This is not just any day we choose, but the "seventh" day. In our calendar, we know exactly which day is the seventh: Saturday. Similarly, Israel is commanded to work the land for six years and, on the seventh, allow themselves and the land to rest. By resting on the Sabbath day, as Leviticus 23 specifies should be observed everywhere on earth, and by observing the Sabbatical year in Israel, ADONAI's people, the Jews, endorse His message that He directs the events of the world. And we understand that it is only through His grace that we, as individuals, have the ability to accomplish anything. Two seven-day festivals are types and shadows of future events, namely the 7 days of the

Festival of Unleavened Bread and the 7 days of the Festival of Tabernacles. It is also significant that we are gathered here today on the first day of the “seventh” month.

One of the bestselling religious books in the United States, Rabbi Jonathan Cahn’s *The Harbinger*, which has now been around for fifteen years, points out that the United States’ two greatest financial shocks occurred in successive Hebrew *Shemittah* years following the 9/11 Islamic terror attacks on the United States 25 years ago. They did not occur at the beginning of each *Shemittah* year, but at the end of the years in 2001 and 2008, both on the 29th day of *Elul*, the last day of those *Shemittah* years. Rabbi Cahn sees this as a series of limited judgments resulting from the United States turning away from G-d, just as ancient Israel did before their dispersion. Notably, both the 2015 and 2022 *Shemittah* years coincided with major global financial disruptions. While mainstream economists view these events as normal market cycles driven by inflation, geopolitical conflict, or monetary policy, proponents of the *Shemittah* theory regard them as part of a historical pattern of economic resets that occur every seven years. At the end of the *Shemittah* year 2015, the Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped over 1,000 points at the opening bell in a flash crash, causing widespread panic. Oil prices also fell sharply, wiping out roughly 70% of their value over the broader 2014-2015 cycle. The year 2022 culminated in one of the worst historical performances for a combined stock and bond portfolio, with the S&P 500 falling roughly 18% to 27% over the cycle, marking a severe correction. Additionally, the composite bond market suffered its second-worst year on record, dropping around 20% as central banks aggressively raised interest rates to combat inflation. Rabbi Jonathan wrote a sequel about the *Shemittah* entitled *The Mystery of the Shemittah*, released in 2014. His eleventh book, each of which debuted on the New York Times Bestseller List, has just been released: *The Dragon’s Prophecy: Israel, the Dark Resurrection, and the End of Days*. I haven’t read this book yet, but I look forward to it. All of Rabbi Jonathan’s books help draw attention to Yeshua’s followers in the United States and to our collective need for revival, a call to repentance.

Another spiritual application of *Shemittah* is forgiveness, because forgiving debts foreshadows the forgiveness of transgressions. Unforgiveness may be a condition that is rampant in the Body of Messiah. The principle of release applies to forgiveness because it releases not only the person holding the grudge, but also the person who is forgiven. We can even cause physical illness by holding onto bitter unforgiveness, and forgiving can set us free. In Matthew 6, we find *Tefilat HaTalmidim*, the Disciple’s Prayer. In this prayer, we ask our Father to forgive us. We say: 12 *And forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors.* (Matthew 6:12 TLV). But many times we stop there and still hold unforgiveness against others, either ignoring or overlooking verses 14 and 15, where Yeshua says: 14 *“For if you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions.* Many of us are walking around functioning as members of the Body of Messiah, carrying unforgiven sin in our lives- the sin of unforgiveness. This prevents Yeshua from forgiving us for the sins we confess. It’s very clear—unless we forgive, ADONAI will not forgive. As we enter this season with our repentance, asking Yeshua to forgive us for our sins, we must forgive others so we can be forgiven and walk righteously before our G-d.

The piercing sound of the *shofar* evokes many emotions in our spirit. We have focused on repentance for the past 29 days of the month of *Elul*, leading up to *Rosh Hashanah*, and we feel sorrow for our sinful ways as we hear these sounds, with hope for the future uppermost in our minds. But now is also a time to understand the intimate relationship we are to have with Yeshua. An event in the Book of John describes the kind of loving relationship we are to have with Him. After His resurrection but before His ascension, *Shimon Kefa* (Simon Peter) and six other of Yeshua’s disciples, again the number 7, were fishing in the Sea of Tiberias. They fished all night but caught nothing. As dawn broke, they saw

Yeshua standing on the shore, but they didn't recognize Him. He asked if they had any fish; after they said no, he told them to cast their net on the right side of their boat, and they would catch some. They did, and there were so many fish in it that they couldn't haul it in. Yochanan (John) recognized Yeshua and said, "It's the L-rd." When Kefa heard this, he swam to shore, and the others followed in the boat. When they all got ashore, they saw a fire with a fish cooking on it and some bread. Yeshua told them to bring some of the fish they had just caught and then to come have breakfast. They all knew it was Yeshua but were afraid to ask Him. After breakfast, Yeshua asked Peter, "*Shim'on Bar-Yochanan* (Simon, son of John), do you love me more than these?" The Greek text tells us that the word is *agape*, asking him if he loved Him. *Agape* love is the highest and most spiritual form of love, the love of the *Shema*, "with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our strength" (Mark 12:29-30). Yeshua asked, *Shimon*, do you *agapas* me? We understand they were not conversing in Greek, but that this is a translation from the Hebraic language they were speaking. If Peter had *agape* love for Yeshua, it would have been a love above all things and all people, even himself! But Kefa's response was that he had *phileo* love, brotherly love, for Yeshua. He said: "Yes, L-rd, You know I *phileo* You." Yeshua asked him a second time, "Do you *agapas* me?" and again Peter responded: "L-rd, You know I *phileo* You; I'm Your friend; I have brotherly love for You." Yeshua asked him a third time, and this time He used *phileo*, asking, "Are you my friend?" Kefa was a little hurt, and he responded, "Yes, L-rd, I *phileo* You; You are my friend." Three times Yeshua got the same answer. Did He get the answer He was seeking from Peter? Didn't Yeshua wish Kefa to say, "Yes, Lord, I *agapas* You?" Isn't that most likely?

Consider the possibility that *Shimon Kefa* in this passage is a picture of Yeshua's body, the "Bride of Messiah." If Yeshua were to ask each of us, "Do you *agapas* Me?" what would our answer be? Each must answer this question personally, and our response may relate to how we are serving Him. Peter's responses seem to indicate a lower level of obedience, but his later actions as a leader were fully aligned with *agape* love for his Messiah. More than anything we can do or say, our personal relationship with our Messiah most affects how we, as members of His body, serve Him. On *Rosh Hashanah* this year, reflect on these things.

This new year of 5787 may prove to be very different for us, possibly a year of change in our nation. We don't know what it holds, but it is also a year of opportunity for each of us to be part of. May we deepen our commitment to Yeshua, loving Him and the Father with *agape* love. Praying that you have a good year! May 5787 be not only a good year for each of us personally, but also a great year for building Yeshua's Kingdom. *L'Shana Tovah!*