

GOD'S APPOINTED TIMES - SUKKOT

"WE AWAIT THE TRUMPET SOUND" I COR 15: 50-58 The Autumn Harvest period is not just a jolly time but as one of God's APPOINTED TIMES - it is Holy unto the Lord. It starts with the Feast of Trumpets - a joyful day! This starts a 10 day period of soul searching called "The Days of Awe" leading up to the Day of Atonement. This period is the critical time of the year when the sins of Israel would be dealt with. All the sins of commission and sins of omission would be wiped away in the blood sacrifice involving the two Goats – or so they hope!

ROSH HASHANAH, or FEAST OF TRUMPETS (YOM T'RUAACH) For the Jewish people Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year is a joyous holiday of prayer, repentance, sounding of the Shofar, and festive meals. It falls on the first day of the 7th month of Tishrei is considered the first day of the Jewish calendar year. Despite the fact that Tishrei is referred to in the Torah as the seventh month (the first being the month of Nissan) Rosh Hashanah represents the start of the new year for many Jewish cycles including the 7-year shmitah (agricultural sabbatical), and 50 year Jubilee.

Rosh Hashanah is the only festive holiday celebrated for two consecutive days in the Land of Israel. During the two days, Jews in Israel and abroad will spend the majority of their time in community synagogues, engulfed in prayer and repentance.

Jewish tradition. The Rosh Hashanah festival traditionally celebrates the yearly re-coronation of G-d of as the King of the world, with the Jewish people re-establishing their role as the King's loyal servants. The first day of the month

of Tishrei is associated with the anniversary of the sixth day of the world's creation, the day on which Adam, the first man was created. Rosh Hashanah also begins the Ten Days of Repentance, which culminate with Yom Kippur.

The Shofar. One of the most important aspects of the traditional service includes the blowing of the Shofar, or ram's horn. The sounds of the shofar represent crying, and are intended to bring each individual toward deep introspection and repentance.

Good Deeds. The Jewish New Year unlike Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, includes festive meals as a central component of the Holy Day. Honey and apples, which now are in season in Israel, symbolize the hope and traditional Rosh Hashanah greeting for a Shana Tova U'Metukah, or a sweet new year. Rosh Hashanah traditions include eating certain foods that are considered as good signs, or omens. The foods are considered reminders to a person that receiving good things is dependent on his doing good deeds, on which he is judged on the new year, which also is called the Day of Judgment. This is the necessary understanding one needs when talking to Jewish people. For the hopes in their own good works are entirely misplaced. But how many others trust in their own goodness.

Israeli grown pomegranates are very popular on the holiday, as some say their sweet and plentiful seeds number 613, the same number of mitzvot listed in the Torah according to the sage Maimonides. Giving thanks for pomegranates, they say, "May it be Your will... that our merits increase as the seeds of the pomegranate."

YOM TROAH - ROSH HASHANA

The Day involved the blowing of the Shofar (Rams Horn) as a memorial (Heb. 'Zikron') that this day is the start of another new year.

Tishrei means 'beginnings.' Distinct from Silver trumpets blown in the temple each day and at a new moon. (Num 10:10)

Significance of Shofar.

1. Torah (Law) given at Sinai to the sound of the Shofar (Ex 19:19) It announces good news.
2. Israel defeated Jericho to the sound of Shofar (Josh 6:20) It declared impending defeat for their enemies.
3. It was a signal for Israel to gather during war (Jud 3:27; 2 Sam 20:1) Fear gripped all hearts.
4. Watchmen blew Shofar to warn of impending danger (Amos 3:6; Jer 6:1; Ezek 33:6)
5. But not always a fearful sound. Blown at the start of Jubilee year (Lev 25:9) Sign of joy.
6. Accession of a new king - Solomon (1 Kg 1:39) Declaring the arrival of a new age.
7. A reminder that God is sovereign (Ps 47:5)
8. Ingathering of the exiles (Isa 27:13) Celebrating reunification.
9. Messiah comes to the sound of Shofar (Zech 9:14) Indicating the dawn of a new age.

Traditionally, the sounding of the Shofar has been a memorial (Reminder) for the Jewish people of God's faithfulness to Abraham. The ram's horn is a reminder of Abraham's attempt to sacrifice Isaac and God's provision of a ram as a substitute. Gen 22:13 But what happened to the Feast of Trumpets? From the giving of the Law at Sinai to the return from exile there is no mention of the Feast. Silence however is not a good indicator. The good Kings of Israel eg Josiah, made sure they did everything right (2 Chr 34:21) But there is no mention of Yom Troah - only Passover. Ezra is thought to have re-introduced it after the return but scripture is silent on the matter.

RECAP ON THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS.

10 days after holiday of repentance – the Feast of Trumpets (Yom Troah) comes the Day of

Atonement. Atonement can only follow true repentance. Interestingly, 'a statute forever' or perpetually has the implication of a limited period of time. It has a beginning and will end when replaced by something better. In Greek, 'forever' means forever and ever. It has an eternal dimension distinct from Hebrew. A new age of forgiveness is anticipated. Both, Yom Troah and Atonement precede Tabernacles, the season of Joy. But you can't have joy until sin is dealt with. And sin is not dealt with on the Day of Atonement! The Benefits of Day of Atonement were short lived. It lasted as long as the faithfulness of Israel! Real name is 'Yom HaKippurim,' or day of covering or concealing otherwise called 'The Fast.' The Talmud shortened to "The Day." This Day of Atonement hides rather than takes away sin but there would come a new day when real cleansing would be possible by it could only be by a Substitutionary Blood Sacrifice.

Leviticus deals with rules and Laws but it is Grace that flows through this book since God knew that Israel could never match up to the requirements. The Day of Atonement and the sacrificial system are an expression of God's grace and compassion. Law is seen too often as a hard taskmaster and yet it is referred to as 'good' in Rom 7:12. Jesus Christ is the full realisation of Grace and truth (Jn 1:17)

FULL IMPACT OF NT EMPHASIS.

Blowing of the Shofar is at the time of greatest darkness (new moon) This is significant for NT teaching on end times. Jesus spoke of the relationship between trumpets and His coming. In Matt 24:31 "And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

In the book of Revelation there are many references. There is a Trumpet at the start of the Revelation of Jesus Christ. "I was in the

Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet," Rev 1:10 + Rev 4:1; Rev 8:13 The 7 Trumpets follow 7 Seals followed by 7 Bowls. Also Rev 9:14

At the last trumpet which presumably is the 7th trumpet of Rev 11:15 "...the dead in Christ shall arise etc (1 Thess 4:13) "...in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for

the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed". 1 Cor 15:52 This autumn feast or "Appointed Time" is a truly wonderful time of anticipation but also a time for us to put things right, get prepared and encourage one another "...and the more so as we see that day approach."

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