

Feast of Trumpets

A Biblical Festival Quick Reference Sheet

Also Known As:

- **Feast of Trumpets:** God named the other holidays, ie. Sabbath, Passover, Day of Atonement; however, this holiday has no name. The Scripture refers to it simply as “Zikhron Teruah” (reminder by blowing of trumpets), so it became known in English as the Feast of Trumpets.
- **Rosh Hashanah** (*Head of the Year*)/**Jewish New Year:** The first month begins in the Biblical month of Nisan, but the year number changes on Feast of Trumpets, thus making it the beginning of the new year.
- **Yom Teruah** (*the day of the sounding of the shofar*): In ancient days, the shofar was blown quite often, but now, the shofar is usually only blown during the month of Elul (once each day), on the Feast of Trumpets, and once on the Day of Atonement.
- **Day of Remembrance:** Leviticus 23 says this is a day of “remembrance with shofar blasts.”

Time of Year:

Fall, September or October. Feast of Trumpets is on the first day of the seventh Biblical month (Tishri), which is on the new moon, ten days before the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) and fifteen days before the Feast of Booths (Sukkot).

Scripture References:

Leviticus 23: 23-25, Numbers 29:1, Ezra 3:1,6, Nehemiah 7:73, 8:2, Psalm 81:4

Themes:

A time of remembrance

- Leviticus 23 does not say what this day is in remembrance of. Possibilities include:
 - God's grace to Abraham when God substituted a ram to be sacrificed instead of Isaac.
 - God's compassion to Sarah, Rachel and Hannah. It is said that God unlocked their wombs on this day.
 - The revelation and giving of the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai that was accompanied by shofar blasts.
 - The future Messianic ingathering of Israel, which will be accompanied by a shofar blast.
 - The forthcoming great Day of Judgment.

A time of repentance (teshuvah)

- Repentance is not just changing one's mind, it is changing one's behavior.
- Feast of Trumpets provides an opportunity to repent and start over.
- Feast of Trumpets was the day on which Ezra chose to reintroduce the Torah to the Jews who returned from the Babylonian exile, and as a result, Israel repented. (See Nehemiah 8.)
- This is a special day when God welcomes our prayers and repentance, and judges us with compassion.

A time of making things right. A day to:

- Focus on one's relationship with God and with others.
- Reflect over the past year; repent; apologize, and make amends where possible.
- Make things right in preparation for the coming Day of Atonement. The ten days between the two festivals are referred to as the “Days of Awe” or the “Ten Days of Repentance.”

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A time of judgement. A day:

- Of judgment for all mankind. Each person is judged for all of his actions concerning this world. This judgment does not refer to the judgment a person will face after death.
- Traditionally, when the Books in heaven are opened, where the good and bad deeds of men are written. The books are said to close on the Day of Atonement.

A day of beginnings

- It is a day to review one's year and begin anew. It is the beginning of the process of taking responsibility for one's actions and thoughts, both good and bad, and to take the necessary steps for change in the upcoming year.
- Traditionally, the day on which Adam was believed to have been created.
- It is said that Joseph was freed from prison on this day.
- It is said that the slavery of the Hebrews in Egypt ceased on this day (six months before the redemption at Passover).

Coronation Day

- Feast of Trumpets is the day on which the years of kings were counted.
- Regardless of what day the king of Israel became ruler, the coronation was on the Feast of Trumpets, near living water.

A day to hear the shofar

- It was customary to sound the shofar to glorify a king and to proclaim one's subservience to him. Likewise, we proclaim God's sovereignty, accept His dominion and recognize that He judges the entire world.
- The sound of the shofar instills a sense of trepidation and fear which should lead us to humble ourselves before God.
- The sound of the shofar is likened to an alarm which warns people to wake up and repent.

A Harvest Festival

- Feast of Trumpets is celebrated as the fall harvest is being brought in.

Messianic Significance:

- Just as the Feast of Trumpets is celebrated by blowing the shofar, Messiah's second coming will be inaugurated by the blast of a shofar. (See Matthew 24:31.) When the shofar is blown, the ingathering of the exiles will take place, and the dead will be resurrected. (See Isaiah 27:13 & 18:3.)

Traditions:

It is customary to:

- Wish one another, "May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year, for good life immediately."
- Stand and hear the shofar blown, traditionally, 100 times.
- Wear a new article of clothing.
- Visit a source of living water and empty one's pockets of bread crumbs in a symbolic gesture of casting away sin. This is referred to as Tashlich (*you will cast*) derived from Micah 7:18-20, "And you will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea."

Foods:

- Apples (a symbol of provision and health)
- Honey (a symbol of hope for a sweet new year)
- Round Challah (a reminder of the cyclical nature of life and resembles a crown)
- Other foods include beets, leeks, squash, dates, pomegranates and a head of a fish.

Scripture Readings:

Psalm 47 (before the sounding of the shofar), Genesis 21 & 22, 1 Samuel 1:1-2:10, Jeremiah 31:2-20

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