



The Fall Festivals

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In this article, we will study the appointed days of the L-rd which take place in the seventh month. There are four special festivals which are in this month. According to the names given in the Torah, they are the Day of Sounding or the Memorial of the Sounding, the Day of Atonements, the feast of Tabernacles, and the Eight Day Assembly. Where as the festivals which occur in the Spring clearly related to Messiah's Yeshua's First Coming, many authorities believe that the Fall festivals relate to His Second Coming. To this view I offer a word of caution. While it is true that Yeshua did something significant on each of the Spring festivals:

Passover— He offered His life as the Passover sacrifice.

Resheet— He rose from the dead, the day that the counting of the omer began.

Pentecost (Shavuot)— He gave His Spirit on the conclusion of the omer period.

However; this does not mean that on each of the Fall festivals Yeshua will act in some specific manner similar to those significant events that He did on each of the Spring festivals. Rather, it is my opinion that the Fall festivals reveal theological truth that will help the reader understand major events that will take place in the Last Days.

Let us now embark in a brief study of each of the Fall festivals with the objective to learn the theological message that these appointed times reveal.

The Day (or Memorial) of the Sounding

This festival is commonly called today Rosh HaShanah or the Jewish New Year. However, in the Torah there are two similar names given to this appointed day. In Leviticus 23:24, the term זכרון תרועה appears, which means the Memorial of Sounding. The term "sounding" refers to the sounding of the Ram's Horn, i.e. the Shofar. The term יום תרועה (Yom Teruah), the Day of Sounding, is found in Numbers 29:2. Once again, the emphasis of this festival relates to the Shofar. The fact that the Sages of Judaism mandated that Genesis chapter 22 be read on this festival explains a great deal. This chapter is about Abraham's offering up Izchak (Isaac). At the last moment, the Angel commands Abraham not to harm his son, but there is provided in place of Izchak a ram, which is caught by his horns. It is in memorial to this event that the Shofar is sounded. What is the theological significance of this festival?

Izchak is known as the child of the promise (see Paul's teaching in Galatians 4:23). This means that the Ram was provided by G-d so that the covenantal promises which G-d had made to Abraham would not die. Hence, on the festival of the Sounding, communing called the **Feast of Trumpets**, one should remember what HaShem provided so the one that has faith, like Abraham, can receive the outcome of the Covenant, i.e. the Kingdom.

It is not a coincidence that it is the Sounding of a Trumpet which will accompany what Paul calls our blessed hope (also known as the Rapture). I shy away from making a statement like others that the Rapture will occur on the Feast of Trumpets; rather, I prefer to state that it is possible to understand many truths concerning the Rapture from what one learns from the Feast of Trumpets.

An interesting question concerning this festival is why do the Sages call this day, Rosh HaShanah? The common response is that there are four different New Years in Judaism. **New Year for kings and the holiday year:** This means that on the first of Nissan (the first month on the Biblical calendar) that a king was given an additional year and it was on the first of Nissan that the Holiday cycle began again.

New Year for tithing animals: On the first day of the sixth month (Elul) each animal would be given an additional year.

New Year for trees: On the fifteenth day of the eleventh month (Sh'vat) all trees would be given an additional year. This was to assist in fulfilling the commandment concerning trees not to eat of its produce for three years and in the fourth year give all the produce to the L-rd and only in the fifth year was a tree treated in the normal manner for trees.

Rosh HaShanah: This is the first day of the seventh month. Instead of sharing with you here the traditional explanations, allow me to present a more mystical view. The Hebrew word ראש Rosh can mean: head, chief, beginning. The Hebrew word שנה means year, but is derived from the Hebrew verbal root for change. Hence, Rosh HaShanah can also be understood as **The Beginning of Change**. The point which I would like to make is that the Fall festivals all relate to a Kingdom Change that is coming and it is our Messiah, Yeshua Who will act in the midst of these changes to ultimately bring about His Kingdom.

The Day of Atonements

The days between the Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonements are called days of repentance or the days of awe, as one should be in awe of G-d's great mercy to forgive those who have sinned against Him.

It is most significant that in the Hebrew Bible this day is referred to as יום הכיפורים the Day of Atonements. Most non-Hebrew speakers do not realize that the phrase is in the plural. What is the purpose of the use of the plural? It has a dual purpose. The atoning death of Yeshua does not just have implications for this world, but also for the age to come, i.e. the Kingdom. Notice how both the Feast of Trumpets and Yom HaKippurim relate to the Kingdom. What is taught theologically about this festival? Although all people need forgiveness from their sins and this requires that the sins be atoned for, it is important that although one is commanded to prepare his heart for forgiveness, it was one who was anointed by G-d who did all the work for atonement, i.e. the High Priest. It is significant that the Torah states that the High Priest was anointed (See Leviticus 16: 32). The term anointed is formed from the same Hebrew word from which the term Messiah is derived. Hence, it is through the work and calling of the High Priest that one can learn a great deal about the work and calling of the Messiah to deal with the sins of humanity.

The Festival of Sukkot (Tabernacles)

The major theological message of the seven days of this festival is to trust in the L-rd for all things. There are two primary commandments associated with Sukkot. The first is to make and dwell in a sukkah (booth or tabernacle) for seven days. The purpose of this commandment is to remind the Children of Israel of the forty years they were in the wilderness and how G-d was faithful (dependable) to provide for all of their needs. The second

commandment was to gather the four species; a palm branch, willow leaves, myrtle leaves, and an etrog (the fruit of a citron tree). One is commanded to gather this in his hands and wave it in traditionally six directions (North, South, East, West, up and down). Although there are different interpretations concerning each of the four species, most understand that collectively the lulav (the palm branch with the leaves of the willow and myrtle trees) and the etrog relate to G-d's provision and the six directions which they are waved are connected to the grace of G-d. In other words, a person demonstrates his dependence on HaShem by accepting the grace which was provided to him by G-d.

The first day of Sukkot is a high Shabbat; that is, regardless of on what day of the week this day falls, it is treated as a Shabbat. The seventh day is called Hoshannah Rabbah, which means the Great Salvation. It concludes the special sacrifices and libations which were offered during each day of the festival.

Sh'meni Atzeret (The Eighth Day Assembly)

Not much is said concerning this special day in the Scripture. However, regardless of on which day of the week it falls, it also is treated as a Shabbat. In order to show that it should not be understood as the eighth day of Sukkot, the Sages forbid entering into one's sukkah on Sh'meni Atzeret. The name of this holiday, the Eighth Day Assembly, relates to the significance of the number eight in Judaism. This number expresses "newness", "redemption", and the Kingdom. Hence, one should see a connection between depending upon the grace of G-d and being assembled into the Kingdom.

May each of you have a blessed time remembering these Fall festivals and may the significance of these appointed days assist in your daily walk with our L-rd Messiah Yeshua and your preparation for the establishment of the Kingdom of G-d.