

The
Chosen 
People

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THE JEWISH HOLIDAYS & JESUS

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A FESTIVAL TO REMEMBER!



Rosh Hashanah

Dear friend,

Shalom from New York City! Jewish people here in New York and around the world are about to celebrate *Rosh Hashanah* and the other Fall Feasts.

Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, literally means “the head of the year.” This festival is one of the seven great Appointed Times listed in Leviticus chapter 23. It is to be celebrated on the first day of the seventh month of the Jewish calendar, *Tishrei*, which usually falls in September or sometimes in early October.

Rosh Hashanah is the first of three great festivals to be celebrated in this seventh month. The other two are *Yom Kippur* (the Day of Atonement) and *Sukkot* (the Feast of Tabernacles). These days were established by God and revealed to the children of Israel by Moses, who received the calendar as part of the Sinai revelation.

A Roadmap to Redemption

The holidays are similar as each one involves worship, offerings, a rest from labor and usually a reminder of a great event in the history of Israel. Oftentimes a holiday is also tied to the agricultural seasons and connected to the harvest in one way or another.

The Holy Days are also prophetic in nature, providing a roadmap to redemption over the course of the year: Passover, Unleavened Bread, First Fruits, Pentecost, the New Year, the Day of Atonement and Tabernacles.

I believe that every one of these Festivals was fulfilled in the person of Jesus the Messiah—and that the first four *spring festivals* pointed to His first coming and the latter three *fall festivals* predict elements of His second coming. For example, Jesus died on Passover, was

resurrected on First Fruits and the Holy Spirit was sent on the Day of Pentecost! There are no coincidences with the Lord, and clearly these Festivals pointed to critical elements in His plan of redemption.

I cannot take the time to discuss this further, but if you go to our website you can order the book by Dr. Daniel Fuchs entitled *Israel's Holy Days in Type and Prophecy*, which shows how each Festival is Messianic in nature (available at www.chosenpeople.com/store).

Rosh Hashanah: The Sounding of the Trumpet

You will not find the phrase Rosh Hashanah in the Bible (Leviticus 23). Rather, the Festival is called *Yom Teruah*, The Day of the Blowing of the Trumpet. This dramatic aspect of the Festival

(Leviticus 23:23-25; Numbers 10:8-10) is designed as an attention-grabber for the Jewish people, preparing us for the Day of Atonement coming ten days later.

The *shofar* (ram's horn) blasts also remind Jewish people of the obedience of Abraham, who was willing to offer his only son as a sacrifice in obedience to God. The Lord stopped Abraham before he went through with the act, providing a ram as a substitute for the sacrifice of Isaac.

According to the Sages of Israel, Abraham earned an abundance of spiritual merit through his obedience and some of his “overflowing” merit is available today for Jewish people who feel they fall short of what is needed to please God during this season. The blowing of the shofar reminds the Jewish people that this cache of additional mercy is available to them if they believe their good works and repentance will not meet God's holy standards. This helps us understand the first-century Jewish mindset as to how God provided a greater and available righteousness for sinful humanity through the death of Jesus at Calvary! (Romans 5:15)

Repentance

The dominant theme of Rosh Hashanah is repentance. In fact, the first day of Rosh Hashanah begins a season of ten days of repentance, often called the “Ten Days of Awe” by the Jewish people. The observance of the Day of Atonement is observed at the conclusion of these ten days. It is understood by most Jewish people that repentance is the path that leads to forgiveness of sin and reconciliation with God, which is secured at the closing moments of Yom Kippur. Jewish tradition tells us that books of life and death are opened at the start of the ten days, and if a Jewish person repents adequately so that their good deeds outweigh their bad, they would then have a good year.

This is why the above-mentioned *available righteousness* through Abraham's obedience is so important to the Jewish idea of repentance-based forgiveness.

Yet, even if this is true, (and I do not believe it is) Abraham's righteousness could never provide what a man or woman needs to be saved. As Paul writes, “*for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*” (Romans 3:23). We know that the only righteousness that saves either Jew or Gentile is the righteousness God provided through the Savior of the world—Jesus the Messiah.

Forgiveness

Jewish people do not really think about forgiveness from sin except during this time of year. It is important to realize that traditional Jewish teaching views forgiveness as temporal, needing annual renewal and being received on the basis of our repentance and willingness to be obedient to His Law.

Personally, the most important part of the Jewish New Year is the link with the next holiday, *Yom Kippur*. Having been raised in a more traditional Jewish home, I was under the false impression from observing *Rosh Hashanah* year after year that repentance really could “earn” God's forgiveness. But after coming to the Lord, I know this is not true! Repentance is valuable, but it cannot save me from my sin.

The next festival we observe, Yom Kippur—the Day of Atonement—is a type of prophetic portrait of the ultimate sacrifice that would one day be made for the forgiveness of sin, as the Lord determined that blood must be shed for the forgiveness of sin (Leviticus 17:11). In fact, the entire Old Testament sacrificial system is a type of the “great” sacrifice that would come!

Jesus the Messiah, the suffering servant of Isaiah 53 and the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, is the fulfillment of these Old Testament predictions of a greater sacrifice to come.

The writer of the book of Hebrews affirms this good news:

But when Messiah appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; and not

through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (Hebrews 9:11-14)

We know that the Messiah Jesus has fully satisfied the wrath of God in dying for my sins and yours. He said, “It is finished,” as the work of salvation was completed forever with His last breath.

We no longer have to wonder, year after year, whether or not God is still angry with us because of our sin—or whether or not we are forgiven. Our own personal efforts could never achieve what only God could accomplish through the work of His beloved Son. It is this atonement that brings forgiveness, and repentance is merely a step towards this glorious end!

Be sure to wish your Jewish friends and family a Happy New Year or as the common Hebrew greeting for this time of year invokes, *L'shanah tovah tikatevu*—“May your name be inscribed in the Book of Life.”

My prayer is that many of my Jewish people will hear the words of eternal life in Yeshua (Jesus) the Messiah during this New Year through the Chosen People Ministries global family, and will respond with faith and joy!

Thanks for your prayers and support!

Your brother,



Mitch



Dr. Mitch
Glaser President

P.S. Our new book,

*The People, the
Land and the Future
of Israel* is now in

print! I would like to send you a copy as a thank you for your New Year's gift of \$300 or more to Chosen People Ministries!

UNDERSTANDING

What Does the Trumpet on Rosh Hashanah Celebrate?

The Bible does not refer to the holiday as Rosh Hashanah, instead using various other designations for the celebration. In the listing of the major biblical feasts, the Torah refers to the day as *zikron tenuah*, “a memorial of blowing of trumpets” (Lev. 23:24). Later, the Torah refers to the holiday simply as *yom tenuah*, the “day of blowing of trumpets” (Num. 29:1). The Torah does not explicitly explain the reason for the holiday, but states that it is a day of “rest,” set aside for various sacrifices (Lev. 23:23–25; Num. 29:1–6). The blowing of trumpets functions as a means of calling the nation to repentance.

Later Jewish tradition added various other names to the holiday: *Yom HaZikaron* (Day of Remembrance); *Yom HaDin* (Day of Judgment); *Yom HaKeseh* (Day of Concealment for Sins) and *Rosh Hashanah* (Head of the Year).

Blowing the *shofar* (ram’s horn) is still one of the main features of Rosh Hashanah. In Micah 7:18–20, the blowing of the *shofar* can call the nation to repentance (*teshuvah*). In Psalm 81:1–4, blowing the *shofar* signifies overwhelming joy during worship. It also represents the hope for the arrival of the Messiah (Zech. 9:14). Although Judaism also made use of silver trumpets for military purposes and in temple rituals (Num. 10), the *shofar* plays the central role in the events of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

Why is Rosh Hashanah Considered the Jewish New Year?

Exodus 12 states that the new year begins with the month of Passover, which is known in the Jewish calendar as *Nisan*

(Ex.12:2). *Tishri*, the month of Rosh Hashanah, is actually the seventh month in the Jewish calendar. If Rosh Hashanah is the first day of the seventh month, then why is Rosh Hashanah considered the Jewish New Year?

The answer is that Judaism has several “new years.” *Nisan*, the month of Passover, represents the beginning of the religious year and the start for calculating the reign of kings. According to Jewish tradition, however, *Tishri* represents the beginning of the creation of the world and every Rosh Hashanah the Jewish civil calendar moves ahead one year. In the ancient world, Rosh Hashanah also helped the nation calculate the start of Sabbatical and Jubilee years. Later in the month of *Tishri*, the cycle of reading through the Torah restarts on Simchat Torah (Joy of the Torah), although this tradition began much later than the biblical era. Rosh Hashanah also commemorates the creation of Adam and Eve and the moment when Abraham climbed to the top of the mountain and bound Isaac in order to offer him as a sacrifice to God (Gen. 22).

Rosh Hashanah precedes Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, by ten days. This ten-day period is called the “Days of Awe”—ten days of repentance and introspection leading up to Yom Kippur. Rosh Hashanah’s relationship to Yom Kippur carries the idea of forgiveness and new beginnings. This imagery also reinforces the idea of Rosh Hashanah as the start of the New Year.

What is the Meaning Behind the “Book of Life”?

According to Jewish tradition, God opens up the Book of Life (*Sefer HaChaim*) on Rosh Hashanah and closes it on Yom Kippur, thus determining the fate of each person once the book is closed. This is why it is customary to pray during these ten days, “Inscribe us in the Book of Life.” The tradition likely



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developed from the account of Moses' intercession on Israel's behalf, when he asked God to forgive Israel's sin. If God refused to forgive Israel, then Moses asked God to blot out his name from "the Book" He has written (Ex. 32:32).

The phrase "Book of Life" occurs once in the Hebrew Bible, when the psalmist asks God to blot his enemies out of the "Book of Life," so that they are not mentioned with the righteous (Ps. 69:28). Apocryphal Jewish literature speaks of the opening of various books during the time of judgment, including the "Book of Life" and the "Book of Death" (Book of Jubilees 30:20-22; 1 Enoch 36:10).

Present Jewish belief concerning the books opening on Rosh Hashanah developed from the Talmud, which states, "three books are opened in heaven on Rosh Hashanah, one for the thoroughly wicked, one for the thoroughly righteous, and one for the intermediate. The thoroughly righteous are inscribed in the *Book of Life*, the thoroughly wicked in the *Book of Death*, while the fate of the intermediate is suspended until the Day of Atonement" (Rosh HaShanah 16b).

John, one of the early Jewish followers of Jesus, reflects the Jewish language of God's judgment when he repeatedly mentions the "Book of Life" throughout the Book of Revelation. John writes, "I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the *Book of Life*. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things written in the books... And anyone not found written in the *Book of Life* was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:12, 15).

The Jewish tradition of the various books opened at the judgment invites the nation to live in covenant fidelity with God. As the nation prepared to enter into the Promised Land, God gave the nation the opportunity to have a flourishing life if they chose to follow His instruction. He said, "I set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live" (Deut. 30:19).

Rosh Hashanah may also anticipate future events. Modern Rosh Hashanah services include 100 piercing blasts of the *shofar*. It is possible that Paul alludes to this Jewish tradition when he

speaks of the last trumpet at the rapture: "Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed — in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Cor. 15:51-52).

In his letter to the Thessalonians he also writes, "For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Messiah will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord" (1 Thes. 4:15-17).

Since Rosh Hashanah is both the "Day of the Sounding of the Shofar" and the "Day of Judgment," it looks forward to the

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day when we can avoid God's harsh judgment when we hear the great sound of the *shofar*. At that time, God will transform the bodies of believers who have died and give them new, immortal bodies. The sounding of the *shofar* encourages us to remember that our present bodies are only temporary—but through the hope of the Gospel, we can look forward to our eternal bodies and eternal life in unbroken relationship with God.

SEE THE BIBLE THROUGH JEWISH EYES

BY DANIEL GOLDBERG, TH.D., D.D.



Dr. Goldberg serves as International Ministries Representative for Chosen People Ministries and lives in Pineville, North Carolina with his wife, Madeline.

THE SUPREMACY OF GOD'S PERSON AND THE COMFORT OF GOD'S PEOPLE THROUGH THE SERVANT OF THE LORD ISAIAH 40-42

The powerful second portion of the book of Isaiah (40-66) brings us face to face with the sweeping themes of God's power, His redemptive purpose, and the focus of His action as history as we know it draws to a climax. These chapters fall into three divisions: the supremacy of God and the intensity of God's punishment (40-48), salvation through Messiah's redemption and its glorious results (49-57) and Jerusalem, the capital of Messiah's coming kingdom and the vivid contrast between the eternal bliss of the redeemed and the everlasting torment of the lost (58-66). This study begins with the first of the three—the supremacy of God.

The Supremacy of God's Person: Isaiah 40

Beginning with chapter 40, Isaiah amplifies the need to comfort Israel based upon the superior Person and promises of God, the Creator. God is the incomparable One (Isa. 40:12-14). It is an impossibility to compare God with the idolatry of the nations (Isa. 40:18-26). He is distinctly above and beyond His creation (Isa. 40:25-28).

Isaiah emphasizes God's attributes

and their impact upon both creation and humanity. God is merciful (Isa. 40:1-2). A new day is envisioned for Israel in which her warfare will be over. The Lord will restore His people. Isaiah instructs the nation to prepare both the nation and her land, because God will visit His people (Isa. 40:3-5).

The nation can trust Isaiah's message, because God's word stands forever (Isa. 40:6-9). God relates to Israel the same way a shepherd gently cares for his flock (Isa. 40:11). God is the sustainer and upholder of all nature (Isa. 40:10-14, 26). The nation must not trust in other gods, because no idol is comparable to the eternal God (Isa. 40:18-20, 25).

The Comfort of God's People Through the Servant of the Lord: Isaiah 41, 42

Israel is assured of Divine protection and provision. The Lord will lead, help, strengthen and uphold His people (41:10-16). Comfort and consolation will come through the "Servant of the Lord," introduced in Isaiah 42.

Most would agree that Israel did not fulfill the role of the Servant in this passage of Scripture. However, one individual from the nation did

fulfill God's design. Here the Scriptures emphasize "the Servant of the Lord" being sent for a special mission and being endowed with God's own Spirit (Isa. 42:1). God's servant would be given as "a covenant for the people, a light for the Gentiles" (Isa. 42:6). He would be able to "open the blind eyes, to free the prisoners from the dungeon and those that sit in darkness out of the prison house" (Isa. 42:7). Only Jesus, the true Servant of the Lord, fulfills this commission.

Conclusion

Both the strength and tenderness of the Savior are in view here. The Lord is the Shepherd-God over Israel and for all nations (Psa. 23:1; 80:1; 95:7; 100:3). Jesus likewise fills that description (Jn. 10:11).

The strength of God is available to those who lack it. All who place their trust in the Lord find a new strength they did not know they had. They will be able to run the race with surplus energy. Here the prophet Isaiah binds together the unwearied God and the fainting man (Isa. 40:31). Every believer may testify, with the Apostle Paul, "I can do all things through Messiah who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13).

NEWS BRIEFS

SENIORS RECEIVE NEW LIFE IN MESSIAH

Carole Bahm, who has been faithfully ministering among Jewish retirees in South Florida, has been witnessing to a 103-year-old Jewish man by the name of Aaron.* His sister-in-law, Kate,* has been doing likewise for many years. Recently, Aaron prayed to receive Jesus as his Messiah and Lord. Carole writes, “When I visited Aaron, I said to him, ‘I understand you accepted Yeshua (Jesus) as your Messiah and Lord. Is that right?’ He looked at me for a long time and then said, ‘Yes.’ To see someone like Aaron become a believer at his age has been a great encouragement. Oh, by the way, he just turned 104.”

Meanwhile in Israel, another Jewish man—a relative youngster at the age of 85—responded to the Gospel at a weekly Bible study that staff member Eugene I. helps lead. He writes, “At the next meeting, he even prayed on his own. I am very excited for him. It is also an encouragement for many who attend our meetings who have not yet fully committed to following Messiah.”

PATIENT PRAYER BEARS FRUIT FOR KINGDOM

Staff member Anna Bortsova in Toronto knows what it is to patiently wait for a planted seed to flourish. A few years ago, at a women’s Bible study that Anna was leading, an unbelieving Jewish woman named Deborah* was “sitting on the fence” regarding a decision for the Lord. Later, she moved with her family to California and although Anna continued to pray, they lost contact. Then, Anna’s telephone rang. It was Deborah, calling from California with news. “I want to tell you something! I became a believer!” she said. “And I remembered our Bible studies so often, thinking and reading through the notes.” Now Anna and Deborah regularly call each other and pray together. Deborah is planning to start a group with two Jewish women who are interested in Bible study.

THE WORD IS GETTING AROUND

Dov,* a young Russian Jewish cab driver picked up staff member Joseph Ryan and his wife, Sarah, from the airport. When Joseph mentioned Chosen People Ministries, Dov began talking about a building in Brooklyn that he recently walked past—it turned out to be our new Charles Feinberg Messianic Center! Joseph began explaining to him that Charles Feinberg was a prominent Jewish believer in Jesus. Surprisingly, Dov interrupted, “I know. I googled him.”

Joseph says, “I was amazed! In all of Brooklyn, what are

the chances this Jewish taxi driver walked past our building, was interested enough to google it, and then had us in his cab!” Please pray that Dov would be receptive to meeting with Joseph in person when he calls to follow up.

A HEALTH EMERGENCY AND A FAITH DECISION IN ISRAEL – ALL IN ONE AFTERNOON

Brian S., who ministers at Chosen People Ministries’ Food Distribution Center in Netanya, knows how to keep a cool head. While waiting to be served there, one of the recipients passed out, possibly having a heart attack. Brian began emergency assistance and by God’s grace, one of the others waiting for assistance happened to be a retired doctor who also helped, as they waited for an ambulance. Brian reports, “Praise the Lord, the ambulance took him away alive as our team prayed health and healing over him! All the more exciting, in the same hour, one of our recipients, a Jewish immigrant woman, asked us for prayer. At the end of our visit, she received Yeshua (Jesus) as her Messiah. God is good!”

ISAIAH 53 ISRAEL OUTREACH UPDATE

Over 100 copies of the Hebrew version of *Isaiah 53 Explained* have been sent out across Israel so far—mostly to Jewish seekers! People from all walks of life are ordering the book, from religious Jewish people to the very secular. Additionally, people are visiting our Isaiah 53 website and over 100,000 Hebrew speakers watched the testimony video for more than five minutes...this is remarkable! Our staff member Gabi G. is in continual communication with three Israelis in particular who continue to ask him questions about Messiah as they are reading through *Isaiah 53 Explained*. Please pray for the opportunities for one-on-one visits with those who are searching. Other Israelis who have ordered *Isaiah 53 Explained* are already followers of Messiah Jesus wanting to grow in their faith and/or share the book with unbelieving friends.

We also sent out hundreds of books to people in our Spanish-language Isaiah 53 Campaign in Argentina...it is tremendously exciting to see God at work. We are following up on the names from both the Hebrew and Spanish campaigns. We will be continuing these online campaigns and turning our eyes towards the great state of Texas in the fall. Please pray that the Lord would open the eyes of 100,000 Jewish people in Texas!

*names have been changed

The People, the Land & the Future of Israel

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— **Jerry B. Jenkins**, coauthor of the Left Behind Series

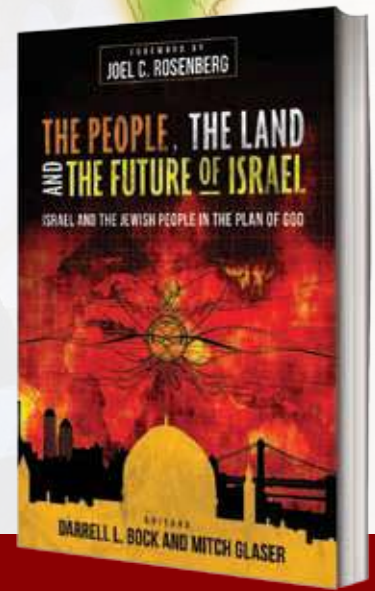
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— **Dorothy Kelley Patterson**, Professor of Theology in Women's Studies, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

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Please remember Chosen People Ministries in your will. "I will bless those who bless you." (Genesis 12:3)

