



CELEBRATE  
Israel's  
HIGH  
HOLIDAYS

CHOSEN PEOPLE MINISTRIES CANADA

# INTRODUCTION

Understanding Israel and the Jewish people is pivotal for understanding God's plan for salvation through the Messiah, Jesus. Jewish High Holy days are three in number: Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Sukkot. With an understanding of these three important Holy Days, you will have a good basis for understanding all of Judaism and the foundation of our Christian faith.

- **ROSH HASHANAH**, literally “the head of the year,” marks the beginning of the Jewish new year. It is also the launch of the Ten Days of Awe which lead up to Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. Rosh Hashanah is also known as the “Feast of Trumpets,” because the ram’s horn (or shofar) was sounded in the Temple to call people to repentance.
- **YOM KIPPUR** is the Day of Atonement, the most solemn day of the Jewish calendar. In the Old Testament, the high priest was called upon to present a bull as a sacrifice for sins — and, on this one day of the year, to enter the Holy of Holies and present an offering at the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant, which was said to be where God dwelt.
- **SUKKOT** is the Feast of Tabernacles, a week-long celebration in which many Jewish people build temporary shelters, as the theme of the feast is to remind them of their wandering forefathers who lived in tents as they roamed the desert. In the Bible, this feast is also referred to as the “Feast of Ingathering,” and celebrates the reaping of crops at harvest time.

When you keep these feasts in mind, as you reflect on the Messiah, you will see how His life, death and resurrection fulfilled the portents of these Holy days. Chosen People Ministries is dedicated to reaching out to Jewish people with prayer, evangelism and discipleship — and we want to help fellow believers do the same. It’s our privilege to offer this book to you with an explanation of the High Holy days — we hope it helps deepen your faith with a better understanding of the Jewish roots of Christianity. We also encourage you to keep our evangelistic work with God’s chosen people in your prayers throughout the coming year. Thank you!

# ROSH HASHANAH

**R**osh Hashanah, literally “Head of the Year,” marks the beginning of the Jewish New Year. It also marks the beginning of the Ten Days of Awe leading up to Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.

The Days of Awe are a period of introspection and repentance in preparation for Yom Kippur.

In the Jewish calendar, Rosh Hashanah falls on the first two days of the month of Tishrei. The Bible does not refer to the holiday as Rosh Hashanah; rather, it describes the holiday as Yom Hazikaron, the **Day of Remembrance**, or Yom Teruah, the **Day of the Blowing of the Shofar** or **Feast of Trumpets** (Lev. 23:23-25; Num. 29:1-6). During synagogue services, the Jewish community sounds the *shofar* (ram’s horn) as a call to repentance.

Special foods are eaten during Rosh Hashanah - for example, we dip apples in honey to symbolize a good and sweet new year. Traditionally, we eat pomegranates as part of the holiday celebration, because we hope our good deeds in the coming year will be as numerous as the seeds of a pomegranate.

## ROSH HASHANAH FAQ

### 1. When is Rosh Hashanah?

Rosh Hashanah begins at sundown on the first day of the Jewish month of Tishrei. The Jewish calendar is a lunar calendar, and the month of Tishrei always begins in either September or October, depending on the year. In modern observance, Rosh Hashanah lasts for two days. Each Jewish day begins at sundown and continues until sundown of the next day. This tradition developed out of the creation account in the Torah, where it says, “the evening and the morning were the first day” (Gen. 1:5).

### 2. What does Rosh Hashanah celebrate?

The Bible does not refer to the holiday as Rosh Hashanah, but rather as “a memorial of blowing of trumpets,” *zikron teruah* (Lev. 23:24) and

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later as the “day of blowing of trumpets,” *yom teruah* (Num. 29:1). The Scripture does not explicitly explain the reason for the holiday, but states 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).

Today, Rosh Hashanah, as the Jewish New Year, marks the beginning of the civil calendar. It also begins a ten-day period of repentance and self-examination, known as the “days of awe,” *yamim nora'im* in Hebrew. According to Jewish tradition, God keeps the Book of Life open during the “Days of Awe” and finalizes His judgment on the final day, **Yom Kippur** (Day of Atonement).

Blowing the *shofar* (ram’s horn) remains one of the main features of Rosh Hashanah. The blowing of the *shofar* calls the nation to repentance. In Psalm 81:1-4, blowing the shofar symbolizes overwhelming joy during worship. It also represents hope for the arrival of the Messiah (Zech. 9:14).

### **3. Why do we still celebrate Old Testament holidays like Rosh Hashanah?**

Believers in Messiah Jesus have freedom to celebrate these holidays or not to do so. Celebration of these festivals is a great way to draw attention to Messiah, as each of the appointed festivals in Leviticus 23 points to Jesus, and remembering His first coming and looking forward to His return (see question #6).

### **4. How is Rosh Hashanah the New Year?**

Exodus 12 states that the Jewish year begins with the month of Passover, which is known in the Jewish calendar as Nisan (Ex. 12:2) and falls in the spring. Tishrei, 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?

In Jewish tradition, there are several new years. The month of Nisan represents the beginning of the religious year and the start for calculating the reign of kings, but Tishrei, according to Jewish tradition, signifies the beginning of the creation of the world. The Jewish civil calendar thus moves ahead on every Rosh Hashanah.

## 5. What are the traditions of Rosh Hashanah?

Rosh Hashanah has many fascinating traditions. Although it is a joyous holiday, celebrating the dawn of a new year, it also commences a season of reflection and repentance. Since the holiday is predominantly a religious celebration, many of the significant observances take place within a traditional synagogue service. The special Rosh Hashanah prayers focus upon judgment, repentance, God's kingship, and remembrance. Probably the most stirring moment of synagogue service is the sounding of the *shofar*, ram's horn. The sounding of the *shofar* reminds the community of God's kingship over Israel. It also calls the nation to repentance and a period of introspection during the Ten Days of Awe leading up to Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement).

Special passages of Scripture are read during Rosh Hashanah, most notably the story of the binding of Isaac in Genesis 22. Some Jewish traditions say that the binding of Isaac took place on Rosh Hashanah, and God's provision of a ram as a replacement for Isaac connects the story to Rosh Hashanah, on which the nation hears the sound of the ram's horn. The sounding of the *shofar* also helps remind the nation of God's provision of a substitute for His people.

Sometime in the afternoon of Rosh Hashanah or during the Ten Days of Awe, many Jewish people participate in a poignant ceremony called **Tashlich**, which means "casting off." It involves gathering along bodies of running water to say prayers and cast small bits of bread into the water, symbolizing the casting of sins into the depths of the sea, as the prophet Micah states, "He will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea" (Micah 7:19).

Rosh Hashanah also has many holiday foods associated with the celebration. Throughout the year, the Jewish community eats special braided bread, known as *challah*, on Friday night to celebrate Shabbat. During Rosh Hashanah, we eat a round *challah*, whose shape represents the never-ending cycle of years – as one year ends, another year begins. The *challah* also represents a crown, because on Rosh Hashanah we recognize God as King.

Other symbolic foods include apples dipped in honey, symbolizing a sweet new year, and pomegranates, which symbolize the numerous good deeds we hope to do in the coming year, just as the pomegranate has numerous seeds.

## 6. Does Rosh Hashanah have any prophetic significance?

The Rosh Hashanah service focuses upon the blowing of the *shofar*, which is sounded 100 times in modern services. 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 Thess. 4:15-17).

Since Rosh Hashanah is the “Day of the Sounding of the Shofar” it looks forward to the moment when we hear the great sound of the *shofar* during the last days. At this time, God will transform the bodies of believers who have died, giving them new, immortal bodies. The sounding of the shofar thus encourages us to remember that our present bodies are only temporary, but we look forward to our eternal bodies, in which we will see the Lord face to face and be with Him forever.

## FAITH REQUIRES RISK: REFLECTIONS ON THE BINDING OF ISAAC

DURING ROSH HASHANAH, THE JEWISH community traditionally reads the *Akedah*, the story of the binding of Isaac in Genesis 22. The sounding of the *shofar* (ram’s horn) reminds us of

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the ram sacrificed in Isaac's place. The Akedah shows how faith requires risk.

When God calls to Abraham, he immediately responds, "Here I am." Abraham was attentive to God's voice, and he obediently followed His instruction. God told Abraham to take Isaac and go to the land of Moriah. Four times God emphasizes which son He requires Abraham to take on his journey by repeating: "your son," "your only one," "whom you love," "Isaac." The fourfold repetition of these references to Abraham's son emphasizes Isaac's position as the son of promise. God is asking Abraham to surrender everything.

Abraham does not ask any questions. He does not challenge God's motives or dispute God's sanity. He immediately begins taking the necessary steps to follow God's instructions obediently. He wakes up early in the morning, gathers his entourage and makes the preparations for the journey. Abraham does not delay or waste any time in fulfilling God's command. Abraham had waited years for Sarah to give birth to the son through whom God had promised to make a great nation. Even though God's command seems to contradict His earlier promise, Abraham did not hesitate in carrying out His instruction.

When Abraham and his entourage arrive at the mountain he confidently explains to his servants that he and his son will go up the mountain to offer a sacrifice, and that both will return to the base camp. On their way up the mountain, Isaac inquired about the lamb for the burnt offering. Abraham replied with certainty, "God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering."

Although Abraham did not know exactly how God would supply his need, he understood that God would not abandon him, nor would He fail to keep His promise of making a great nation through Isaac. At the last moment, after Abraham had bound Isaac and placed him upon the altar, the Angel of the Lord stopped Abraham from slaying his son. Abraham then noticed a ram caught in the thicket by its horns, which he offered as a sacrifice in place of Isaac.

Abraham's faithful obedience reminds us that we will never experience a robust relationship with God until we step out in faith. Too often we would rather have a life of safety and control than a vibrant life courageously following God. Alan Hirsch and Michael Frost write in their book, *The Faith of Leap: Embracing a Theology of Risk, Adventure & Courage*, "When our need for security becomes obsessive, we remove ourselves from the journey of discipleship!"

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Faith does not promise a life that is safe or secure, nor does it guarantee an easy life. Faith requires risk. It forces us to follow God into a life of adventure. If we don't risk our safety and security by stepping out in faith, we will never experience God's provision. If Abraham had not risked everything and obediently followed God's instruction, he would not have discovered God's provision and blessing.

### ROSH HASHANAH RECIPIES

*At home, our family tradition is to dip slices of apple or challah into honey. "May it be a good, sweet year - shanah tovah u-metukah" we say to each other, and we exchange sweet, sticky kisses. These recipes provide a new twist on this tradition - enjoy!*

#### **Apple and Honey Sorbet**

You can serve this sorbet at your Rosh Hashanah meal between first and main course. It is white (flecked with bright green) - tangy from the green apples, and sweet with honey. Fresh and fabulous.

- 1 1/4 pounds Granny Smith apples, cored and thinly sliced
  - 1 1/2 cups water
  - 1 1/2 cups sugar
  - 1 1/2 lemons, juiced
  - 1 tablespoon honey
1. In a large, resealable plastic bag or plastic container with a lid, mix apples with the juice of 1/2 lemon. Freeze for several hours or overnight.
  2. In a small saucepan, bring water and sugar to a boil. Reduce heat, and simmer for 5 minutes. Remove from heat, and stir in honey. Cool completely.
  3. Place apple in a blender, and liquidize them with juice of 1 lemon and the cooled sugar syrup until as smooth as possible. The peel will add texture, and prevent the mixture from being completely smooth.
  4. Transfer the mixture to an ice cream machine and freeze according to directions. Leave the sorbet out to soften 10 minutes prior to serving.

## **Rosh Hashanah Apple & Honey Breakfast Cake**

*(16 servings)*

- 2 cups. all purpose flour
  - 1 1/2 tsp. baking powder
  - 1 tsp. cinnamon
  - 1/2 tsp cloves
  - 1/2 tsp sugar
  - 1/2 tsp. baking soda
  - 1/2 cup. margarine or butter, softened
  - 1 cup honey + 3 Tbs.
  - 2 eggs
  - 1 cup. orange juice
  - 2 1/2 cups. dried apples
1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees F. Grease a 2 quart baking dish; set aside. In a small bowl stir together flour, baking powder, cinnamon, cloves, sugar, and baking soda. Set aside. In a mixing bowl beat margarine with an electric mixer on medium speed for 30 seconds. Add the 1 cup honey and eggs; beat until smooth. Add flour mixture and orange juice alternately to the beaten mixture, beating on low speed until just combined. Pour batter into prepared pan.
  2. Bake for 20 minutes. Meanwhile, pour boiling water over apples to cover; let stand 15 minutes; drain well. Sprinkle cake with apples. Bake 15-20 minutes more or until a wooden toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. In a small saucepan, heat the 3 Tbs. honey just until warm; drizzle over cake.

## **Sweet and Sour Braised Brisket**

*(8 to 10 servings)*

- 1 (6-pound) brisket
- Salt
- Vegetable oil
- 1/2 pound carrots, peeled and cut into 2-inch pieces
- Few stalks celery, cut into big chunks
- 3 medium onions, peeled and cut into eights
- Cloves from 1 head garlic, peeled and lightly smashed

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- 26-ounce can crushed tomatoes
  - 1/3 cup light brown sugar
  - 1 cup chicken stock
  - 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar or apple cider vinegar
1. Preheat oven to 200 degrees F.
  2. Rub brisket generously with salt and vegetable oil.
  3. Heat a large sauté pan over medium-high heat. Add vegetable oil to evenly coat pan and when the oil is hot and is just beginning to smoke, add the brisket and brown on both sides. Transfer the brisket to a shallow baking dish. Add the vegetables to the saute pan. Cook until they brown and start to soften, about 5 minutes. Then pour the vegetables over the brisket.
  4. Whisk together the tomatoes, sugar, stock and vinegar in a mixing bowl then pour it into the same sauté pan. Cook for a few minutes to get all the flavor out of the skillet, and then pour over the brisket. It should be at least 3/4 of the way submersed in the liquid. Cover the dish loosely with aluminum foil and bake for 8 to 10 hours until tender and the meat begins to fall apart. Slice thinly and serve with veggies and cooking liquid.

### **Mom's Authentic Kosher Cholent Recipe**

*(8 servings)*

“Chuck roast with kidney beans, barley, and potatoes makes a very filling beef stew. It cooks at 200 degrees Fahrenheit for 10 to 15 hours.”

- 3 onions, quartered
- 4 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 4 pounds chuck roast, cut into large chunks
- 1 cup dry kidney beans
- 1 cup dried pinto beans
- 1 cup pearl barley
- 5 large potatoes, peeled and cut into thirds
- boiling water to cover
- 2 (1 ounce) packages dry onion and mushroom soup mix
- 2 tablespoons garlic powder
- salt and pepper to taste

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1. In a large oven-safe pot or roasting pan, sauté onions in oil over medium heat.
2. Add meat, and brown well on all sides.
3. Mix in beans; stir continuously until the beans start to shrivel. Stir in the barley. Add potatoes, and add just enough boiling water to cover the meat and potatoes. Mix in dry soup mix and garlic. Season with salt and pepper. Bring to a boil, lower heat, and simmer partially covered for 20 minutes on stove top.
4. Preheat oven to 200 degrees F.
5. Cover pot tightly, and place in preheated oven. Allow to cook overnight for at least 10 to 15 hours. Check periodically to make sure you have enough liquid to cover; add small amounts of water if needed. Do not stir; stirring will break up the chunks of potatoes.

### **Rosh Hashanah Challah**

*(2 braided loaves)*

- 2 1/2 cups warm water (110 degrees F)
  - 1 tablespoon active dry yeast
  - 1/2 cup honey
  - 4 tablespoons vegetable oil
  - 3 eggs plus one more egg
  - 1 tablespoon salt
  - 8 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
  - 1 cup golden raisins
1. In a large bowl, sprinkle yeast over barely warm water. Beat in honey, oil, 3 eggs, and salt. Add the flour one cup at a time, beating after each addition, graduating to kneading with hands as dough thickens. Add raisins. Knead until smooth and elastic and no longer sticky, adding flour as needed. Cover with a damp clean cloth and let rise for 1 1/2 hours or until dough has doubled in bulk.
  2. Punch down the risen dough and turn out onto floured board. Divide in half and knead each half for five minutes or so, adding flour as needed to keep from getting sticky. Divide each half into thirds and roll into long snake about 1 1/2 inches in diameter. Pinch the ends of the three snakes together firmly and braid from middle. Form into a

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round braided loaf by bringing ends together, curving the braid into a circle, and pinching the ends together. Grease two baking trays and place finished round on each. Cover with towel and let rise about one hour.

3. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.
4. Beat the remaining egg and brush a generous amount over each braid.
5. Bake at 375 degrees F (190 degrees C) for about 40 minutes. Bread should have a nice hollow sound when thumped on the bottom. Cool on a rack for at least one hour before slicing.

# YOM KIPPUR

**Y**om Kippur, the **Day of Atonement**, is the most solemn day in the Jewish calendar. The Bible prescribes Yom Kippur as a day of affliction (Lev. 16; 23:26-32).

In the ancient world, the High Priest woke up early, donned his priestly garments, and sacrificed a bull for both himself and his family. He then cast lots over two goats, choosing one for the Lord and designating the other as the goat to remove sin. Only on this day did the High Priest enter into the Holy of Holies in the Temple to offer incense and sprinkle blood on the ark of the covenant. Before concluding the sacrifices by burning both the bull and the goat, the High Priest placed blood from the Lord's goat onto the second goat. He then cast the second goat into the wilderness, thus symbolically removing Israel's sin.

In modern observance, Yom Kippur involves a fast from both food and drink. Many spend the entire day praying in the synagogue. During the Ten Days of Awe preceding Yom Kippur, many Jewish people give *zedakah* (charity) which some consider a replacement for the animal sacrifice. A small segment of the Orthodox Jewish community practices *kapparot*, a ceremony in which a person waves a chicken over his head, before killing the chicken as a symbolic transfer of sin. According to tradition, the Book of Life and the Book of the Dead are closed on Yom Kippur, and the fates of those within the books are sealed for the coming year.

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Followers of Jesus the Messiah confidently look forward to eternal life, because our names are written in the Book of Life. When Jesus died, the veil of the Holy of Holies ripped in two, symbolically breaking a barrier between humans and the presence of God. Previously, only the High Priest had access to this room, and he only entered it once a year on Yom Kippur (Matt. 27:51). However, Jesus' death gives believers access to God, because He entered into the Heavenly Holy of Holies to offer His blood for our redemption (Heb. 9:11-12). Unlike the Israelites' annual sacrifices on Yom Kippur, Jesus' one sacrifice continues to provide atonement to this day. Yom Kippur, for followers of Jesus, reminds us of the certainty of our redemption through the blood of our Messiah and High Priest, Jesus.

Yom Kippur also reminds us of the ultimate salvation of the Jewish people. The prophet Zechariah speaks of a day when the nation of Israel will recognize her Messiah and "they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son" (Zech. 12:10). When the Jewish people recognize Messiah, as Paul writes, "All Israel will be saved" (Rom. 11:26). The Day of Atonement thus reminds us of our own salvation and also looks forward to the salvation of Israel.

## YOM KIPPER FAQ

### **1. What does Yom Kippur mean?**

Yom Kippur literally means "Day of Atonement." It functions as the day in which the nation of Israel corporately asks for forgiveness.

### **2. Where does Yom Kippur appear in the Bible?**

Yom Kippur appears frequently in the Hebrew Bible. It is first mentioned in reference to the initial instructions to the priests about making atonement once a year upon the Ark of the Covenant (Ex. 30:10). Leviticus 16 provides a detailed description of the High Priest's role in offering sacrifices during Yom Kippur. According to this passage, Yom Kippur takes place on the tenth day of the seventh month. Although Tishri is the first month in the modern Jewish calendar, it corresponds to the seventh month in the biblical calendar. God tells the nation it is a day of affliction and self-denial (Lev. 16:29,31; 23:27, 29, 32). Later in Leviticus and Numbers, within the list of the national holidays, God

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provides a summary of instructions for Israel concerning observance of Yom Kippur (Lev. 23:26-32; Num. 29:7-11).

### **3. When does Yom Kippur occur?**

Yom Kippur begins at sundown on the tenth day of the Jewish month of Tishri. The Jewish day begins at sundown and continues until sundown of the next day. This tradition developed out of the creation account in the Torah, where it says, “the evening and the morning were the first day” (Gen. 1:5). Although the Jewish and Gregorian calendars differ, the Jewish month of Tishri always begins in either September or October, depending upon the year.

### **4. How did ancient Israel observe Yom Kippur?**

In ancient Israel, observance of Yom Kippur centered upon the temple. The High Priest woke up early for ritual purification. He then put on special priestly garments, representing the sacredness of the holiday (Lev. 16:2-4). After the initial preparation for the holiday, the priest offered a bull as a sacrifice for both himself and his family (Lev. 16:6). He then selected and consecrated two separate male goats, one as a sacrifice for God and the other which the community would later lead into the desert (Lev. 16:7-10).

The priest took the blood from the bull, which he had sacrificed as sin offering for himself and his family, and placed it upon the coals of the altar before entering into the inner room of the temple to sprinkle the blood upon the Ark of the Covenant (16:11-14). Then he sacrificed the Lord's goat on behalf of the nation before entering into the Holy of Holies to sprinkle the goat's blood upon the Ark (16:15). Finally, the priest placed some of the blood from the Lord's goat onto the second goat. The High Priest confessed the sins of the nation over the second goat and the nation led the goat out into the wilderness (16:21-22). According to tradition, the people led the goat to a high precipice in the wilderness and pushed it over the side to ensure the goat would never return to the camp. The removal of the goat from the camp symbolized the removal of the nation's sins from Israel.

There are many nuances of the ancient observation of Yom Kippur, but the essential lesson from the temple sacrifices for this Holy Day is regarding the means of atonement: God's only method of atoning for sins is through the offering of a living sacrifice.

## 5. How does the modern Jewish community observe Yom Kippur?

In modern Judaism, Yom Kippur represents the end of the Days of Awe, ten days of repentance and reflection starting with Rosh Hashanah and ending with Yom Kippur. This period of repentance culminates in Yom Kippur, when it is said that God makes His final judgment on the fate of each person for the coming year.

As a day of repentance and the most sacred day in the Jewish calendar, most observant Jewish people spend Yom Kippur at the synagogue. The Bible describes it as a day for the affliction of the soul (Lev. 23:27). Modern Judaism implements this affliction through certain forms of self-denial, such as fasting, as many Jewish people abstain from both eating and drinking for an entire twenty-five hours, beginning before sundown until after nightfall on the following day. The entire community has a special meal after sundown at the conclusion of Yom Kippur to break the fast.

In addition, Jewish law also prohibits washing and bathing, marital relations, and use of any type of lotions or perfume during Yom Kippur. As with most Jewish holidays, Yom Kippur is a day of rest, which means the Jewish community must also abstain from any type of creative work. The main theme of Yom Kippur is repentance. Jewish people express their repentance through prayer, confession and giving *tzedakah* (charity).

Yom Kippur has five separate synagogue services. Both Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur utilize a special prayer book, called the *Machzor*, which simply means “cycle.” The Yom Kippur services add special prayers focusing on confession and repentance. Some Jewish men wear special white robes, called *kittel*, symbolizing both purity and mortality. It is also customary to wear a *tallit*, prayer shawl, during all prayer services. Yom Kippur is the only time in which Jewish men wear the *tallit* in the evening. The final synagogue service concludes with the blowing of the *shofar* (ram’s horn).

## 6. Why do we still celebrate Old Testament Holy Days like Yom Kippur?

Each of the appointed festivals in Leviticus 23 points to Jesus, and they look forward to His first and second comings. Believers in Messiah Jesus have a freedom either not to observe these Holy Days, or to celebrate them in a way that draws attention to Messiah.

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Followers of Jesus recognize that atonement is available to God's people only through the death and resurrection of our Messiah. God has already accomplished the complete work of atonement through Jesus' sacrifice. Thus, for believers, Yom Kippur does not represent a time of apprehension and fear, worrying about one's position with God.

Rather, observance of Yom Kippur can be a poignant spiritual experience for both Jewish and Gentile followers of Jesus. First, Yom Kippur reminds us of the penalty of our sin and reinforces the importance of holiness in our spiritual lives. Since Yom Kippur is a somber day, focused upon repentance, it calls believers to remember God's holiness. Our sin has terrible consequences and is severely offensive to our holy God. Despite our deep sorrow over our sin, we can have assurance and confidently approach God's presence, as Jesus' sacrifice gives God's people an eternal redemption (Heb 4:14-16; 9:11-14).

Second, since Yom Kippur is the national "Day of Atonement" for Israel, believers can dedicate prayers on Yom Kippur to praying for the redemption of the Jewish people, as the Bible promises a day when the nation of Israel will recognize their Redeemer and Messiah (Zech. 12:10).

### **7. Does Yom Kippur have any prophetic significance?**

Yom Kippur as the Day of Atonement has significant prophetic significance. When Jesus died, the veil standing in front of the Holy of Holies ripped in two, thus symbolizing free access to God's presence. Previously, only the High Priest had access to this room and only once a year on Yom Kippur (Matt. 27:51). Jesus' death provides access to God because He entered into the Heavenly Holy of Holies to offer His blood for our redemption (Heb. 9:11-12). Unlike the repeated annual sacrifices on Yom Kippur, Jesus' one sacrifice continues to provide atonement. Yom Kippur reminds us of the certainty of our redemption through the blood of our Messiah and High Priest, Jesus.

Atonement through the Messiah is different than it was in ancient Israel. Instead of offering animals, Jesus offered Himself as our atonement (Heb. 9:12). As our High Priest, He did not first need to offer a sacrifice on His behalf, because He is sinless. His atonement is perfect and permanent; His sacrifice does not need to be repeated every year.

Yom Kippur, the national Day of Atonement for Israel, also reminds us of the ultimate salvation of the Jewish people. The prophet Zechariah speaks of a day when the nation of Israel will recognize her Messiah and

“they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only son” (Zech. 12:10). When the nation recognizes her Messiah, Paul states, “all Israel will be saved” (Rom. 11:26). As Yom Kippur reminds us of our own salvation, it also gives us anticipation to look forward to the salvation of God’s chosen people.

## THE PROMISE OF FORGIVENESS FULFILLED IN MESSIAH

FORGIVENESS. WHAT MORE COMFORTING WORD could there be, especially when we know how much we are in need of it? Forgiveness is at the heart of the Gospel message. The sinful woman who bathed Jesus’ feet with the tears accumulated over the course of a lifetime understood. And her love for Him overflowed to such an extent that He declared, “Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little” (Luke 7:47).

The gift of forgiveness, the Apostle Paul says, is not like the offense that calls forth its necessity. “...For if by the one man’s offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many” (Romans 5:15).

But where does forgiveness come from? What are its roots in the Hebrew Scriptures and in Judaism? How does it find fulfillment in the life and teaching of the Messiah?

### **The Hebrew Scriptures and Jewish Tradition**

One of the most important things to remember about the teachings of the Jewish faith is the larger framework in which they operate. This larger framework may be called God’s covenant with Creation. Everything follows this single, consistent thread of continuity throughout Scripture. The Lord created the universe and humanity for the purpose of a loving and harmonious relationship. Therefore, anything that hinders the quality of that relationship must be dealt with.

This is the primary purpose of the sacrificial system and the priesthood. It was instituted to implement God’s statutes: “...So the priest shall make atonement for him concerning his sin, and it shall be forgiven him” (Lev. 4:26). Therefore, forgiveness is the means through which the

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balance of peace (shalom) in creation is restored.

But unlike other systems of sacrifice in the ancient Near East, there was nothing inherently powerful about the priesthood or the sacrifices. "Whereas the required ritual is carried out by the priest, it is desired and is granted solely by God."<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, the attitude of the penitent sinner was of great importance. Sacrifice must be offered in humility and accompanied by repentance. One of the most striking features of the message of the prophets is Israel's casual assumption that going through the motions of sacrifice would be enough to please a just and righteous God.

Still, the topic of forgiveness is a constant theme in the literature of Judaism throughout the centuries. The Talmud confidently asserts, "He who sins and regrets his act is at once forgiven" (Hagigah 5a, Berakhot 12b).<sup>2</sup> Maimonides, the 12th century Jewish sage who did so much to shape the thought of his time and for centuries to come, wrote, "Even if a man has sinned his whole life and repents on the day of his death, all his sins are forgiven him" (Yad, Teshuvah).<sup>3</sup>

### **The Day of Atonement in Judaism Today**

There is no more solemn observance in the Jewish calendar year than the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). Coming at the end of the ten-day period known as the "Days of Awe," it is the culmination of an intense time of introspection during which the faithful Jewish person seeks amends not only with God, but also with others whom he or she might have offended in the past year.

The Day of Atonement begins with fasting at sundown and an evening synagogue service. It continues the following day and culminates in the evening when worshippers stand for an hour-long service to conclude the long day of prayers and fasting. The liturgy of the synagogue for the Day of Atonement is filled with pleas for forgiveness and restoration of relationship with God.

The focus of Yom Kippur is upon worship, the need for forgiveness and deliverance from the just judgment of the Lord against our unrighteousness, and upon the hoped for restoration of relationship. There is much Scripture woven into the synagogue services, particularly from those Psalms which emphasize the exaltation of God and the supplication of sinners. The spirit of the day is summed up in the ancient prayer that begins with the words "Selach Lanu," Forgive Us:

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*“And for all these, O God of forgiveness, forgive us, pardon us, grant us atonement...For thou art the Forgiver of Israel and the Pardoner of the tribes of Jeshurun in all generations, and beside thee we have no king to pardon and forgive our sins.”<sup>4</sup>*

But from the time of the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD, there has been no prescribed sacrifice to accompany the Jewish plea for forgiveness. And without sacrifice, how are such pleas to be answered?

### **The High Priest of the Book of Hebrews**

If we are conscious of having sinned, it follows that we long for our sins to be forgiven and to be reassured of the good graces of our Creator. And while the Book of Hebrews confirms these comforting truths, it also reveals to an even larger extent the scope of the ministry of Messiah as our eternal High Priest.

Among other things, the Book of Hebrews patiently spells out the superiority of Messiah to all that has come before him. Each year Israel's High Priest entered the Most Holy Place with the blood of animal sacrifices. However, as Hebrews reminds us, “...now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself” (Heb. 9:26).

The office of High Priest was a temporary provision, as were the annual sacrifices that needed to be repeated over and over so that our sins could be wiped from our slate. Now, however, we have a High Priest who not only brings the perfect and sufficient offering, but is Himself that offering—not year after year, but once and for all through the sacrifice of Himself.

Knowing this, all who have placed their trust in Him may rejoice. No longer must we wonder how or even if we are forgiven and restored. The promise was on His lips even as He died for us when he spoke His final words, “It is finished” (John 19:31).

#### **Notes:**

1. *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1972), volume 6, p. 1435.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Mishneh Torah*. Hilchot Teshuvah 2:1
4. Davis, Arthur and Adler, Herbert M., eds. *Synagogue Service for Day of Atonement* (New York: Hebrew Publishing Co., 1959) p.10.

# SUKKOT

**S**ukkot, the **Feast of Tabernacles**, is a week-long feast during which the Jewish community builds temporary shelters (*sukkot* means “booths” in Hebrew) to remind each generation that our forefathers

lived as nomads, wandering in the desert for forty years (Lev. 23:42-43).

The Bible also refers to this holiday as the Feast of Ingathering, which celebrates the final reaping of the crops at the end of the harvest (Ex. 23:16). Throughout the holiday it is customary to wave the **Lulav** and **Etrog**, or the four species (date palm, myrtle, willow, citron), representing thankfulness and joy for the present harvest, along with hope for winter rains to ensure an abundant harvest the following spring (Lev. 23:40). The waving of the Lulav and Etrog also represents God's pervasive presence.

In the first century, the priests used to take a pitcher of water from the pool of Siloam and pour it out on the altar, following an elaborate processional up the hill to the Temple Mount. This ceremony occurred every day of the festival, with the most extravagant procession on the final day. The pouring of the water expressed Israel's hope for future rains to produce an abundant harvest. According to the Talmud, this tradition is derived from Isaiah 12:3, “with joy you shall draw water from the wells of salvation.”

On the last day of Sukkot, possibly at the time of this final procession, Jesus stood in the midst of the people and declared, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water” (John 7:37-38). When He said this, some declared, “This is the Messiah” (John 7:41).

Anticipation for the arrival of the Messiah reaches its height during Sukkot. The prophet Zechariah speaks of a time when God will fight and defend His people when the nations gather against Israel (Zech. 14:1-9). After God establishes peace, all the nations will then travel to Jerusalem to worship God during Sukkot (Zech. 14:16). God promises to withhold rain from those countries that do not honor Him in Jerusalem (14:17- 19). Sukkot thus looks forward to the day when God will establish His Kingdom and all nations will join together to worship Him.

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Sukkot also looks forward to the day when God will dwell in the midst of His people. When John introduced Jesus as the Messiah, he said, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). The word “dwelt” can also be translated “took up temporary residence.”

When Jesus revealed His glory to Peter, James and John on the top of a mountain, Peter asked to build three temporary dwellings (*sukkot*), one each for Jesus, Moses and Elijah (Matt. 17:1-13). Peter's desire to build temporary dwellings is an allusion to Sukkot and represents a request for Jesus to establish His Messianic Kingdom. Later, while Jesus rode into Jerusalem for the Feast of Passover, crowds gathered placing palm branches along the road, proclaiming, “Lord save us,” and “Blessed is the King of Israel,” a direct Messianic title. The crowds used palm branches as an allusion to Sukkot, expressing their hope for the coming Messianic Kingdom.

*The Feast of Tabernacles animates our hope in the return of our Messiah and the establishment of His Messianic Kingdom.*

## SUKKOT FAQ

### **What does Sukkot mean?**

Sukkot is the plural form of the Hebrew word *sukkah*, which means a temporary dwelling such as a tent, booth, or hut. English translations of the Bible typically refer to the holiday as the Feast of Tabernacles or Feast of Booths. The *sukkah* represents the temporary dwellings in which the Israelites lived while wandering in the desert after the Lord brought them out of Egypt.

### **Where does Sukkot appear in the Bible?**

The Torah refers to the feast of Sukkot on a number of occasions. It first describes it as the Feast of Ingathering (*Hag Ha'Asif*), when the nation of Israel celebrated the conclusion of the harvest (Ex. 23:16; 34:22). God designates the feast as one of the three pilgrimage festivals when Israelites must travel to Jerusalem to celebrate the holiday in the

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Temple (Deut. 16:16). These early biblical references demonstrate the close association between the holiday and the fall harvest in the agrarian setting of ancient Israel.

Later, the Torah refers to the holiday as the Feast of Tabernacles, Hag Sukkot (Lev. 23:33; Deut. 16:13; Ezra 3:4). The same section of Scripture also describes it simply as the Feast of the Lord (Lev. 23:39). In this passage, God instructs Israel to celebrate the feast for seven days, beginning on the 15th day of the seventh month. Although Tishri (the month of Sukkot) is the first month in the modern Jewish calendar, it corresponds to the seventh month in the biblical calendar. The same passage adds an additional eighth day to the festival as a closing assembly (Lev. 23:36). Judaism refers to this holiday as *Shemini Atzeret*, which means “the assembly of the eighth.”

During the celebration of the festival, the nation presented certain offerings to God. The book of Numbers gives a detailed description of the Temple sacrifices for each of the eight days of the holiday (Num. 29:12-39).

God also instructs Israel to gather a sample from four species of trees to use as part of the Temple celebration during the holiday (Lev. 23:40). Later Jewish tradition identifies these species as the *etrog* (a citron), *lulav* (closed date palm frond), *hadas* (myrtle branch) and *aravah* (willow branch). Nowadays, the three types of branches (date palm, myrtle and willow) are bound together and referred to by the name of the date palm frond (*lulav*). Throughout Sukkot, Jewish communities wave the three species along with the *etrog* (citron) in a special ceremony, which can occur in the synagogue, in the *sukkah*, or in the home.

The Bible also alludes to the holiday as the “feast of the seventh month” or by the simple designation of “feast” (Judges 21:19; 1 Kings 8:2, 65; 2 Chron. 5:3, 7:8; Ezek. 45:25; Neh. 8:14).

In the New Testament, John 7 describes Jesus’ celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem.

### **When does Sukkot occur?**

Sukkot begins on Sunday the 15th day of the Jewish month of Tishri. Since the Jewish day begins at sundown, the holiday commences on sundown at the conclusion of the 14th day and continues for seven days until sundown following the 21st day in the Jewish month Tishri. The addition of Shemini Atzeret, the assembly of the eighth, on the 22nd

of Tishri makes Sukkot an eight-day festival. In Israel, Simchat Torah occurs on the same day as Shemini Atzeret, but outside of Israel, Simchat Torah is a separate celebration, making the holiday nine days.

### **What does Sukkot celebrate?**

The initial Scriptures concerning Sukkot suggest that the holiday began as a celebration for the ingathering of the harvest. The water libation ritual that took place in biblical times anticipated the start of the rainy season, asking God to sustain the nation with an abundant harvest the following spring.

The *sukkah*, the temporary structure built for the holiday, reminds Jewish people of how our ancestors lived in temporary dwellings while they journeyed through the desert to the land of Israel.

The waving of the *lulav* and *etrog*, the four species, reminds us of how God is everywhere. Every day during the holiday, Jewish people wave the four species in six directions – east, west, north, south, up, down.

Finally, the adjoining holiday Simchat Torah celebrates the Torah. During this day, the Jewish community dances with the Torah in the synagogue. Over the course of each year, the Jewish community reads through the entire Torah (the first five books of the Bible) in weekly portions. Simchat Torah completes and begins the cycle of the readings, meaning that the last reading in Deuteronomy is followed by the reading of the beginning of Genesis. The cyclical nature of the reading suggests the Torah, the teaching of the Lord, has neither beginning nor end.

### **How did ancient Israel observe Sukkot?**

During the days of the Temple, the nation of Israel offered special sacrifices to the Lord on each day of Sukkot (Num. 29:12-39). Since Sukkot is one of the three pilgrimage festivals, pilgrims from around the Middle East traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast.

It was also a significant agricultural celebration, commemorating the completion of the harvest. In the first century, the priests gathered a pitcher of water from the pool of Shiloach (Siloam) and poured it out on the altar following an elaborate and joyous processional up the hill to the Temple Mount. This ceremony occurred every day of the festival, with the most extravagant processional performed on the final day.

The pouring out of the water expressed Israel's hope for future rains to produce an abundant harvest. According to the Talmud, this tradition

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derived from Isaiah 12:3, “*with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.*”

On the last day of Sukkot, possibly at the time of this processional, Jesus stood in the midst of the Temple and declared, “*If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water*” (John 7:37-38). When He said this, some declared, “This is the Messiah” (John 7:41).

As is the practice today, Jewish people constructed temporary dwellings, known as *sukkot*, to dwell in during the festival. They also participated in the waving of the four species at the Temple.

### **What are the modern traditions of Sukkot?**

The main Sukkot tradition is to build a temporary structure, known as a *sukkah*. The *sukkah* can be made of different materials, although there are Jewish traditions regulating its construction to show the transient nature of the building. Each *sukkah* must have at least two walls, because the inhabitants must “dwell” in the structure for a week (Lev. 23:42). Tradition defines “dwelling” as eating the daily meals in the *sukkah*, but it is also common to sleep in the *sukkah* in climates and circumstances where it is possible to do so.

The top of the *sukkah* is covered with a natural material, such as palm fronds. The roof should allow the inhabitants to view the stars from within the *sukkah*, in order to remember the Israelites’ journey through the desert. It is customary to welcome guests into the *sukkah* to join in the celebration. Welcoming of guests recalls Abraham’s hospitality when he welcomed guests into his tent.

During Sukkot, Jewish people also wave the four species the *lulav* and *etrog* (Lev. 23:40).

### **Why do we still celebrate Old Testament Holy Days like Sukkot?**

Believers in Messiah Jesus have freedom to celebrate these Holy Days or not to celebrate them. Each of the appointed festivals in Leviticus 23 points to Jesus’ first and second comings, so celebration of these Holy Days is a great way to draw attention to Him.

According to Zechariah, when the Messiah establishes His Kingdom, all nations will travel to Jerusalem to worship the Lord on Sukkot (Zech. 14). Since Sukkot looks forward to the arrival of the Messiah, celebration

of Sukkot is a great way to share with the Jewish community how Jesus, the Jewish Messiah, has already arrived – and how He has promised to return to establish His eternal Kingdom in Jerusalem.

### **Does Sukkot have any prophetic significance?**

The prophet Zechariah speaks of a time when God will fight and defend His people when the nations gather against Israel (Zech. 14:1-9). After God establishes peace, all the nations will then travel to Jerusalem to worship God during Sukkot (Zech. 14:16). God promises to withhold rain from those countries that do not honor Him in Jerusalem (14:17-19). Sukkot looks forward to the day when God will establish His Kingdom and all nations will join together to worship Him.

Peter likely alludes to this holiday when Jesus appears in His full glory next to Moses and Elijah on top of the mountain (Matt. 17:1-13; Mark 9:2-13; Luke 9:28-36). He asks Jesus if it would be appropriate to build three tents – this is essentially a request for Jesus to inaugurate His Kingdom. When Jesus rode a donkey into Jerusalem during the week before Passover, crowds gathered to welcome Him by placing palm branches along the road, proclaiming, “Lord save us,” and “Blessed is the King of Israel,” a direct Messianic title. The crowds used palm branches as an allusion to Sukkot, expressing their hope for the coming Messianic Kingdom.

Sukkot looks forward to the day when God will once again dwell in the midst of His people as Messiah did. When John introduces Jesus as the Messiah, he says, *“the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth”* (John 1:14). The Feast of Tabernacles thus looks forward to the return of our Messiah and the establishment of His Messianic Kingdom.

## MEDIATIONS ON THE FEAST OF THE TABERNACLES

SUKKOT, THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES, lasts for seven days and is part of the High Holy Days season that begins with Rosh Hashanah (New Year). Like many Jewish feasts, Sukkot has a dual significance.

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The first is agricultural, as the tabernacles or booths remind us of how the farm laborers lived as they worked to bring in the harvest. That's why this holiday is also called the Festival of Ingathering.

The second meaning of Sukkot is historical, as the holiday commemorates the forty-year period during which the children of Israel wandered in the desert. In honor of the holiday's historical significance, we are commanded to dwell in temporary shelters (called *sukkot* in Hebrew) as our ancestors did. Today, the commandment to "dwell" in a *sukkah* can be fulfilled by simply eating all of one's meals there; however, if the weather, climate, and one's health permit, one should live in the *sukkah* as much as possible, including sleeping in it.

We also find the Feast of Tabernacles mentioned in connection with the life and ministry of Yeshua (Jesus). On the last and greatest day of this feast, during the ceremony of the pouring of the water in the Temple, Yeshua stood up and boldly proclaimed to the celebrants, "*If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water*" (John 7:37-38)

There is yet another significance of Sukkot - the temporary shelters remind us that we are not to think of ourselves as completely "at home" in this world. For centuries, the Jewish people needed no reminding that they had no permanent dwelling place in this world. Even now, with the reality of the State of Israel, we realize that as long as there is hatred, strife and other evidence of sin, humanity remains exiled from God until our final restoration. We look forward to the fulfillment of the prophetic promise to all of those who have placed their faith in Yeshua - "*For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land*" (Ezekiel 36:24).

# MESSIANIC PROPHECIES

## **He will be a Descendant of Abraham** (Genesis 12:1-3)

*The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."*

## **He will be from the Tribe of Judah** (Genesis 49:10)

*The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his.*

## **He will be from the House of David**(2 Samuel 7:12-13)

*When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.*

## **He will be Born of a Virgin** (Isaiah 7:14)

*Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.*

## **He will be Born in Bethlehem** (Micah 5:2; 5:1 Heb.)

*But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.*

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### **He will be God Himself** (Isaiah 9:6-7; 9:5-6 Heb.)

*For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

### **He will be a Prophet Like Moses** (Deuteronomy 18:15)

*The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him.*

### **He will Come Humbly** (Zechariah 9:9)

*Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.*

### **He will be Crucified** (Psalm 22:16-18)

*For dogs have surrounded Me; The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet; I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me. They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots.*

### **He will be a Suffering Servant** (Isaiah 53:5-6)

*But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*

### **Israel Will Mourn for Him** (Zechariah 12:10)

*And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son.*

**There is no person in all of recorded history who fits these descriptions more perfectly than Yeshua (Jesus)!**

# THE HISTORY OF CHOSEN PEOPLE MINISTRIES

**C**hosen People Ministries was founded by Rabbi Leopold Cohn in 1894 to bring the Gospel of Jesus the Messiah to the Jewish people. In carrying out this purpose, the Mission also seeks

to inspire the Church to participate in and support the work of Jewish evangelism, helping fellow believers carry out this vital part of God's divine redemptive plan.

Rabbi Leopold Cohn founded Chosen People Ministries in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn, New York, shortly after he received Jesus as his Messiah. In its earliest days, people affectionately referred to the Mission as the Brownsville Mission to the Jews. Rabbi Cohn established an outreach headquarterd in a renovated horse stable, where the Mission offered a variety of services and classes for the growing population of Jewish immigrants. His wife, Rose, was instrumental in organizing some of the outreach programs. The Mission published the first issue of its monthly newsletter, *The Chosen People*, in October 1895.

The proclamation of the Gospel to the Jewish people encountered resistance from some, but there were many in the Jewish community who welcomed the message that the Jewish people could receive Messiah's gift of eternal life while maintaining a Jewish identity.

After a few years, the Mission moved its headquarters to Williamsburg (Brooklyn), and then to Manhattan. As ministry expanded beyond a regional focus, the Mission changed its name to *American Board of Missions to the Jews* to reflect the wider scope of the organization. Missionaries began following God's call to reach the Jewish community throughout North and South America, Europe and Israel. Eventually, the Mission changed its name to Chosen People Ministries, and, after a number of years in Charlotte, North Carolina, the Mission headquarters returned to its birthplace in New York City. Chosen People Ministries continually seeks to meet the needs of each generation with both spiritual and material assistance.

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The Mission has continued to develop a rich tradition throughout its history. Following Rabbi Cohn's death in 1937, Joseph Hoffman Cohn succeeded his father as Mission leader, serving until his death in 1953. A long line of godly men has served Chosen People Ministries as effective leaders. Harold Pretlove, Dr. Daniel Fuchs, Harold Sevens, and Sam Nadler have each left an indelible mark on the character of the century-old Mission. Now under the leadership of Dr. Mitch Glaser, Chosen People Ministries continues to experience an exciting time of renewal and expansion.

Just as it did over one hundred years ago, Chosen People Ministries offers English/Bible classes to Jewish immigrants. The Mission also seeks to utilize new means of communication to reach Jewish people in this new millennium with the eternal message of God's love in Jesus the Messiah. Chosen People Ministries is eager, with God's help and your prayers and support, to reach the Jewish people of the twenty-first century. Yes, the world and the Jewish community have experienced enormous changes—but humanity's need for reconciliation to God remains the same. Chosen People Ministries continues to follow its calling to proclaim the unchanging message of the Gospel to the Lord's chosen people.

## OUR MINISTRY PROGRAMS

CHOSEN PEOPLE MINISTRIES EXISTS TO pray for, evangelize, disciple, and serve Jewish people everywhere and to help fellow believers do the same. We fulfill this mission through many types of ministry programs.

### *Messianic Centers*

One of our most effective ministry strategies is to engage local Jewish communities through our Messianic Centers. Our centers are facilities that we rent or own, located in key Jewish population centers; they serve as the base of our ministry operations in the surrounding community. In addition to supporting our evangelistic and discipleship efforts, they provide a place for worship, Bible studies, spiritual counseling, and practical help ministries like food distribution and addiction recovery programs. Some of our key Messianic Centers are located in New York, Los Angeles, South Florida, London, Berlin, Moscow, Tel Aviv, and Jerusalem.

### *Messianic Congregations*

Messianic Congregations are places of worship where both Jewish and Gentile believers can fellowship together in a Jewish context. In addition, they offer Jewish seekers a familiar cultural setting combined with clear Gospel teaching, which communicates our commitment that one can be Jewish and believe in Jesus! We have helped launch dozens of Messianic Congregations around the world, and they continue to be an important and viable part of our ministry.

### *Evangelism and Discipleship*

Evangelism has always been the heartbeat of our ministry, and every year we lead outreach programs and events specifically designed for reaching Jewish people with the Gospel. Our traditional outreach programs include tract distribution, open-air concerts, book tables, and surveys. During our Isaiah 53 Evangelistic Campaign, we have incorporated newer outreach methods, by utilizing media and advertising to offer evangelistic literature to Jewish people. We also host seminars and debates where Jewish seekers can learn about Jesus in a neutral setting. Through each of these outreach events, we meet Jewish people who are seeking spiritual answers. Our missionaries connect with these individuals and build authentic relationships with those who are seeking the truth.

### *Equipping the Local Church*

Another key focus of Chosen People Ministries is to engage and train local churches for Jewish evangelism. Throughout our history, we have observed that one of the key factors in Jewish people coming to know the Lord is the positive influence of Gentile Christians. Therefore, we have made it a priority to develop and offer resources for churches to help believers discover the Jewish roots of the Christian faith and understand the need for Jewish evangelism. We continually develop tools and help equip churches with practical ways for congregants to share Jesus with Jewish people in their communities.

## THE MASTER OF DIVINITY PROGRAM

ANOTHER WAY WE ARE FULFILLING our mission is by identifying and training new leaders in Jewish ministry through our seminary program: *The Charles L. Feinberg Center for Messianic Jewish Studies*. Several years ago, we recognized a tremendous need within Jewish missions for more seminary-trained leadership. Through a partnership with Biola University's Talbot School of Theology, located strategically in the Los Angeles metropolitan area, we were able to develop a cutting-edge new Master of Divinity program with an emphasis on Messianic Jewish Studies. After receiving accreditation through the New York Board of Regents and the Association of Theological Schools, we began classes in summer of 2007.

The Feinberg Center program contains 98 credits and awards a Master of Divinity degree in Messianic Jewish Studies from Talbot School of Theology. Our program is still the only one of its kind in the world; it offers unique coursework to prepare leaders for Jewish ministry as missionaries, Messianic pastors, non-profit leaders, and educators. Three key components of the program make it unique: the coursework, field ministry, and cost.

### *Coursework*

We have designed the curriculum for the Feinberg Center to incorporate both a typical Jewish studies program and an evangelical seminary program, while also catering each specific class towards the current needs of Jewish ministry. Each of our Jewish studies courses, like *Rabbinic Literature and Theology*, *Theology of the Siddur* (Jewish prayer book), and *Jewish History*, contain practical elements on how a better understanding of Jewish tradition can enhance our work in Jewish missions. Additionally, each of the traditional evangelical seminary courses, like *Pastoral Studies*, *Church History*, and *Apologetics*, provide a unique Jewish perspective for the context of Jewish ministry. Our professors are all excellent scholars with a long history of personal experience in Jewish ministry.

### *Field Ministry*

We placed the Feinberg Center in New York City because it is the center of Jewish life in America. With close to two million Jewish people, the

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city provides endless possibilities for students to immerse themselves in Jewish culture and ministry while completing their coursework. In fact, each semester we organize various Jewish-focused field ministry programs to help each student put what they have learned in the classroom into practice.

We have designed the different field ministry opportunities to expose our students to several aspects of Jewish ministry over the course of their studies. These aspects include direct evangelism, discipleship, leading Bible studies, Messianic congregation leadership, and non-profit administrative training. We also provide other unique projects each semester, such as our evangelistic Jewish holiday celebrations, interfaith benevolence projects, debates, and café-style youth outreaches. These numerous field ministry programs take students into several areas of New York City, including Manhattan, Queens, and Brooklyn.

### *Cost*

We established the Feinberg Center to provide our students an affordable education and give them the opportunity to graduate debt-free, enabling them to enter vocational ministry without the tremendous burden of student loans. To achieve this affordability, we offer a wide range of scholarships and subsidies to offset student costs. Not only is our tuition a quarter of what it would normally cost, we also provide student housing for single students and offer students with families a housing scholarship to make their rent affordable. The generous and regular support from our ministry partners makes an affordable education possible.



CHOSEN PEOPLE MINISTRIES CANADA would not exist without the faithful support of Christians around the world who stand with Israel and the Jewish people. We are grateful for the prayers and sacrificial gifts that enable us to continue to bring the Gospel to the Jewish people in 16 countries around the globe.

Would you pray about supporting *Your Mission to the Jewish People*? We are praying that you will give generously and sacrificially as we believe we have a golden moment to join together in reaching Jewish people that may only come once in a lifetime.

There are a number of ways you can give, but the easiest way is to visit our website, [www.chosenpeople.ca/donate/](http://www.chosenpeople.ca/donate/)

You can also mail your donation to:

Chosen People Ministries Canada  
225 Bridgeland Ave.  
Toronto, ON, M6A 1Y7

Lastly, you are always welcome to call us and give your donation with your credit or debit card over the phone. Please call 1-888-442-5535, Tuesday through Thursday, between 8:30am and 5:00pm EST.

**Thank you!**

# Exploring the Jewish High Holidays

## ROSH HASHANAH

- Tashlich, “you will cast,” is one of the most significant observances of Rosh Hashanah.
- During Tashlich, Jewish communities gather along bodies of running water to toss bits of bread into the flowing water.
- This symbolizes the casting of one’s sins into the depths of the sea. “He will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.” (Micah 7:19).

## YOM KIPPUR

- In the ancient world, on Yom Kippur, the High Priest woke up early, donned his priestly garments, and sacrificed a bull for both himself and his family.
- He then cast lots over two goats, choosing one for the Lord and designating the other as the goat to remove sin.
- Only on this day did the High Priest enter into the Holy of Holies in the Temple to offer incense and sprinkle blood on the ark of the covenant.
- The High Priest placed blood from the Lord’s goat onto the second goat. He then cast the second goat into the wilderness, thus symbolically removing Israel’s sin.

## SUKKOT

- In the first century, for celebration of Sukkot, the priests used to take a pitcher of water from the pool of Siloam and pour it out on the altar.
- This expressed Israel’s hope for future rains to produce an abundant harvest, derived from Isaiah 12:3, “with joy you shall draw water from the wells of salvation.”
- On the last day of Sukkot, Jesus stood and declared, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water” (John 7:37-38).