

ROSH HASHANAH

Rosh Hashanah occurs on the first and second days of Tishri. This year it begins at sundown October 2, 2016. Rosh Hashanah in Hebrew means, "head of the year". In Scripture it is known as the Feast of Trumpets, but is also known as the Jewish New Year. This could be confusing because the Lord told Moses and Aaron regarding the month of Nisan: **“This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year.” (Ex 12:2)**

This apparent contradiction can be easily explained by pointing out that the Hebrews had two calendars. Nisan began their religious year, and Tishri began their civil year. The months in the Hebrew calendar begin with the month of Nisan as explicitly stated in the Torah. In fact, the title "First of the Months" (Rosh Hodashim) is reserved in the Torah for the month of Nisan (Exodus 12:2). That's why Tishri is called the 7th month. The years of the Hebrew calendar, however, are numbered from Tishri. For example, it was from Tishri that the "Sh'mittah" or "Sabbatical Year" was calculated. This can be easily seen as the 50th year, or the year of Jubilee, began on the Day of Atonement, which was the 10th day of the 7th month (Lev. 25:8, 9). Exodus 34:22 calls the 7th month, "the turn of the year".

Tishri was also used in calculating the date of man's creation (Yom Teruah). According to the sages September 2016 is 5,777th year from the creation of Adam. The 1st of Tishri was also used to calculate the three years required for fruit trees to remain unpicked (Lev. 19:23).

The first day of Tishri was called the Feast of Trumpets because that holy day was to be commemorated with trumpet blasts. **“The Lord said to Moses, ‘Say to the Israelites: On the first day of the seventh month you are to have a day of rest, a sacred assembly commemorated with trumpet blasts. Do no regular work, but present an offering made to the Lord by fire.’” (Lev 23:23-25)**

Modern Jews also begin the celebration of Rosh Hashanah by the blowing of a ram's horn, or shofar. In ancient times the ram's horn was used to announce the new moon, holidays, and even to summon the people to war. While somewhat festive, this new year's celebration is nothing like the New Year's celebration associated with Dec. 31st. Theirs is focused more on personal introspection and prayer. Rosh Hashanah is considered part of a process of spiritual growth.

The modern celebration includes traditional Jewish foods such as two loaves of bread known as challah. Their round shape is said to symbolize God's crown as well as our own circle of life. Sometimes the bread is baked with a ladder on top to symbolize the Sovereignty of God in the promotion of godly people. Apples dipped in honey are another tradition, symbolizing hope for a sweet year. Honey is also spread on the challah. A mixture made of apples and honey symbolizes the hope for a "sweet year" ahead. Honey is also spread on challah. A mixture made from carrots, cinnamon, yams, prunes, and honey, is also traditional. It is called "Tzimmes".

Since this special day was determined by the "new moon" the actual day was not easily determined. Since their month began when the first sliver of the new moon became visible, two independent and reliable eye witnesses were required to testify before the Sanhedrin. Only then would they officially declare the "Rosh Chodesh). Today Orthodox Jews celebrate Rosh Hashanah for two days while Reform Jews for only one.

Remember! Man does not live by bread alone, but by "every" word that proceeds from the mouth of God (Matt. 4:4). Consequently: **“. . . everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.” (Rom 15:4)**

HAPPY NEW YEAR!