

The Feasts of the Lord – Rosh HaShanah

by Rufus Barnes

Continuing the series on the Feasts of the Lord, we now turn to the first of the autumn Feasts, commonly known as the Jewish New Year or, in Hebrew, Rosh Hashanah. However, somewhat strangely, as the description in Leviticus 23 verses 23 to 25 tells us, the feast falls on the first day of the seventh month! How can this apparent contradiction be explained?

Rosh Hashanah translates in English to 'The Head of the Year' which reflects the rabbis view that this is the start of the **spiritual** year. It is the beginning of what are known in the Jewish calendar as the High Holy Days, which incorporate the New Year and the next two feasts we shall be considering, namely the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles.

The Biblical name for this feast is actually not Rosh Hashanah, but Yom Teruah – the Day of the Sounding of the Trumpets. It is on this day that the people of God are reminded to turn back to Him and this reminder is given by the blowing of the Shofar – the ram's horn. In turning back to God, His people must repent of their sins and prepare to appear before Him in judgement.

This feast marks the re-gathering of God's people and over the following 10 days – the Days of Awe – they are expected to forgive those who have sinned against them, before they, and the Nation, appear before God on the Day of Atonement for their sins to be forgiven them. There is an important Biblical principle here which unsurprisingly Jesus taught His disciples in the Lord's Prayer '*Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who have trespassed against us*'. We must forgive those who have sinned against us as a pre-requisite to our Heavenly Father forgiving us our sins.

For Christians this feast also contains the promise of prophetic fulfilment. At this feast the shofar is blown in four different ways. It begins with a blast, which is followed by a series of short broken notes, then an alarm call and finally a long great blast. Verses 16 – 18 of 1 Thessalonians 4 refer to the return of the Lord. Different translations use different words for what will happen but it is clear that Jesus' return will coincide with the blowing of the shofar, referred to in some translation as the 'the last trump', the name given to the long great blast on the shofar at Rosh Hashanah!

Rufus Barnes – April 2020

*After becoming a Believer and getting married, Rufus Barnes went to Bible School in Jerusalem where his eyes were opened to the Hebraic root of the Christian faith. He is currently Vice-Chair of **CMJ UK**, is on the leadership team of **Hephzibah Cambridge** and leads an Israel prayer meeting in his home town in Essex UK. He has led a number of study tours to Israel and was Chair of **Love Never Fails**.*