

For Jews and Christians, It's Time to Celebrate

It's the most wonderful time of the year!

No, I am not talking about those weeks between Thanksgiving and Christmas. I am talking about the Month of Tishri (September through October on the Greco-Roman calendar). This season, known as the High Holy Days, includes Yom Teruah (Day of Trumpets), also known as Rosh Hashana (New Year), Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) and Sukkot (Tabernacles).

As an adult, I really do see these days as the most wonderful time of the year. As a child though, Yom Teruah and Yom Kippur were the most dreaded days of the year. The services lasted all day and were as dry as sand. The only redeeming factors these two days held was that they were excused absences from school, and on Yom Teruah, one of the men would sound the shofar 100 times. The shofar always reminded me of the bugles sounding when the cavalry arrived to save the day.

While Yom Teruah and Yom Kippur were long and mostly boring to me as a child, Sukkot really was a wonderful time. Sukkot was one of the reasons as a child I loved the G-D of the Bible. Just think about it: the G-D of Israel commanded His people to go camping for a week every fall.

Each family would build a temporary dwelling called a *sukkah*. We decorated the *sukkah* with fruits and vegetables (which could be eaten as desired during the week). We ate our meals in the *sukkah*, and we slept in the *sukkah*. I will always remember counting the days until Sukkot.

As an adult, I still love Sukkot. We build a *sukkah* and still decorate it with fruits. Our synagogue family puts up tents and camps together.

It is still a week our children look forward to (and some of the adults). But as an adult, my wonderment during the season has shifted from my childhood camping trip to a deeper understanding of the first two Holy Days. As an adult, I now look forward to Yom Teruah and Yom Kippur and the prayers for forgiveness that we say as a community.

As a child, I rarely thought about eternity, but now as I approach my 60s, eternity is on my mind much more. So, while as a child I thought to myself, *How cool is the G-D of Israel who commanded us to go camping?*, today I say to myself, *How cool is the G-D of Israel who provided a means of forgiveness to His people?*

Now, when I hear the voice of the shofar call out to us 100 times, my heart doesn't thrill about the sounds alone. My heart becomes filled with the knowledge that I have been forgiven and made new. When I pray the prayers of repentance on Yom Kippur, my heart rejoices because I know my sins are forgiven, and my atonement has been made complete in Yeshua.

These days really have become the most wonderful time of the year. In only a few weeks, we will gather together and hear the shofar sound. Only now when I hear that sound, I no longer think about the cavalry coming to save the day. I think about the Savior who went to Calvary to save His people.

For those of you unfamiliar with these biblical Holy Days, you can read more about them in Leviticus 23, or in the book *G-D's Appointed Times* by Barney Kasdan. I also would like to encourage you to make plans to attend services for Yom Teruah, Yom Kippur and Sukkot at a Messianic synagogue near you.

To find one, you can visit or . {eoa}

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