

The Gentile New Year's Celebration

Rod Myers
January 2, 2022

Not all cultures celebrate the New Year on the same day:

1. Chinese New Year February 8, 2016.
2. Seollal (Korean New Year) February 8, 2016.
3. Nyepi (Balinese New Year) March 9, 2016.
4. Nowruz (Iranian New Year) March 20, 2016.
5. Ugaadhi (Telugu and Kannada New Year) April 8, 2016. (Parts of India)
6. Aluth Avurudda (Sinhalese New Year) April 14th, 2016 (Sri Lanka)
7. Puthandu (Tamil New Year) April 14, 2016. (Parts of India)
8. Diwali (Marwari and Gujarati New Year Day) October 30, 2016. (Parts of India)
9. Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year) October 2 to October 4 (Approx)
10. Ra's as-Sanah al-Hijriyah (Islamic New Year) October 3 (Approx)
11. Aboriginal Murador New Year October 30 (Approx) (Northern Australia)

Of course most of the world celebrates January 1 as the New Year because of the Gregorian calendar. This was instituted in 1582 by Pope Gregory VIII.

I thought it might be fun and educational to tie our New Year's celebration to the Jewish New Year of Rosh Hashanah.

Before we do let's put RH in context. God instituted in the Jewish Law several days of remembrance.

Leviticus 23 outlines the 7 or 8 festivals or days of remembrance:

- The Sabbath 23:1-3
- Passover 23:4-5
- Feast of Unleavened Bread 23:6-8
- The Feast of First Fruits 23:9-14
- The Feast of Week (Pentecost) 23:15-22
- The Feast of Trumpets 23:23-25
- The Day of Atonement 23:26-32
- The Feast of Booths 23:33-36

So what about Rosh Hashanah? Is it in the Bible? And if so what is it?

- The only mention of the phrase "rosh Hashanah" in the Bible is in Ezekiel 40:1, i.e. "the beginning of the new year."

- The Jews consider the Feast of Trumpets the New Year celebration.
- It is marked by the blowing of the shofar (Bring mine)
- To the Jews this is the time of the creation of the world and Adam and Eve.
- **By Mary Fairchild**

In the Bible, Rosh Hashanah, or Jewish New Year, is also called the Feast of Trumpets. The feast begins the Jewish High Holy Days and Ten Days of Repentance (or Days of Awe) with the blowing of the ram's horn, the shofar, calling God's people to repent from their sins. During Rosh Hashanah's synagogue services, the trumpet traditionally sounds 100 notes.

Rosh Hashanah (pronounced *rosh´ huh-shah´nuh*) is also the start of the civil year in Israel. It is a solemn day of soul-searching, forgiveness, repentance, and remembering God's judgment, as well as a joyful day of celebration, looking forward to God's goodness and mercy in the New Year.

Jews are commanded to hear the sounding of the ram's horn on Rosh Hashanah unless it falls on the Sabbath, and then the shofar is not blown.

Orthodox Jews take part in a ceremony known as Tashlich on the first afternoon of Rosh Hashanah. During this "casting off" service they will walk to flowing water and say a prayer from Micah 7:18-20, symbolically casting their sins into the water.

A traditional holiday meal of round challah bread and apple slices dipped in honey is served on Rosh Hashanah, symbolizing God's provision and hope for the sweetness of the coming New Year.

L'Shanah Tovah Tikatevu, meaning "may you be inscribed [in the Book of Life] for a good year," is a typical Jewish New Year's message found in greeting cards, or spoken in a shortened form as Shanah Tovah, meaning "good year."

- Some Jewish organizations take the opportunity of RH to give to the poor.

What of our Gentile New Year?

Our New Year's Celebration often includes excessive amounts of alcohol which leads to several typical crimes. According to All Pro Bail Bondsmen:

- 1) DUI and DWI (Driving while impaired)
- 2) Property Damage
- 3) Assault and Battery
- 4) Public Intoxication
- 5) Trespassing

Americans buy 159% more alcohol on New Year's Eve than on a typical day of the year. It is 151% more on Christmas Eve.

Instead of seeking forgiveness for past sins, typically Americans are focused on making resolutions they seldom keep for the coming year, the most popular ones being:

- Exercise more.
- Lose weight.
- Get organized.
- Learn a new skill or hobby.
- Live life to the fullest.
- Save more money / spend less money.
- Quit smoking.
- Spend more time with family and friends.

Compared to the Jewish celebrations we seem to be lacking in devotion to God. What if we:

- Came together to remember God's creation of the world?
- Took a day to search our souls, to repent of our sins, to come to the Lord for forgiveness, and to contemplate the Lord's judgment?
- Used the day to rejoice that our name is in the book of Life?
- Used this day as an opportunity to share our bounty with those who are suffering?
- Made the Lord's Supper more of a celebration?
- Made our Gentile New Year's Day as exciting as the Jewish New Year's Celebration.