



Yom Teruah and Rosh Hashanah: One Day, Two Distinct Events

Is the first day of the seventh month Yom Teruah or Rosh Hashanah?

The answer is not one or the other.

The same date carries two distinct identities:

Yom Teruah is the appointed day commanded by יהוה.

Rosh Hashanah identifies the beginning of a year-counting cycle.

These two meanings are not enemies. They converge on the same day while serving different purposes.

To understand this correctly, we must allow the whole counsel of Scripture to speak. **We must distinguish between the numbering of months and the counting of complete years.**

Aviv is the first month

יהוה told Moshe and Aharon:

- “This month shall be for you the **beginning of months**; it shall be the first month of the year for you.”
— Shemoth/Exodus 12:2

The month of Aviv, later called Nisan, is indisputably the first month in the numbering of the months. Pesach is celebrated in this first month, followed by Shavuot and then the remaining appointed times.

Nothing about Rosh Hashanah changes this.

Tishrei is not the first month. It is the seventh month.

However, Shemoth 12:2 says that Aviv is the first month “for you.”

It establishes the order in which the months and appointed times are numbered. It does not necessarily say that every annual cycle must begin on the first day of Aviv.

Being the first month in a sequence and being the turning point at which complete years are counted are related ideas, but they are not identical.

Scripture recognises an autumn turning of the year

- Shemoth/Exodus 23:16 says:
“You shall observe the Feast of the Harvest, with the firstfruits of your work from what you sow in the field, and the **Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year**, when you gather the fruit of your work from the field.”
- Shemoth/Exodus 34:22 says:
“You shall observe the Feast of Weeks with the firstfruits of the wheat harvest, and the **Feast of Ingathering at the turning of the year.**”

The expression translated “turning of the year” is:

תְּקֻפַּת הַשָּׁנָה — tequfat hashanah

It describes the circuit, turning or transition of the year. [Shemoth/Exodus 23:14–17 and 34:22–24]

The Feast of Ingathering, Sukkot, occurs in the seventh month. It is celebrated when the produce has been gathered and the agricultural cycle has reached its annual turning point.

This gives us two biblical reference points:

- **Aviv begins the numbering of the months and the cycle of the appointed festivals.**
- **The seventh month stands at the turning of the agricultural year and the beginning of another annual cycle.**

We therefore do not need to choose between a spring beginning and an autumn beginning. Scripture itself recognises different ways of measuring the year.

The rains confirm the agricultural cycle

The agricultural year in the land of Yisra’el begins to turn during the autumn.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 11:14 speaks of the early and latter rain. The early rain comes in the autumn, softening the ground so it can be ploughed and planted. The latter rain comes toward spring and brings the grain to maturity before the harvest.

Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 5:24 similarly describes יְהוָה as the One who gives:

- “The autumn rain and the spring rain in their season, who preserves for us the appointed weeks of harvest.”

Yo'el/Joel 2:23 also speaks of the early and latter rains.

Why is the autumn rain called the “early” rain if Aviv is the first month?

It is early in relation to the agricultural cycle. The ground is prepared and seed is planted after the autumn transition. The latter rain completes the growing process, and the first grain is harvested in Aviv.

The rain cycle therefore supports what Shemoth already reveals: the agricultural year turns in the autumn even though the numbered sequence of months begins with Aviv.

Yom Teruah is the Torah-appointed event

The first day of the seventh month is described in Vayiqra/Leviticus 23:24:

- “In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a solemn rest, a memorial proclaimed with teruah, a set-apart assembly.”

The Hebrew expression is:

זְכוֹרֹן תְּרוּעָה — Zikhron Teruah

Zikhron means a memorial, remembrance or act of being brought to remembrance.

Teruah describes a loud, forceful sound: a shout, alarm or trumpet blast.

Bemidbar/Numbers 29:1 calls the same occasion:

יוֹם תְּרוּעָה — Yom Teruah

The Torah therefore gives the day a clear appointed purpose:

- It is a day of rest.
- It is a set-apart assembly.
- It is a day of remembrance.
- It is marked by teruah.

This is the first event occurring on the day: **the commanded observance of Yom Teruah.**

It must not be obscured by later customs. Whatever else is recognised on this date, the Torah's instructions remain foundational.

What is being remembered?

The Torah calls it a *zikhron*, but it does not explicitly identify one particular historical event that must be remembered.

The teruah may call Yisra'el to remember יהוה's kingship, His covenant, the revelation at Sinai, His acts of deliverance and the nation's responsibility to live faithfully before Him. All these themes fit the Scriptural use of remembrance and the sound of the shofar.

Yet Vayiqra/Leviticus 23 does not say, "You must remember this one specific event."

The emphasis falls on **covenantal remembrance** itself. **Yisra'el is summoned to awaken, assemble and stand before יהוה.**

The day is first a present act of obedience rooted in the remembrance of יהוה's covenant faithfulness.

Can a remembrance also point forward?

Calling Yom Teruah a remembrance does not prevent it from carrying prophetic significance.

Pesach remembers the deliverance from Mitsrayim, but it also provides the pattern through which Yeshua's redemptive work is understood.

Shavuot remembers the harvest and is associated with the giving of Torah, yet it also carries continuing spiritual meaning.

Sukkot remembers the wilderness journey, but the prophets also use its imagery when speaking about the nations and the Messianic kingdom.

A memorial looks backward, but it can simultaneously shape present obedience and anticipate future fulfilment.

Later Scripture connects the trumpet with the Day of יהוה, resurrection, gathering, judgment and the establishment of the Messianic reign. We should not force all those meanings into Vayiqra/Leviticus 23:24, but neither should we deny the prophetic development of the trumpet theme elsewhere in Scripture.

Yom Teruah is a remembrance, but remembrance and expectation are not opposites.

What does "Rosh Hashanah" mean?

Rosh Hashanah — ראש השנה means "head of the year."

The expression occurs in Yehezqel/Ezekiel 40:1:

- "In the twenty-fifth year of our exile, **at the beginning of the year, on the tenth day of the month**—in the fourteenth year after the city had been struck down—on that very day the hand of יהוה was upon me, and He took me there."

The Hebrew says:

בראש השנה — berosh hashanah

This is direct Scriptural evidence that Scripture can speak of a “**head of the year.**”

However, we must read the entire verse. Yehezqel/Ezekiel places this occasion on the tenth day of the month, not the first.

The traditional Jewish interpretation connects Yehezqel’s date with the Jubilee year. Vayiqra/Leviticus 25:8–10 commands that the Jubilee shofar be sounded on the tenth day of the seventh month, Yom HaKippurim:

- “Then you shall cause the shofar of teruah to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month.... You shall set apart the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants.”

In a Jubilee year, the **year-counting cycle had begun**, but the public proclamation of liberty occurred on the tenth day when the shofar sounded. Rabbinic discussion consequently connects Yehezqel’s “head of the year” with a Jubilee year. [Rosh Hashanah 8a–8b]

Yehezqel/Ezekiel 40:1 proves that *Rosh Hashanah* is a Scriptural expression. It also connects the head of the year with the seventh-month season. Nevertheless, it does not by itself name the first day of Tishrei as Rosh Hashanah.

That connection emerges from the combined evidence of Scripture’s autumn year-transition and the preserved Jewish system of year-counting.

The seventh month and the counting of years

The Torah gives further evidence that complete years and seven-year cycles turn around the seventh-month festival season.

Moshe commanded:

- “**At the end of every seven years, at the appointed time in the year of release, during the Feast of Sukkot, when all Yisra’el comes to appear before יהוה your Elohim ... you shall read this Torah before all Yisra’el.**”
— Devarim/Deuteronomy 31:10–11

The seven-year Sh’mithah cycle reaches its public conclusion during Sukkot in the seventh month.

Likewise, Vayiqra/Leviticus 25 commands Yisra’el to count seven cycles of seven years. The Jubilee year is then proclaimed by the shofar on the tenth day of the seventh month.

These passages place the turning of complete year-cycles in the seventh-month season.

The Mishnah later preserves this understanding by identifying four different “new years.”

- It says that the first of Aviv/Nisan is the new year for kings and festivals,
- while the first of Tishrei is the new year for ordinary years,
- Sh’mithah years, Jubilee cycles,

- planting and certain tithes. [Mishnah Rosh Hashanah 1:1]