

OIM UPDATE

January 2018

For a variety of reasons, the joyful anticipation for wonderful things to continue in the coming year is riding high! In fact, one way to view the year 2018, from an ancient perspective, is how the Hebrew word *chai* (חַי) or life in gematria adds up to the number 18. And if the number two can represent a double blessing, then 2018 has the potential to be an awesome year for those pursuing the Holy One of Israel. *Twenty Chai! Mazel Tov!*

Later this year, the worldwide Jewish community and many Believers in Israel's Messiah all over the world will celebrate and recognize the seventieth anniversary of the reconstitution and independence of the State of Israel on May 14, 1948, which just happens to be the 5th of Iyar in the Hebrew year of 5708. Now this year on April 19, *Yom HaAtzmaut* (Independence Day) will be in the Hebrew year 5778. In addition, Independence Day immediately follows *Yom HaZikaron*, Memorial Day in remembrance of Israelis lost to defend their country, commemorated on the 4th of Iyar or April 18th this year.

Biblically speaking, there has always been some special significance to the number seventy or ten times seven. In the Torah, it was the seventy elders who were allowed to approach the Holy One and witness His presence on pavement of sapphire, after the blood anointing of the covenant:

"Then Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins and the other half he poured out against the altar. He took the Scroll of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people. Again they said, '**All that ADONAI has spoken, we will do and obey.**' Then Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, 'Behold the blood of the covenant, which ADONAI has cut with you, in agreement with all these words.' Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and **seventy of the elders of Israel** went up. They saw the God of Israel, and under His feet was something like a pavement of sapphire, as clear as the very heavens" (Exodus 24:6-10, TLV).

In addition, seventy elders received the same Spirit given to Moses, in order to minister through prophecy to the people of Israel:

"So Moses went out and told the people ADONAI's words. **He gathered 70 of the elders of the people** and had them stand around the Tent. ADONAI descended in the cloud and spoke with him. **He took some of the Ruach that was on him and placed it on each of the 70 elders.** It so happened that when the *Ruach* first rested on them, they prophesied—but never again" (Numbers 11:24-25, TLV).

Frequently in Jewish and Rabbinical thought, it is concluded that the number of nations created by the Almighty correspond to the seventy people who migrated with Jacob down to Egypt. The sons of Jacob offered sacrifices atonement by the seventy shekels (Numbers 7):

"**Your fathers went down to Egypt with 70 persons,** and now ADONAI your God has made you like the stars of the heavens in number" (Deuteronomy 10:22, TLV).

Moving through time, one remembers Jeremiah's prophecy about the seventy year punishment of the Southern Kingdom, for not observing the Sabbath rest after settling in the Promised Land. But Jeremiah also gives an excellent word that foreshadows the blessings which come with the restoration of Israel to the territory promised to Abraham and his descendants:

"For thus says ADONAI: '**After 70 years for Babylon are complete, I will visit you,**

and fulfill My good word toward you—to bring you back to this place. For I know the plans that I have in mind for you,' declares *ADONAI*, 'plans for *shalom* and not calamity—to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call on Me, and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me, when you will search for Me with all your heart'" (Jeremiah 29:10-13, TLV).

A parallel prophecy is found in Zechariah 1, which further describes the Holy One's inherent love for Jerusalem and Zion, and that in His time, the restoration of Israel will be completed:

"Then the angel of *ADONAI* answered and said, '*ADONAI-Tzva'ot*, how long will You withhold compassion on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah with whom You have been angry for 70 years?' *ADONAI* answered the angel who was speaking to me with pleasant, comforting words. Then the angel speaking to me said, 'Cry out saying, **thus says *ADONAI-Tzva'ot*, 'I am exceedingly zealous for Jerusalem and for Zion and I am infuriated with the haughty nations. I was a little angry with them, but they furthered their own calamity.' 'Therefore,' thus says *ADONAI*, 'I will return to Jerusalem with compassion. My House will be built there,' declares *ADONAI-Tzva'ot* 'and a measuring line will be stretched out over Jerusalem.' **Again cry out, saying, thus says *ADONAI-Tzva'ot*, 'My cities will again overflow with prosperity and *ADONAI* will again comfort Zion and will again choose Jerusalem''**" (Zechariah 1:12-17, TLV).**

Finally in Apostolic era, the Messiah Yeshua Himself chooses seventy people to go two by two to proclaim the good news. With the warnings about potential challenges, the good report was that as the laborers went forth via the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the power of the gospel of the Kingdom ruled over those who demonically opposed the declarations:

"Now after these things, **the Lord assigned seventy others and sent them out by twos** before Him into every town and place where He Himself was about to go. And He was telling them, '**The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore, beg the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.** Go forth! Look, I am sending you as lambs in the midst of wolves'. . . **Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, 'Master, even the demons submit to us in Your name!'**" (Luke 10:1-3, 17, TLV).

Therefore in this seventieth anniversary year of the rebirth of Israel, it is my prayer that many laborers will be inspired to go forth and faithfully proclaim the good news of eternal life provided by the atoning death of Yeshua. In so doing, as the harvest of souls abounds, may a revival of youth break forth around the world this year of life (*chai*), as it did fifty years ago following the liberation and recapture of Jerusalem on June 7, 1967 during Six Day War. In so doing, may we all witness the Lord's power once again, as His love goes forth from Zion to the nations of the world:

"*ADONAI* will extend your mighty rod from Zion: 'Rule in the midst of your enemies.' Your people will be a freewill offering in a day of your power. In holy splendors, from dawn's womb, yours is the dew of your youth" (Psalm 110:2-3, TLV).

We want to especially thank those of you who have faithfully supported our efforts over the years! We continue to need your financial support in order to dedicate the time and energy required to continue in the work that the Lord has assigned us. **We particularly need many of you to sign up for a regular monthly contribution via PayPal at www.outreachisrael.net.**

Blessings in 2018,
Mark Huey

TOWARD 2020

We are two years away from 2020, and with it the third decade of the Twenty-First Century. I can vividly recall just a mere nine years ago, as 2010 was approaching, how I believed that the second decade of the Twenty-First Century was going to be a substantial period of change and development for our emerging Messianic movement. What issues and topics which had seldom been discussed, were now going to come into the open? What things would take place, which would be positively used by the Lord to help us become a Messianic force for righteousness and good in the Earth?

Have some good things taken place in the 2010s? Absolutely. For myself, I have a more focused life of ministry service than I once did. The ease of technology has enabled me to work at a much faster pace, and reach a diverse number of people with important messages more efficiently. I get to multi-task with multiple computers in my office: one for writing and one for editing audio and video. I have a nice routine throughout the week that gives my life structure, and family and friends whom I love, and who lift me up when I have personal distresses and concerns.

I think for some of us, 2017 has closed with a mixture of feelings. For a number of you 2017 was a very good year. While the American political scene is starkly divided, the president you want is in the White House, the economy is turning around, and certainly the religious freedoms of Believers are in tact. For some of you, 2017 was a year you would like to forget. Traumas and hardships are a part of human life. We learn from them, but we always like to be as far away from them as possible. For me, 2017 was a mixture of good things, not so good things, unexpected things, and even a few surprises.

There were some ministry projects that I set out to complete in 2017, which were completed. The massive volume *Salvation on the Line, Volume I* was released, covering passages in the Gospels and Acts, addressing the Divinity of Yeshua. *Salvation on the Line, Volume II*, covering the rest of the Divinity passages in the Apostolic Scriptures, was completed at the end of the year, now in post-production. Originally unforeseen was the release of *The New Testament Validates Torah MAXIMUM EDITION*, transplanting many things from our *Practical Messianic* commentary series. Planned, but doubtlessly accelerated, was the release of the Messianic Apologetics app for iPhone and Android.

The biggest thing which was completely unexpected for me, was the crash experienced on messianicapologetics.net at the end of July, and the subsequent upgrade and reconstruction of the Messianic Apologetics website. This involved not only reintegration of critical material, but me making significant efforts of seeing that a number of Bible studies from the 2000s were re-recorded, that

most of our articles and FAQ entries now have associated audio podcasts, and that we indeed take advantage of new podcast channels on iTunes and Google Play. As 2017 closed, Messianic Apologetics launched a new podcast routine, which each day touching on a particular theme:

Monday: the Nature of Yeshua

Tuesday: The New Testament Validates Torah MAXIMUM EDITION

Wednesday: video podcast or blog or new FAQ entry

Thursday: Kosher

Friday: Sabbath or Biblical Holidays

2018 does bring with it a number of new writing projects, some of which have been on the table for a while. These include *After the Afterlife* which will deal with the future resurrection, the reflective commentary *Bible Messages for the Practical Messianic*, and progress needing to be made on the *Messianic Circumcision Helper*, among others. Since being given the primary responsibility for Outreach Israel News in 2017, I have been writing articles to later be used in a workbook called *The Messianic Walk*. Unlike our ministry's original workbook *Hebraic Roots: An Introductory Study*, which was mainly produced for small non-Jewish groups investigating the Messianic movement—*The Messianic Walk* is going to be a direct result of me teaching the New Foundations-New Members class at my local congregation. It will be dealing with the Messianic mission of Jewish outreach, evangelism, Israel solidarity, and the unique dimensions present when Jewish and non-Jewish Believers come together in congregational settings.

Outreach Israel Ministries and Messianic Apologetics have an important job to do in this hour! While we are very economical and do many things ourselves, we still have many legitimate expenses and financial needs. This 2018, we need many of you to step up and to join with us as regular, monthly contributors. Your modest, monthly donation of \$50 or \$100, is used very wisely and reasonably. It certainly equips us to continue the daily and weekly tasks of providing sound teaching to the people of today's Messianic community!

J.K. McKee,

INTRODUCING THE BIBLICAL APPOINTMENTS

by J.K. McKee

Why are holidays important?¹ A holiday, as we call it in English, is defined by *The American Heritage Dictionary* as “A day on which custom or the law dictates a halt to ordinary business to commemorate or celebrate a particular event.” Another definition is very simply, “A holy day,” meaning a day set aside to remember something religious.² The holidays that we find in the Holy Scriptures give us a great opportunity as Believers to commemorate Biblical history and the work of our Messiah.

In the opening verses of Leviticus 23, we are told, “The LORD spoke again to Moses, saying, ‘Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, “the LORD’s appointed times which you shall proclaim as holy convocations—My appointed times are these”’” (vs. 1-2, NASU). The Hebrew word for “appointed time” or “appointed festival” (ATS) is *moed* (מוֹעֵד), and its plural form is *moedim* (מוֹעֲדִים). It has a variety of meanings, including: “appointed time, place, meeting,” and “sacred season,” “set feast,” or “appointed season” (BDB).³ It is to be a special time between God’s people and Him. The *ArtScroll Chumash* tells us,

“. . . *Moadim* are the days which stand out from the other days of the year. They summon us from our everyday life to halt and to dedicate all our spiritual activities to them. . . . The *Moadim* interrupt the ordinary activities of our life and give us the spirit, power, and consecration for the future by revivifying those ideals upon which our whole life is based, or they eradicate such evil consequences of past activity as are deadly to body and spirit and thus restore us to lost purity and the hope of blessing.”⁴

It is important that the “Tent of Meeting,” where Moses and Aaron and the elders of Israel met the Lord in the wilderness, is called the *ohel moed* (אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד). It could be understood as the “Tent of Appointment.” Numbers 20:6 says, “Then Moses and Aaron came in from the presence of the assem-

¹ This has been adapted from a previous edition, appearing in J.K. McKee, *Introduction to Things Messianic* (Kissimmee, FL: TNN Press, 2009).

² William Morris, ed., *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (New York: American Heritage Publishing, 1969), 628.

³ Francis Brown, S.R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 417.

⁴ Nosson Scherman, ed., et. al., *The ArtScroll Chumash, Stone Edition*, 5th ed. (Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, 2000), 682.

bly to the doorway of the tent of meeting and fell on their faces. Then the glory of the LORD appeared to them.” Using this as a frame of reference, if we truly want the glory of God to appear before us, then the importance of meeting Him when *He wants* cannot be overstated.

The term for “convocation” (Leviticus 23:1-2), also often used to describe the appointed times, is the Hebrew *miqra* (מִקְרָא). It specifically means “convocation, convoking, reading,” in reference to a “religious gathering on Sabbath and certain sacred days” (BDB).⁵ It is derived from the verb *qara* (קָרָא), to “call, cry, utter a loud sound,” “make proclamation,” and “summon” (BDB).⁶ The appointed times call us together to rejoice in the Lord, focusing on Him, and make mention to one another of the work that He has done for us.

Many Messianic Believers, especially those who place a high prophetic emphasis on the pattern of the Biblical appointments, define the festivals of the Lord as *rehearsals*. Certainly, when we celebrate the Biblical holidays we not only remember the historical events in the life of Ancient Israel such as the Passover and Exodus, or the giving of the Ten Commandments, but we also recognize the prophetic fulfillment, both past and future, of Messiah Yeshua in them (Colossians 2:17). We essentially “rehearse” what is to come, in preparation for the Messiah’s return, and we learn important lessons about God’s ongoing plan of salvation history.

Another Hebrew term that is often used in Scripture to describe the Biblical feasts is *chag* (חַג), which *AMG* defines as “a feast, a festival.”⁷ It is derived from the verb *chagag* (חָגַג), “to hold a feast, a pilgrim feast, to celebrate a holy day. . . It is usually used in the context of rejoicing and describes festive attitudes and actions, often while on the way to worship or when celebrating a feast.”⁸ One of the clear elements of the appointed times is *celebration*. The *moedim* are to be times of great rejoicing in the Lord.

The Biblical holidays as outlined in Leviticus 23 may be divided up into three general seasons: Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. Thus, when someone refers to Passover, he or she may not just be referring to Passover, but also the Festival of Unleavened Bread that occurs immediately thereafter. The listing below provides a brief reference of each of the Biblical holidays in Leviticus 23, and various extra-Torah and extra-Biblical celebrations that are beneficial and edifying to the Body of Messiah.

⁵ BDB, 896.

⁶ Ibid., 895.

⁷ Warren Baker and Eugene Carpenter, eds., *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament* (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 2003), 312.

⁸ Ibid., 313.

The Sabbath

Shabbat (שַׁבָּת): *Shabbat* is the first appointed time given, although there are those who do not reckon it among the *moedim*, instead considering it to be its own unique institution.

Shabbat (or *Shabbos*) is the seventh-day Sabbath. Remembering the Sabbath is considered to be a sign of holiness (Exodus 31:16), where no work is conducted. The institution of the Sabbath is inclusive to all strata of society, including animals (Exodus 20:8-11), and welcomes in strangers and foreigners from outside the community of Israel (Isaiah 56:6-7). *Shabbat* is regarded as a memorial of both the Creation (Genesis 2:3) as well as the Exodus (Deuteronomy 5:15). *Shabbat* is a time where there is to be no buying or selling (Nehemiah 13:15), kindling of a fire (Exodus 35:3)—but most especially be a time of delighting in the Lord (Isaiah 58:13-14).

Yeshua the Messiah said that “The sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27, NRSV), indicating how its rest is open for all people. However, as Lord of the Sabbath (Matthew 12:7-8), rather than *Shabbat* being legalistically burdensome through undue regulations, Yeshua emphasized that performing acts of goodness were permitted on the Sabbath (Matthew 12:1-5, 9-11; Luke 13:15).

The weekly Sabbath is a holy convocation (Leviticus 23:3), and by Second Temple times was often focused around synagogue worship and study. *Shabbat* is to be a weekly outward sign that is to distinguish God’s people as they rest from all their work sundown Friday evening to sundown Saturday evening. Messianic congregations usually hold their weekly worship and teaching services on either Friday evening or Saturday morning, often attended with either a fellowship meal (or *oneg*) and other activities. The Sabbath is often closed with a traditional service known as *Havdalah*, preparing those who kept it for the next working week. *Shabbat* will be observed by the entire world in the future Millennium (Isaiah 66:23).

The Spring Holidays

Pesach (פֶּסַח): *Pesach* or Passover commemorates God’s deliverance of the Ancient Israelites from slavery and His subsequent judgment on the Egyptians (Leviticus 23:5-8). The prime element of Passover is the lamb (Exodus 12:3, 6-7), and how the blood of the lamb protected the Israelites from the death of the firstborn (Exodus 12:12-13, 29-33). The account of the Passover and Ancient Israel’s deliverance from Egyptian servitude, is a theme which is carried on throughout the Holy Scriptures

Customary observance of the Passover in Jewish tradition extending back to Second Temple times focuses one’s attention on the *seder* (סֵדֶר)

meal, a time of retelling the Passover story in the home, by incorporating the elements of unleavened bread, green herbs, bitter herbs, and *charoset*. Those involved in the *seder* will follow an *haggadah*, a basic order of service, which incorporates four cups of wine. The *seder* plate will be the centerpiece of the Passover evening, where the different elements of the meal will be represented. Throughout the *seder* meal, green herbs will be dipped into saltwater, remembering the bitterness of Israel's slavery, *charoset* represents the mortar used by the slaves to build for the Egyptians, and unleavened bread reminds one of the hasty departure the Israelites had to make from Egypt.

For Believers in Israel's Messiah, Yeshua, He is the Passover Lamb who was sacrificed for our sins (1 Corinthians 5:7; John 1:29). Passover and the Exodus story are vital to the understanding of one's salvation! Yeshua's sacrifice at Golgotha (Calvary) as *our* Passover Lamb, delivers us from slavery to sin and into eternal life in Him. Yeshua's Last Supper held with His Disciples (Matthew 26:17-35; Mark 14:1-31; Luke 22:1-23; John 13:1-20), was actually a Passover *seder* meal. The plagues issued by the God of Israel upon Egypt, not only serve as clear indicators of the judgments of the One True God over the false gods of Egypt—but also speak to the judgments of the Book of Revelation. The Pharaoh of Egypt, is certainly representative of the future antimessiah/antichrist.

Chag HaMatzah (חַג הַמַּצוֹת): *Chag HaMatzah* is the Festival of Unleavened Bread (Leviticus 23:5-6). It occurs for one week following Passover, in remembrance of the Ancient Israelites leaving Egypt and having to eat *matzah* (מַצָּה) or unleavened bread, the bread of haste (Exodus 12:39). Items without leavening or yeast are to be eaten during this time. Since *matzah* is without leaven, for Believers in Yeshua it represents His sinless nature for us and how we must remove the sin from our lives (1 Corinthians 5:8; Galatians 5:9). Since Unleavened Bread occurs in conjunction with Passover, it is often not distinguished as a separate holiday (see Scripture references for *Pesach*).

Shavuot (שָׁבוּעוֹת): *Shavuot* (or *Shavuos*) or the Feast of Weeks is more commonly called Pentecost, a Greek-derived name meaning "fiftieth" (Grk. πεντηκοστή, *pentēkostē*). The Feast of Weeks was originally established as an agricultural festival where the first of the wheat harvest would be presented to God as an offering (Leviticus 23:15-21). *Shavuot* is also the time when it is traditionally believed that the Torah was given to Moses on Mount Sinai. Following the giving of the Torah, the Ancient Israelites worshipped the

golden calf and Moses destroyed the two tablets of the Ten Commandments (cf. Exodus 19-33). *Shavuot* or Pentecost is the traditional time when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Believers at the Upper Room in Jerusalem following Yeshua's ascension into Heaven (Acts 2:1-4). Messianic people can often associate *Shavuot* with the formal giving of the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:25-27), concurrent with the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai 1,300 (or 1,500) years earlier.

The Fall Holidays

Yom Teruah (יום תְּרוּעָה): *Yom Teruah* is the Day of Blowing, as specified in the Torah (Leviticus 23:23-25). It is remembered as *Rosh HaShanah* (רֵאשִׁית הַשָּׁנָה) or the Civil New Year in Judaism today, although it is hardly remembered as a January 1 new year. *Yom Teruah* or *Rosh HaShanah* was established to be a holy convocation celebrated by the blowing of trumpets, and involves special blowings of the *shofar* (שׁוֹפָר) or ram's horn. This convocation is intended to prepare the people for the ten Days of Awe before *Yom Kippur*, where unresolved conflicts between others in the community are repented of. *Rosh HaShanah* has special significance to us as Believers in the Messiah as we will be caught up in the air to meet Him at the blast of the trumpet at His Second Coming (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

Yom Kippur (יום כִּפּוּר): *Yom Kippur* is the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 23:26-32). In the past, this was the only time when the high priest was permitted to enter into the Holy of Holies and spread the sacrificial blood upon the Ark of the Covenant (Leviticus 16:2; cf. Hebrews 9:3-5). The releasing of the scapegoat is also featured prominently on *Yom Kippur* (Leviticus 16:5-9, 10, 21-22). On the Day of Atonement we are commanded to afflict ourselves by fasting (cf. Acts 27:9), and reflect on our sin. Within the Messianic community, while the final atonement for sin has been offered by Yeshua the Messiah, *Yom Kippur* is still a time of prayer and intercession, resolving corporate conflicts and sins, and entreating for the salvation of the Jewish people and the world. *Yom Kippur* has special prophetic significance to us who know Yeshua, because it is likely that a future *Yom Kippur* will be when the Day of the LORD occurs, when His judgment is poured out upon humanity at the Battle of Armageddon.

Sukkot (סֻכּוֹת): *Sukkot* (or *Succos* in the Ashkenazic pronunciation) is the Feast of Tabernacles, also called the Feast of Booths. The Israelites were to dwell in a temporary house known as a *sukkah* (סֻכָּה), or a hut covered by

leafy branches for seven days (Leviticus 23:33-44; Numbers 29:12). The Feast of Tabernacles commemorates the Ancient Israelites' journey in the wilderness and how God wanted earnestly to tabernacle or dwell with them with them. It involves the waving of branches (Leviticus 23:40), and is to be a family affair (Deuteronomy 16). Many think that the American holiday of Thanksgiving has its roots in the Feast of Tabernacles. *Sukkot* is also a likely time when Yeshua the Messiah was born (John 1:14), and it will be celebrated by all after His return. Tabernacles will be a critical holiday for all the nations to celebrate during the Millennium (Zechariah 14:1-21).

Shemini Atzeret (שְׁמִינִי עֲצֵרֶת): *Shemini Atzeret* (or *Shemini Atzeres* in the Ashkenazic pronunciation) or the Eighth Day of Assembly is often overlooked as its own separate holiday, coming after the seven days of *Sukkot* (Leviticus 23:36b-37a). *Shemini Atzeret* represents the desire of our Heavenly Father to stay with us for one more day, as we reflect back on the tabernacling during *Sukkot*. It symbolizes how we will live with Him forever in the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:3-4).

Other Holidays In and Out of the Bible

Chanukah (חֲנֻכָּה): *Chanukah* (or Channukah, Hanukah, Hanukkah, etc.) or the Feast of Dedication is an eight day holiday commemorating the work of the Maccabees and their defeat over the Syrian Greeks in 165 B.C.E. The Syrian Greeks or Selucids had conquered the Land of Israel and desecrated the Temple (cf. Daniel 8:21-25), sacrificing a pig and erecting an altar to the god Zeus in it. It was illegal on the threat of death for the Jewish people to circumcise their sons, observe the Sabbath, observe the Torah-prescribed festivals, and eat kosher food. The Syrian Greeks promoted forced assimilation of the Jewish people to Hellenistic paganism. *Chanukah* celebrates how Maccabean resistance fought off the Seleucids, restoring Jewish independence, and how the Temple was rededicated (1&2 Maccabees in the Apocrypha). There was only enough consecrated oil to light the candelabra or *menorah* in the Temple for one day, but instead it lasted for eight days (b.*Shabbat* 12a in the Talmud). Yeshua the Messiah is witnessed to remember *Chanukah*, most often appearing in English Bibles as "the Feast of the Dedication" (John 10:22, NASU).

Purim (פּוּרִים): *Purim* or the Feast of Lots commemorates the story of Esther, the events of which occur after the Persian Empire conquers the Babylonian Empire, which has a large population of Jews dispersed from the Land of Israel. *Purim* celebrates the defeat of the evil Haman, who had

planned to kill all the Jews, and how God's sovereignty and protecting hand prevailed through the Jewess Esther, wife of the Persian emperor, and her cousin Mordechai. The name *Purim* comes from the *pur* (פּוּר) or lot that was to be cast to determine when the mass executions were to take place (Esther 3:13). Frequently in the Jewish community, *Purim* is a time when a customary retelling of the story of Esther is delivered in dramatic form, a tradition which is carried out to various degrees in the Messianic movement as well.

Tishah b'Av (תִּשְׁעָה בְּאָב): *Tishah b'Av* or the Ninth of Av is an extra-Biblical fast day when the destruction of the First and Second Temples in Jerusalem is remembered. Historically, the Ninth of Av has also been a day when terrible, tragic events have occurred to the Jewish people, such as their eviction from Spain in 1492. It has been a time to remember the past and terrible events like the Crusades or the Holocaust.

Simchat Torah (שִׂמְחַת תּוֹרָה): *Simchat Torah* (or *Simchas Torah*) or Joy of the Torah occurs on the same day as *Shemini Atzeret*. It was added by the Jewish Rabbis to celebrate the ending of the reading of the yearly Torah cycle, and to rejoice in the forthcoming reading of the next Torah cycle.

Modern-Day Israeli Holidays

Yom HaShoah (יּוֹם הַשּׂוֹאָה): *Yom HaShoah* or Holocaust Memorial Day is when the 6 million Jews who died in the Holocaust are formally remembered. It specifically commemorates the 1943 Warsaw Ghetto uprising.

Yom HaZikaron (יּוֹן הַזִּכְרוֹן): *Yom HaZikaron* or Israel's Remembrance Day commemorates the war heroes of the State of Israel, those who have fought and died for the preservation of the Jewish people and the Jewish state.

Yom HaAtzmaut (יּוֹם הַעֲצֵמָאוּת): *Yom HaAtzmaut* is Israel Independence Day when the State of Israel was established as an independent country in 1948. The Zionist cause and early pioneers of the State of Israel are remembered, as are those who have fought and died to maintain Israel's freedom and independence.

Yom Yerushalayim (יּוֹם יְרוּשָׁלַיִם): *Yom Yerushalayim* or Jerusalem Day commemorates the recapturing of the Old City of Jerusalem in the 1967 Six Day War.