

# **INTRODUCTION TO THINGS MESSIANIC**

**An Introduction for Newcomers  
to the Messianic Movement**

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**MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS**  
[messianicapologetics.net](http://messianicapologetics.net)

# Introduction to Things Messianic

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# Abbreviations and Special Terms

The following is a list of abbreviations for reference works and special terms which are used in publications by Outreach Israel Ministries and Messianic Apologetics. Please familiarize yourself with them as the text may reference a Bible version, i.e., RSV for the Revised Standard Version, or a source such as TWOT for the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, solely by its abbreviation. Detailed listings of these sources are provided in the Bibliography.

ABD: *Anchor Bible Dictionary*  
AMG: *Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament, New Testament*  
ANE: Ancient Near East(ern)  
Apostolic Scriptures/Writings: the New Testament  
Ara: Aramaic  
ASV: American Standard Version (1901)  
ATS: ArtScroll Tanach (1996)  
b. Babylonian Talmud (*Talmud Bavli*)  
B.C.E.: Before Common Era or B.C.  
BDAG: *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Bauer, Danker, Arndt, Gingrich)  
BDB: *Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*  
C.E.: Common Era or A.D.  
CGEDNT: *Concise Greek-English Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Barclay M. Newman)  
CGL: *Cambridge Greek Lexicon* (2021)  
CHALOT: *Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Holladay)  
CJB: Complete Jewish Bible (1998)  
CJSB: Complete Jewish Study Bible (2016)  
DRA: Douay-Rheims American Edition  
DSS: Dead Sea Scrolls  
EDB: *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*  
EJ: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*  
ESV: English Standard Version (2001)  
Ger: German  
GNT: Greek New Testament  
Grk: Greek  
HALOT: *Hebrew & Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Koehler and Baumgartner)  
HCSB: Holman Christian Standard Bible (2004)  
Heb: Hebrew  
HNV: Hebrew Names Version of the World English Bible  
IDB: *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*  
IDBSup: *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Supplement*  
ISBE: *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*  
IVPBBC: *IVP Bible Background Commentary (Old & New Testament)*  
Jastrow: *Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Bavli, Talmud Yerushalmi, and Midrashic Literature* (Marcus Jastrow)  
JBK: New Jerusalem Bible-Koren (2000)  
JETS: *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*  
KJV: King James Version  
Lattimore: The New Testament by Richmond Lattimore (1996)  
LITV: *Literal Translation of the Holy Bible* by Jay P. Green (1986)  
LES: *Lexham English Septuagint* (2019)  
LS: *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon* (Liddell-Scott)  
LSJM: *Greek-English Lexicon* (Liddell-Scott-Jones-McKenzie)  
LXE: *Septuagint with Apocrypha* by Sir L.C.L. Brenton (1851)  
LXX: Septuagint  
m. Mishnah  
MT: Masoretic Text  
NASB: New American Standard Bible (1977)  
NASU: New American Standard Update (1995)  
NBCR: *New Bible Commentary: Revised*  
NEB: New English Bible (1970)  
Nelson: *Nelson's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament Words*  
NETS: New English Translation of the Septuagint (2007)  
NIB: *New Interpreter's Bible*

NIDB: *New International Dictionary of the Bible*

NIV: New International Version (1984)

NJB: New Jerusalem Bible-Catholic (1985)

NJPS: Tanakh, A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures (1999)

NKJV: New King James Version (1982)

NRSV: New Revised Standard Version (1989)

NLT: New Living Translation (1996)

NT: New Testament

OT: Old Testament

REB: Revised English Bible (1989)

RSV: Revised Standard Version (1952)

t. Tosefta

Tanach (Tanakh): the Old Testament

Thayer: *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*

TDNT: *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*

TLV: Messianic Jewish Family Bible—Tree of Life Version (2014)

TNIV: Today's New International Version (2005)

TWOT: *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*

UBSHNT: United Bible Societies' 1991 Hebrew New Testament revised edition

v(s). verse(s)

Vine: *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*

Vul: Latin Vulgate

YLT: Young's Literal Translation (1862/1898)

WMB: World Messianic Bible (2020)

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# Introducing the Biblical Appointments

Why are holidays important? 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.<sup>1</sup> The holidays which we find in the Holy Scriptures give God’s people a great opportunity as Believers to commemorate Biblical history and the work of the Messiah.

In the opening verses of Leviticus 23, it is stated, “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’”” (Leviticus 23:1-2, NASU). The Hebrew word for “appointed time” or “appointed festival” (ATS) is *moed*, and its plural form is *moedim*. It has a variety of meanings, including: “appointed time, place, meeting,” and “*sacred season*,” “*set feast*,” or “*appointed season*” (BDB).<sup>2</sup> *Moedim* are intended to be special times between God and His people. The Orthodox Jewish *ArtScroll Chumash* further details,

“...*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

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<sup>1</sup> William Morris, ed., *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (New York: American Heritage Publishing, 1969), 628.

<sup>2</sup> Francis Brown, S.R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 417.

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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.”<sup>3</sup>

It is important to recognize how the “Tent of Meeting,” where Moses and Aaron and the elders of Israel met the Lord in the wilderness, is called the *ohel moed*. It could be understood as the “Tent of Appointment.” Numbers 20:6 recorded, “Then Moses and Aaron came in from the presence of the assembly to the doorway of the tent of meeting and fell on their faces. Then the glory of the LORD appeared to them” (NASU). Using this as a frame of reference, if God’s people truly want the glory of God to appear before them, then the importance of meeting Him when *He wants* cannot be casually dismissed.

The term for “convocation” (Leviticus 23:1-2), also often used to describe the appointed times, is the Hebrew *miqra*. It specifically means “convocation, convoking, reading,” in reference to a “religious gathering on Sabbath and certain sacred days” (BDB).<sup>4</sup> It is derived from the verb *qara*, to “call, cry, utter a loud sound,” “make proclamation,” and “summon” (BDB).<sup>5</sup> The appointed times are intended to call God’s people together to rejoice in Him, focusing on Him, and making mention to one another of the work that He has done.

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 God’s people celebrate the Biblical holidays today, they 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 they also must recognize the prophetic fulfillment, both past and future, of Messiah Yeshua in them (Colossians 2:17). Believers in Israel’s Messiah essentially “rehearse” what is to come, in preparation for the Messiah’s return, and we should learn important lessons about God’s ongoing plan of salvation history.

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<sup>3</sup> Nosson Scherman, ed., et. al., *The ArtScroll Chumash, Stone Edition*, 5th ed. (Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, 2000), 682.

<sup>4</sup> BDB, 896.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 895.

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Another Hebrew term which is often used in Scripture to describe the Biblical festivals is *chag*, which AMG defines as “a feast, a festival.”<sup>6</sup> It is derived from the verb *chagag*, “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.”<sup>7</sup> 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. So, 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. In the listing below, we give you a brief reference of each of the Biblical holidays in Leviticus 23, and the extra-Biblical celebrations which we believe are beneficial and edifying to the Body of Messiah.

## The Sabbath

*Shabbat*: *Shabbat* is the first appointed time witnessed in Scripture. *Shabbat* (or *Shabbos*) is the seventh-day Sabbath. It 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. The Sabbath is often closed with a traditional service known as *Havdalah*, preparing those who kept it for the next working week (cf. Genesis 2:3; Exodus 20:8-11; Leviticus 23:1-4; Deuteronomy 5:12-15).

## The Spring Holidays

*Pesach*: *Pesach* or Passover commemorates God’s deliverance of the Ancient Israelites from slavery and His subsequent judgment on the Egyptians. The prime element of Passover is the lamb and how the blood of the lamb protected the Israelites from the death of the firstborn. It is important that Believers in Israel’s Messiah understand Passover to properly appreciate Yeshua’s sacrifice at Golgotha (Calvary) as Passover Lamb, who delivers the redeemed from slavery to sin to eternal life in Him. It is important to contemplate the Passover meal as it relates to the Messiah’s Last Supper. And, it is important to recognize God’s judgment upon the gods of Egypt as it relates to His future judgment upon the gods

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<sup>6</sup> Warren Baker and Eugene Carpenter, eds., *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament* (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 2003), 312.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 313.

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of this world during the Tribulation period (cf. Exodus 12:14; Leviticus 23:5; Numbers 28:16-25; Mark 14:1-31; Matthew 26:17-35; Luke 22:1-23; John 13:1-20; 1 Corinthians 5:7).

***Chag HaMatzah:*** *Chag HaMatzah* is the Festival of Unleavened Bread. It occurs for one week following Passover, in remembrance of the Ancient Israelites leaving Egypt and having to eat *matzah* or unleavened bread, the bread of haste. 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 and how the redeemed must remove sin from their lives. Since Unleavened Bread occurs in conjunction with Passover, it is often not distinguished as a separate holiday (see Scripture references for *Pesach*).

***Shavuot:*** *Shavuot* (or *Shavuot*) or the Feast of Weeks is more commonly called Pentecost, a Greek-derived name meaning “fiftieth” (Grk. *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. *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. *Shavuot* or Pentecost is also 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 (cf. Exodus 19:33; Leviticus 23:15-22; Deuteronomy 16:9; Acts 2:1-47).

## The Fall Holidays

***Yom Teruah:*** *Yom Teruah* or the Day of Blowing, remembered as *Rosh HaShanah* or the Civil New Year in Judaism today, was established to be a holy convocation celebrated by the blowing of trumpets. The convocation involved special offerings and preparing the people for the ten Days of Awe before *Yom Kippur*. The Day of Blowing has special significance to Believers in the Messiah, as the holy ones or saints will be caught up in the air to meet Him at the blast of the trumpet at His Second Coming (cf. Leviticus 23:23-25; Matthew 24:29-31; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

***Yom Kippur:*** *Yom Kippur* is the Day of Atonement. On the Day of Atonement, God’s people are commanded to afflict themselves by fasting, and reflect on their sin. It was the only time when the high priest was permitted to enter into the Holy of Holies and spread the sacrificial blood

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upon the Ark of the Covenant. *Yom Kippur* has special significance to those 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 rebellious humanity at the Battle of Armageddon (cf. Leviticus 23:26-32; Numbers 16:29-34).

**Sukkot:** *Sukkot* (or *Succos*) is the Feast of Tabernacles, also called the Feast of Booths. The Israelites were to dwell in temporary houses known as *sukkas* or huts covered by leafy branches. The Feast of Tabernacles commemorates the Ancient Israelites' journey in the wilderness and how God wanted earnestly to tabernacle with them. *Sukkot* is also a likely time when Yeshua the Messiah was born, and it will be celebrated by all in Jerusalem after His return. Tabernacles will be a critical holiday for all the nations to celebrate during the Millennium (cf. Leviticus 23:33-43; Numbers 29:12; Zechariah 14:1-21; John 1:14).

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

## Other Holidays In and Out of the Bible

**Chanukah:** *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 had conquered the Land of Israel and desecrated the Temple, sacrificing a pig and erecting an altar to the god Zeus in it. *Chanukah* celebrates how the Temple was rededicated. 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 (cf. Daniel 8:21-25; 1&2 Maccabees; John 10:2-23).

**Purim:** *Purim* or the Festival of Lots commemorates the story of Esther, the events of which occur after the Persian Empire conquered the Babylonian Empire, having 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 (cf. Esther).

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**Tishah b'Av:** *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:** *Simchat Torah* (or *Simchas Torah*) or Joy of the Torah occurs on the same day as *Shemini Atzeret*. It was instituted by the 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:** *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 HaAtzmaut:** *Yom HaAtzmaut* is Israel Independence Day when the State of Israel was established as an independent country in 1948. Israel's past wars and military heroes are remembered and honored.

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

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# SUGGESTED STUDY QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 10

1. Why are holidays important? What is the importance of the Biblical holidays of Leviticus 23?
2. Describe what the Hebrew *moedim* means and its significance.
3. Describe the meaning and significance of the Hebrew terms *miqra* and *chag*.
4. Give a 1-2 sentence overview of each of the appointed times.
5. In 2-3 short paragraphs, describe the Biblical holiday you would like to investigate more and learn more about.
6. What role do you think that the extra-Biblical holidays should play for today's Messianics? Do you think they are spiritually edifying?

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