

The Names of the Feast

There are three basic names for this feast. The most common name by far today is **Purim**. This is the biblical name according to **Esther 9:26**. It is the plural form of the singular word *pur*, meaning *lot*. Therefore, **Purim** means *lots*, or *the Feast of Lots*. The reason this name was used is given in **Esther 9:24**, because **Haman had cast the *pur* (that is the lot)** to determine the day to destroy the Jews.

A second name is **Mordecai's Day**. This is a name given to the feast in early Jewish writings between the TaNaKh and the B'rit Chadashah and is found in one of the apocryphal books, *Second Maccabees* 15:36. It was given this name because it was actually Mordecai who inaugurated the feast (**Esther 9:20-21**).

The third name is **Id El Sukar**. This is Arabic, meaning *the sweet festival*. The Arabs of Jerusalem gave this name during the Turkish period (1517 to 1917). It became the Jewish custom in Jerusalem to give sugar candies to Moslem authorities on this day, thus, the Arabs began calling this feast the Sweet Festival.¹¹³