



ZION'S ROAR

MINISTRIES

Joel 3:16



ויהוה מציון ישאג ומירושלם יתו מולו ורעשו שמים וארץ ויהוה מחסה לעמו ומעו
THE LORD ALSO SHALL ROAR OUT OF ZION, AND UTTER HIS VOICE FROM JERUSALEM;
AND THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH SHALL SHAKE: BUT THE LORD WILL BE
THE HOPE OF HIS PEOPLE, AND THE STRENGTH OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL.

THE JEWISH CALENDAR: Simplified

The Jewish calendar is based on a lunar model. All months begin with the “sighting” of the new moon.

Each lunar month has approximately 29.5 days, resulting in months of alternating 29 and 30-day duration. The twelve months of the standard lunar year total 354 days - in contrast to the 365 days of the standard solar model. Uncorrected, this annual shortfall of 11 days would result in the displacement of the four seasons within a period of a few years.

This time-shift would obviously interfere with the correct observance of the various “Feasts of the Lord” as based on the harvest cycle (*Vayikra/Leviticus 23*). To maintain the seasonal observances at their proper times, an intercalation is performed to periodically add a “leap month” to the lunar year (note, a “leap day” is added to the solar calendar every four years to correct for the same problem in the Gregorian model).

For the intercalation of a lunar “leap month” in the Jewish model, a repeating 19-year cycle is envisioned. The “leap month” is then added on years 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17, and 19 of each nineteen-year cycle (these select numbers also have an interesting correlation with the rising musical scale).

For example, at the time of this writing we are in the Jewish year 5779 (2018-2019 AD or CE).

But the beginning of the current nineteen-year cycle was the Jewish year 5768 (2007-2008).

So, starting from then, the third year was 5771 (2010-2011) and had an extra month; the sixth year 5774 (2013-2014) had an extra month; the eighth year 5776 (2015-2016) had an extra month; and the eleventh year, our current year, 5779 (2018-2019) will also have an extra month.

The extra month will not appear again until the fourteenth year, 5782 (2021-2022); then the seventeenth year, 5785 (2024-2025); then the nineteenth year 5787 (2026-2027); after which, the nineteen-year cycle will begin anew in 5788 (2027-2028).

The Bible primarily refers to the months as ordinals, i.e., the “first month,” the “second month,” the “third month,” and so on. Rarely, the former Canaanite name of a month may appear in pre-exilic texts. “*Aviv*” (KJV: “*Abib*”) is cited as the first month in *Shemot/Exodus 13:4; 23:15; 34:18*; and *Devarim/Deuteronomy 16:1*; and “*Ziv*” (KJV: “*Zif*”) is cited as the second month in *Melakim/1 Kings 6:1 and 37*; but the only other months in which the Bible cites the former Canaanite name are the seventh month, “*Ethanim*,” as cited in *Melakim/1 Kings 8:2* and the eighth month, “*Bul*” as cited in *Melakim/1 Kings 6:38*.

Following the Babylonian captivity of roughly 586-516 BC or BCE, Jewish people returning to Jerusalem brought new month names with them. Thus, some exilic and post-exilic books of the Bible occasionally record a few Babylonian names such as the first month of “*Nisan*” in *Nehemiah 2:1 and Esther 3:7*; the third month “*Sivan*” in *Esther 8:9*; the sixth month “*Elul*” in *Nehemiah 6:15*; the tenth month “*Tevet*” (KJV: “*Tebeth*”) in *Esther 2:16*; the eleventh month, “*Shevat*” (KJV: “*Sebat*”) in *Zechariah 1:7*; and the twelfth month, “*Adar*” in *Ezra 6:15, Esther 3:7,13; 8:12; 9:1,15,17,19, and 21*.

The Jewish people have developed two ways of ordering the months, and thus have at least two different “New Year” days depending on which calendar mode is being used (note, there are also a number of varying “New Year” days for trees, and for livestock, etc. to assist with calculating the fruit produce and/or animal ages of personal property for tithing and sacrificial purposes in Tabernacle/Temple times, as per the various *Torah* requirements describing such).



Joel 3:16

The original time-keeping mode is the standard model referred to as the “Civil Calendar.” According to rabbinical authorities, the world as we know it was created in the fall month of *Tishrei*. Thus time, as we know it, began then. Therefore, *Tishrei* is considered the first month of the “New Year” on the Jewish “Civil Calendar” for standard time-keeping and secular purposes:

Standard Order	Babylonian/Hebrew (Canaanite)	Gregorian Equivalent
First Month	Tishrei (Ethanim)	September to October
Second Month	Cheshvan (Bul)	October to November
Third Month	Kislev	November to December
Fourth Month	Tevet	December to January
Fifth Month	Shevat	January to February
Sixth Month	Adar I	February to March
	Adar II* (Leap Year Only)*	
Seventh Month	Nisan (Aviv/Abib)	March to April
Eighth Month	Iyar (Ziv/Zif)	April to May
Ninth Month	Sivan	May to June
Tenth Month	Tammuz	June to July
Eleventh Month	Av	July to August
Twelfth Month	Elul	August to September

However, a second time-keeping mode was initiated by G-d Himself in *Shemot/Exodus* 12:2. This portion of *Torah* describes the miraculous deliverance of the Jewish people from Egypt in a spring Exodus. It was the beginning of Israel as a nation and G-d instructed *Moshe/Moses* to honor it as the first month of that New Year. Sometimes it is known as the “Religious Calendar,” but I prefer a different label...maybe the “Appointment Calendar,” since it tracks the L-rd’s appointed times, or *Moedim*. Each of the Feasts of the L-rd, as recounted in *Vayikra/Leviticus* 23, and the majority of the biblical text, is based on this model:

Appointed Order	Babylonian/Hebrew (Canaanite)	Gregorian Equivalent
First Month	Nisan (Aviv/Abib)	March to April
Second Month	Iyar (Ziv/Zif)	April to May
Third Month	Sivan	May to June
Fourth Month	Tammuz	June to July
Fifth Month	Av	July to August
Sixth Month	Elul	August to September
Seventh Month	Tishrei (Ethanim)	September to October
Eighth Month	Cheshvan (Bul)	October to November
Ninth Month	Kislev	November to December
Tenth Month	Tevet	December to January
Eleventh Month	Shevat	January to February
Twelfth Month	Adar I	February to March
	Adar II* (Leap Year Only)*	

Although there are a number of additional complexities to the Jewish calendar and related time-keeping methods, the afore-mentioned explanation provides a basic understanding of its structure and two helpful quick reference tables for the purposes of biblical study.