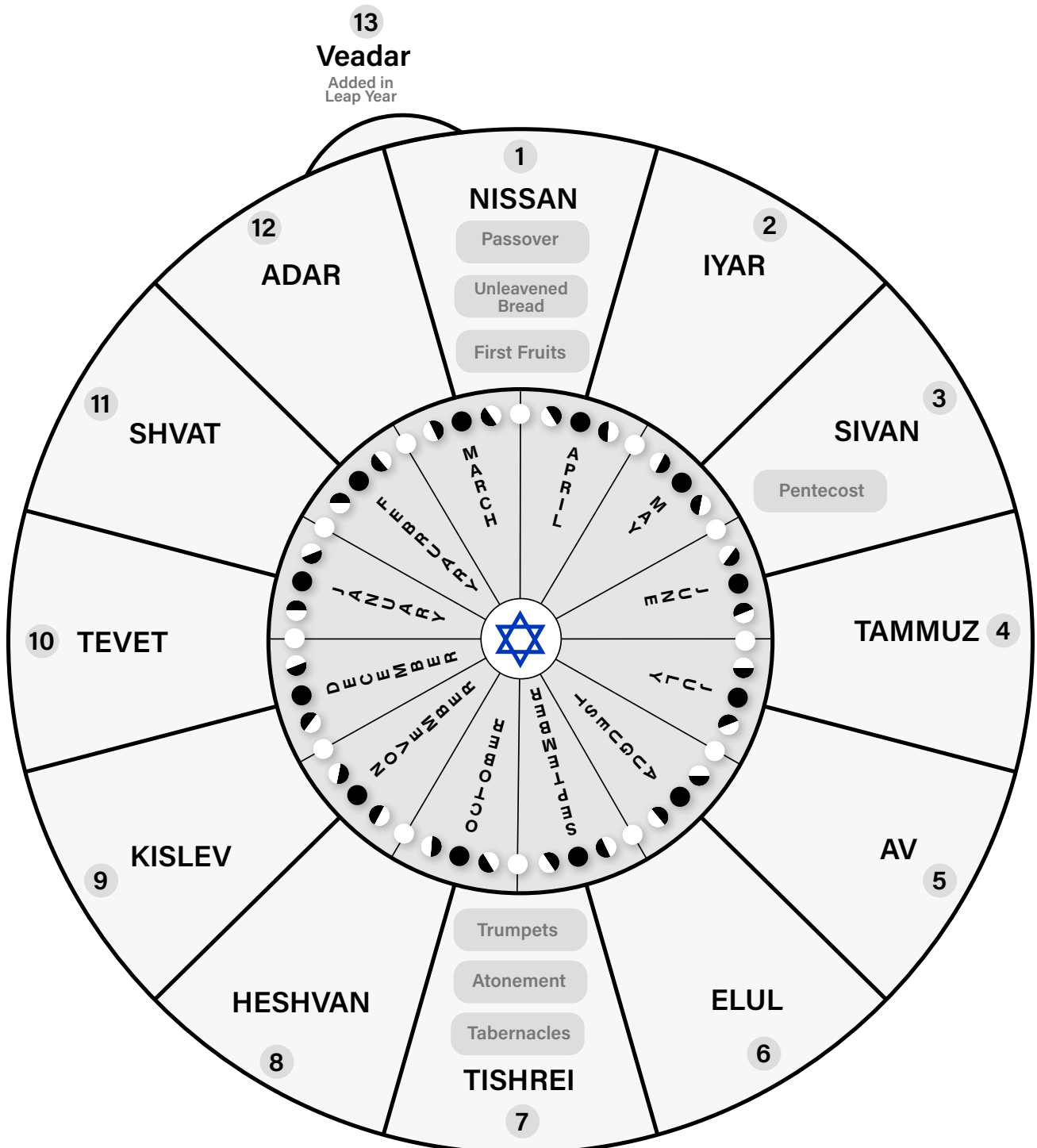




## UNDERSTANDING THE HEBREW CALENDAR

The Hebrew calendar, also called the Jewish calendar, is central to understanding the biblical feasts, festivals, and appointed times established by God in Scripture. Unlike the modern Gregorian calendar, which is solar-based, the Hebrew calendar follows a lunisolar system—a blend of the moon's phases and the solar year. For Christians, learning about this calendar deepens our understanding of God's timeline and how the feasts point to His redemptive plan through Jesus Christ.



# HEBREW CALENDAR

## 1. STRUCTURE OF THE HEBREW CALENDAR

The Hebrew calendar operates on the cycles of the moon:

- Each month begins with the sighting of the new moon (Psalm 81:3; Numbers 10:10).
- A month has 29 or 30 days, based on the lunar cycle (about 29.5 days).
- A full year contains 12 or 13 months. To align with the solar year (365 days), a leap month (Adar II) is added approximately every three years.

This system keeps the feasts aligned with their seasons (e.g., Passover in spring, Tabernacles in fall), as commanded by God in Exodus 12:2 and Exodus 23:14-17.

## 2. BIBLICAL MONTHS

The Hebrew calendar contains 12 primary months, with an occasional 13th month (Adar II). Here are the months, along with their approximate timing in the Gregorian calendar:

1. **Nisan** (March–April): The first month; Passover (Pesach) occurs here (Exodus 12:2).
2. **Iyar** (April–May): A time of preparation and counting the Omer.
3. **Sivan** (May–June): Pentecost (Shavuot), marking the giving of the Law (Exodus 19).
4. **Tammuz** (June–July): Often associated with mourning (e.g., Israel's idolatry).
5. **Av** (July–August): Includes the 9th of Av, a day of lament for the destruction of the Temple.
6. **Elul** (August–September): A month of repentance leading to the fall feasts.
7. **Tishrei** (September–October): The seventh month and most sacred, with three major feasts:
  - Feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah)
  - Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)
  - Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot)

8. **Cheshvan** (October–November): A quiet month, often called “bitter” due to no feasts.
9. **Kislev** (November–December): Includes Hanukkah (not a biblical feast but celebrated by Jews).
10. **Tevet** (December–January): A time of reflection.
11. **Shevat** (January–February): Associated with the blossoming of trees.
12. **Adar** (February–March): The month of Purim (Esther 9:26-28).

Leap Year Addition: **Adar II** (a second Adar) is added as the 13th month in leap years.

## 3. DAYS AND WEEKS ON THE HEBREW CALENDAR

- Days: A day on the Hebrew calendar begins at sunset and ends at the following sunset, based on Genesis 1:5 (“And there was evening and there was morning, the first day”).
- Weeks: The 7-day week is rooted in God’s creation order (Genesis 2:2-3). The Sabbath (Shabbat), observed on the 7th day (Friday sunset to Saturday sunset), is a holy day of rest and worship.

## 4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HEBREW CALENDAR

The Hebrew calendar is divinely designed to highlight God’s appointed times (Leviticus 23:2). These “holy convocations” or feasts align with the agricultural seasons of Israel and symbolize God’s work in history and prophecy.

- Spring Feasts (Passover, Unleavened Bread, Firstfruits, and Pentecost):
  - These feasts point to Christ’s first coming: His death, resurrection, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

## HEBREW CALENDAR

- Fall Feasts (Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and Tabernacles):
  - These feasts anticipate Christ's second coming, judgment, and the ultimate gathering of God's people.

Understanding the Hebrew calendar helps Christians see the unity of Scripture and the ways Jesus fulfills these appointed times. For example:

- Passover (Pesach): Points to Jesus as the Lamb of God (1 Corinthians 5:7).
- Feast of Firstfruits: Fulfilled in Jesus' resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:20).
- Pentecost (Shavuot): Marks the giving of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2).

## 5. ALIGNING OUR WORSHIP WITH GOD'S TIMELINE

The Hebrew calendar reveals God's sovereign design for worship, remembrance, and redemption. By studying it:

1. We see God's hand in history and His promises fulfilled in Jesus Christ.
2. We learn to set aside appointed times for rest, reflection, and worship.
3. We better understand the prophetic significance of events still to come (e.g., Christ's return).

While Christians are not required to observe the Hebrew calendar (Colossians 2:16-17), it is a valuable tool for deepening our understanding of Scripture, God's timeline, and His desire to dwell with His people.

## CONCLUSION

The Hebrew calendar is not just a schedule of days and months—it is a picture of God's redemptive story woven through time. By understanding its structure and significance, we gain a deeper appreciation for how the Old Testament feasts point us to Jesus, the fulfillment of God's promises. As believers, we can celebrate God's faithfulness throughout history and eagerly await the culmination of His plan when Christ returns.

**"These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ" (Colossians 2:17).**