Unlike the Gregorian calendar (the one commonly used today), which consists of 12 months, the Jewish calendar operates on a lunar cycle and adds a 13th month in certain years. This occurs every seven years within a 19-year cycle. In seven of these years, there are 13 months, while in the remaining twelve years, there are only 12 months. The years with 13 months are the 3rd, 6th, 8th, 11th, 14th, 17th, and 19th of the 19-year cycle. Once this cycle ends and a new one begins, the same pattern is followed, with some years having 12 months and others 13.

The 13th month, known as Adar II, is added in those years to keep the Jewish festivals aligned with the correct seasons. Without this adjustment, important festivals such as Passover could fall in the wrong season. Passover, for instance, must always be celebrated in the spring. Now, let’s explore the 12 regular months of the Jewish calendar, with their biblical references, and understand the significance of each.

Month 1: Abib or Nisan

Abib (or Nisan) is the first month in the Jewish calendar, corresponding roughly to March-April in the Gregorian calendar. This month marks the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, a

pivotal event in Jewish history.

> *Exodus 13:3:* “Moses said to the people, ‘Remember this day, on which you went out from Egypt, from the house of bondage, for by strength of hand the Lord brought you out of this place. No leavened bread shall be eaten.'”
>
> *Esther 3:7:* “In the first month, which is the month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, they cast Pur—that is, the lot—before Haman to determine the day and the month, the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar.”

Nehemiah 2:1

> *:* “In the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was before him, I took the wine and gave it to the king.”

Month 2: Ziv or Iyar

This is the second month of the Jewish calendar, falling between April-May in the Gregorian calendar. It was in this month that King Solomon began constructing the Temple of God in Jerusalem.

> *1 Kings 6:1:* “And it came to pass, in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel had come out of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon’s reign, in the month of Ziv, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the Lord.”

Month 3: Sivan

The third month of the Jewish calendar falls between May and June in the Gregorian calendar. This is when the Israelites received the Law at Mount Sinai.

> *Esther 8:9:* “In the third month, the month of Sivan, on the twenty-third day, the king’s scribes were summoned. According to Mordecai’s instructions, the Jews were to be written to in every province of King Xerxes’ empire.”

Month 4: Tammuz

This is the fourth month in the Jewish calendar, corresponding to June-July. The month is notably mentioned in Ezekiel's vision where he saw women weeping for Tammuz, a pagan deity.

> *Ezekiel 8:14:* "Then He brought me to the entrance of the north gate of the Lord's house, and there, at the entrance, were women sitting and weeping for Tammuz."

Month 5: Av

The fifth month falls between July and August. While this month is not specifically named in many biblical passages, it is referenced by number in the context of various events. For example, Ezra arrived in Jerusalem in the fifth month.

> *Ezra 7:8:* "Ezra came to Jerusalem in the fifth month of the seventh year of King Artaxerxes."

Month 6: Elul

Elul is the sixth month in the Jewish calendar, corresponding to August-September. It is a month of repentance and preparation for the Jewish New Year (Rosh Hashanah) and Yom Kippur. It is during this month that Nehemiah completed the reconstruction of the wall of Jerusalem.

> *Nehemiah 6:15:* “So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the month of Elul, in fifty-two days.”

Month 7: Tishrei

The seventh month, Tishrei, is one of the most significant months, falling between September and October. It includes key Jewish holidays such as Rosh Hashanah (New Year), Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), and Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles). It was also the month when King Solomon dedicated the Temple.

> *1 Kings 8:2:* “And all the men of Israel assembled themselves to King Solomon at the feast in the month of Tishrei, which is the seventh month.”

Month 8: Bul

This is the eighth month in the Jewish calendar, falling between October and November. It was during this month that King Solomon completed the construction of the Temple of God.

> *1 Kings 6:38:* “In the eleventh year, in the month of Bul, which is the eighth month, the house was finished in all its parts.”

Month 9: Kislev

Kislev, the ninth month, falls between November and December. This month is referenced in the book of Zechariah when the

prophet received a vision concerning Judah and Israel.

> *Zechariah 7:1:* “In the fourth year of King Darius, the word of the Lord came to Zechariah on the fourth day of the ninth month, Kislev.”

Month 10: Tebeth

Tebeth, the tenth month, corresponds to December-January. This is the month when Esther was brought before King Ahasuerus.

> *Esther 2:16:* “So Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus, into his royal palace, in the tenth month, which is the month of Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign.”

Month 11: Shebat

The eleventh month, Shebat, corresponds to January-February in the Gregorian calendar. This month is also mentioned in the book

of Zechariah.

> *Zechariah 1:7:* “On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, which is the month of Shebat, in the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to Zechariah.”

Month 12: Adar I

Adar I is the 12th month of the Jewish calendar, falling between February and March. This is when the Purim festival is celebrated, marking the deliverance of the Jews from Haman’s plot.

> *Esther 3:7:* “In the first month, which is the month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, they cast Pur—that is, the lot—before Haman to determine the day and the month, the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar.”

The 13th Month: Adar II

In a leap year, a 13th month called Adar II is added to the Jewish calendar. This adjustment is necessary to align the Jewish festivals with the correct agricultural seasons. For example, without adding Adar II, Passover could fall at the wrong time of the year, disrupting the celebration's historical significance.

Which Calendar Should Christians Follow?

The question may arise: Should Christians follow the Jewish calendar or the Gregorian calendar? The truth is, calendars themselves do not bring us closer to God. Whether using the Jewish, Gregorian, or any other calendar, what truly matters is how we redeem the time.

As

> *Ephesians 5:15-16 says:* "See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil."

We redeem time by living in accordance with God's will, pursuing

holiness, worship, prayer, studying His Word, and fulfilling the work He has entrusted to us before the end of time.

May the Lord bless you as you walk wisely and make the most of every moment.

Maranatha.

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