

# The Jewish Calendar

## The Months of the Year

The Jews used two kinds of calendars:

*Civil Calendar*—official calendar of kings, childbirth, and contracts,

*Sacred Calendar*—from which festivals were computed.

<i>Names of Months</i>	<i>Corresponds with</i>	<i>No. of Days</i>	<i>Month of Civil Year</i>	<i>Month of Sacred Year</i>
Tishri	Sept.–Oct.	30 days	1st	7th
Heshvan	Oct.–Nov.	29 or 30	2nd	8th
Chislev	Nov.–Dec.	29 or 30	3rd	9th
Tebeth	Dec.–Jan.	29	4th	10th
Shebat	Jan.–Feb.	30	5th	11th
Adar	Feb.–Mar.	29 or 30	6th	12th
*Nisan	Mar.–Apr.	30	7th	1st
Iyar	Apr.–May	29	8th	2nd
Sivan	May–June	30	9th	3rd
Tammuz	June–July	29	10th	4th
Ab	July–Aug.	30	11th	5th
Elul	Aug.–Sept.	29	12th	6th

\*Hebrew months were alternately 30 and 29 days long. Their year, shorter than ours, had 354 days. Therefore, about every 3 years (7 times in 19 years) an extra 29-day month, Veadar, was added between Adar and Nisan.

## The Jewish Day

The Jewish day was from sunset to sunset, in 8 equal parts:

First watch ..... sunset to 9 P.M.  
 Second watch ..... 9 P.M. to midnight  
 Third watch ..... midnight to 3 A.M.  
 Fourth watch ..... 3 A.M. to sunrise

First watch ..... sunrise to 9 A.M.  
 Second watch ..... 9 A.M. to noon  
 Third watch ..... noon to 3 P.M.  
 Fourth watch ..... 3 P.M. to sunset

## The Feasts of Israel

<i>Feast of</i>	<i>Month on Jewish Calendar</i>	<i>Day</i>	<i>Corresponding Month</i>	<i>References</i>
*Passover (Unleavened Bread)	Nisan	14–21	Mar.–Apr.	Ex. 12:43—13:10; Matt. 26:17–20
*Pentecost (Firstfruits or Weeks)	Sivan	6 (50 days after Passover)	May–June	Deut. 16:9–12; Acts 2:1
Trumpets, <i>Rosh Hashanah</i>	Tishri	1, 2	Sept.–Oct.	Num. 29:1–6
Day of Atonement, <i>Yom Kippur</i>	Tishri	10	Sept.–Oct.	Lev. 23:26–32; Heb. 9:7
*Tabernacles (Booths or Ingathering)	Tishri	15–22	Sept.–Oct.	Neh. 8:13–18; John 7:2
Dedication (Lights), <i>Hanukkah</i>	Chislev	25 (8 days)	Nov.–Dec.	John 10:22
Purim (Lots)	Adar	14, 15	Feb.–Mar.	Esth. 9:18–32
*The three major feasts for which all males of Israel were required to travel to the Temple in Jerusalem (Ex. 23:14–19).				



# MONIES, WEIGHTS, AND MEASURES

The Hebrews probably first used coins in the Persian period (500–350 B.C.). However, minting began around 700 B.C. in other nations. Prior to this, precious metals were weighed, not counted as money.

Some units appear as both measures of money and measures of weights. This comes from naming the coins after their weight. For example, the shekel was a weight long before it became the name of a coin.

It is helpful to relate biblical monies to current values. But we cannot make exact equivalents. The fluctuating value of money's purchasing power is difficult to determine in our own day. It is even harder to evaluate currencies used two- to three-thousand years ago.

Therefore, it is best to choose a value meaningful over time, such as a common laborer's daily wage. One day's wage corresponds to the ancient Jewish system (a silver shekel is four days' wages) as well as to the Greek and Roman systems (the drachma and the denarius were each coins representing a day's wage).

The monies chart below takes a current day's wage as thirty-two dollars. Though there are differences of economies and standards of living, this measure will help us apply meaningful values to the monetary units in the chart and in the biblical text.

<i>Monies</i>			
<i>Unit</i>	<i>Monetary Value</i>	<i>Equivalents</i>	<i>Translations</i>
Jewish Weights			
Talent	gold—\$5,760,000 <sup>1</sup> silver—\$384,000	3,000 shekels; 6,000 bekas	talent
Shekel	gold—\$1,920 silver—\$128	4 days' wages; 2 bekas; 20 gerahs	shekel
Beka	gold—\$960 silver—\$64	½ shekel; 10 gerahs	bekah
Gerah	gold—\$96 silver—\$6.40	⅓ shekel	gerah
Persian Coins			
Daric	gold—\$1,280 <sup>2</sup> silver—\$64	2 days' wages; ½ Jewish silver shekel	drachma
Greek Coins			
Tetradrachma (Stater)	\$128	4 drachmas	piece of money
Didrachma	\$64	2 drachmas	tribute
Drachma	\$32	1 day's wage	piece of silver
Lepton	\$.25	⅓ of a Roman kodrantes	mite
Roman Coins			
Aureus	\$800	25 denarii	
Denarius	\$32	1 day's wage	denarius
Assarius	\$2	⅓ of a denarius	copper coin
Kodrantes	\$.50	⅓ of an assarius	penny, quadrans

<sup>1</sup>Value of gold is fifteen times the value of silver.

<sup>2</sup>Value of gold is twenty times the value of silver.

## Weights

Unit	Weight	Equivalents	Translations
<b>Jewish Weights</b>			
Talent	c. 75 pounds for common talent, c. 150 pounds for royal talent	60 minas; 3,000 shekels	talent
Mina	1.25 pounds	50 shekels	mina
Shekel	c. .4 ounce (11.4 grams) for com- mon shekel c. .8 ounce for royal shekel	2 bekas; 20 gerahs	shekel
Beka	c. .2 ounce (5.7 grams)	½ shekel; 10 gerahs	half a shekel
Gerah	c. .02 ounce (.57 grams)	⅓ shekel	gerah
<b>Roman Weight</b>			
Litra	12 ounces		pound

## Measures of Length

Unit	Length	Equivalents	Translations
Day's journey	c. 20 miles		day's journey
Roman mile	4,854 feet	8 stadia	mile
Sabbath day's journey	3,637 feet	6 stadia	Sabbath day's journey
Stadion	606 feet	⅓ Roman mile	furlong
Rod	9 feet (10.5 feet in Ezekiel)	3 paces; 6 cubits	measuring reed, reed
Fathom	6 feet	4 cubits	fathom
Pace	3 feet	⅓ rod; 2 cubits	pace
Cubit	18 inches	½ pace; 2 spans	cubit
Span	9 inches	½ cubit; 3 hand- breadths	span
Handbreadth	3 inches	⅓ span; 4 fingers	handbreadth
Finger	.75 inches	¼ handbreadth	finger

## Dry Measures

Unit	Measure	Equivalents	Translations
Homer	6.52 bushels	10 ephahs	homer
Kor	6.52 bushels	1 homer; 10 ephahs	kor, measure
Lethech	3.26 bushels	½ kor	half homer
Ephah	.65 bushel, 20.8 quarts	⅓ homer	ephah

## Dry Measures—Continued

<i>Unit</i>	<i>Measure</i>	<i>Equivalents</i>	<i>Translations</i>
Modius	7.68 quarts		basket
Seah	7 quarts	$\frac{1}{3}$ ephah	measure
Omer	2.08 quarts	$\frac{1}{10}$ ephah; $1\frac{1}{2}$ kab	omer
Kab	1.16 quarts	4 logs	kab
Choenix	1 quart		measure
Xestes	$1\frac{1}{2}$ pints		pot
Log	.58 pint	$\frac{1}{4}$ kab	log

## Liquid Measures

<i>Unit</i>	<i>Measure</i>	<i>Equivalents</i>	<i>Translations</i>
Kor	60 gallons	10 baths	kor
Metretes	10.2 gallons		gallons
Bath	6 gallons	6 hins	measure, bath
Hin	1 gallon	2 kabs	hin
Kab	2 quarts	4 logs	kab
Log	1 pint	$\frac{1}{4}$ kab	log