

APPENDIX

I. The Jewish Calendar—A Different Cycle

The Jewish calendar is based on aspects of the solar and lunar calendars, which are different from the secular calendar based primarily on the solar calendar.

The beginnings and endings of each Jewish month are determined by the appearance and disappearance of the moon. Yet the beginning of each Jewish year is dependent on the earth's position in relationship to the sun. The confluence of those two cycles form the Jewish calendar.

In early times determinations regarding the beginning of each month were made by witnessed accounts of the actual sighting of the new moon. Approximately 400, Rabbi Hillel II is credited with having developed a mathematical formula to scientifically determine the beginning of each month. This system was later changed only slightly, and for the last one thousand years Jews have used the same calendar.

Usually the Jewish year is made up of 354 days, which is composed of 12 months of 29 or 30 days. Adjustments are made to keep months in their appropriate season by adding a 13th month every two or three years. In a 19-year cycle there are seven years that contain the 13th month, called *Adar Sheni*, the Second Adar.

Although the Jewish dates of the holidays do not change in the Jewish calendar, the dates of the Jewish holidays vary in the secular calendar. As an example, Rosh Hashanah always occurs in the fall season but varies from early September to mid-October. Because of this variation it is necessary to consult a Jewish calendar for each holiday's secular date.

How to know which secular dates correspond with the Jewish holiday dates in any one year:

Each Jewish year begins with Rosh Hashanah in the fall and overlaps parts of two secular years. The most important thing to remember in connection with the Jewish calendar is that Jewish holidays begin and end in the evening.

Nowadays you can go on the internet and type in "Jewish calendar" to get several different options for finding the dates. Do be careful to correctly figure out the beginning of the holiday:

Some Jewish online calendars give the date of the holiday – with the assumption that you understand that the holiday starts the evening before. Thus, for example, if a calendar said "Rosh Hashanah September 19 and 20" you would know that the holiday begins the evening of September 18.

Other online Jewish calendars actually say, for example, "Erev Rosh Hashanah," which means the holiday starts on that evening (the *erev*) of the secular calendar date given. For example, if this type of calendar said "Erev Rosh Hashanah September 18, Rosh Hashanah September 19 and 20," you would know that the holiday begins the evening of September 18.