

Jewish Feasts & Farming: New Testament				
CALENDAR¹		FEASTS	RAIN	HARVESTS
GREGORIAN	JEWISH			
March-April	Nisan ²	Nisan 14: Passover (Firstfruits later ³) Nisan 15-21: Unleavened Bread	latter rains ⁴ no rain	barley
April-May			no rain	barley wheat
May-June	Sivan	Sivan 6: Pentecost (50 days after Firstfruits)	no rain	wheat
June-July			no rain	
July-August			no rain	grapes, dates, and other summer fruits
August-September			no rain	summer fruits
September-October	Tishri ⁵	Tishri 1: Trumpets Tishri 10: Day of Atonement Tishri 15-21: Tabernacles	no rain	olives
October-November			early rains early rains	olives
November-December	Kislev	Kislev 25: Dedication (Hanukkah)	rain	
December-January			rain	
January-February			rain	
February-March			rain	

¹ The Jewish year adapted lunar months to the solar cycle. Each month began with a new moon and lasted 29 or 30 days. But twelve lunar months total only 354 days. In order to make up the difference to a solar year of 365 days, an extra month was added to seven out of nineteen years.

² Nisan was the first month of the religious year (Exodus 12:2). The civil year, however, began six months later with Trumpets (*Rosh hashana*, head of the year) on the first day of the month Tishri.

³ Firstfruits of barley were offered “on the morrow after the sabbath” after Passover (Leviticus 23:11). Apparently, “sabbath” meant the weekly Sabbath, though some leaders insisted it meant Passover itself.

⁴ The beginning of the rainy season (“early rains”) varied from year to year. After the ground was moistened, it could be plowed and seeds sown. Intermittent rains continued for months. “Latter rains,” which swelled the grain before harvest, were a greatly desired extension of the rainy season. Barley harvest began on the day of Firstfruits. Olive harvest was done as convenient, before and/or after the fall plowing.

⁵ See the footnote that begins with the word “Nisan.”