

1. Why should God have to tell the Israelites when their year began, that is, which month was to be the first in their calendar?
2. The answer has two aspects:
 - A. This was not at all a settled question for Israel, and therefore they needed a revealed guidance on the matter.
 - B. Also - God was teaching them to link even their measuring of time to His calling on their lives.
3. The people groups of the ancient world varied in their attitude and opinion of when the year should begin.
4. Some cultures chose a fall new year and some celebrated a spring new year.
5. This sense of calendar is sometimes known as the “agricultural calendar” because it pays special attention to the time of harvest as the conclusion of the agricultural year.
(Exodus 23:16 and 34:22)
6. It is clear that in terms of formal teaching - the new year is firmly established as starting in the spring, the month of Nisan (what we would call March–April) becoming the first month, and it was the seventh month to which the fall festival was dated.
7. Here we read that God has decided that history would determine the calendar, and in particular, the history of God’s saving act of the exodus does so.
8. Whatever may have been their previous thinking about a calendar, God declared that they would now have a calendar designed to remind them of how they first became a people—an act so important that it was also to be memorialized by a special annual feast, the Passover.
9. The standard for worship and the ensuring of pure and orderly religious activities was given in what is called the “Holiness Code” (Leviticus 17-26).
10. Under this portion of the law, all worship was to be conducted with the proper reverence by the priests.
11. When sacrifices were made, care was to be taken to guarantee that they were performed at the correct time, using the prescribed details and prayers appropriate to the type of sacrifice involved.
(Leviticus 23:10-13)
12. The details of the feasts and sacrifices were to be given special attention to ensure that they did not in any way resemble the idolatrous religions of Canaan or the surrounding region.
(Leviticus 18:1-5)
13. Leviticus 23 is the most comprehensive legal discussion regarding the institution of the Israelite feasts in the Bible.

