Jewish Holidays, Week 1: Jewish Calendar

“I know Weinstein’s parents were upset, but it sounded so made up. I mean, Yom Kippur?” - Principal Skinner, The Simpsons

Introduction
Today we start what is scheduled to be a month-long series on Jewish holidays. Today I’ll be covering the origin and development of the Jewish calendar to give us perspective on the holidays. Next week, we’re scheduled to look at the most commonly occurring Jewish holiday: the Sabbath. The following week, I plan to cover the high holidays (Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur) and then the last week I’d like to go over Passover.

In the beginning
When talking about calendar systems and time, where should I start? How about, “In the beginning?”
Let’s read Genesis 1:1. The first question that comes to my mind when I read that is, “When was that?”

Today’s date is June 1, 2008 (for us) and 27 Iyar, 5768 (for a Jew).

Does anyone have any ideas what the 5768 stands for? The Jewish calendar begins approximately one year prior to Creation. Aside: If you’re curious how this date was determined, think genealogies.

Let’s read the first five verses of Genesis 1 and see how God defined a day. God defined a day as an evening and a morning (He didn’t name them in that order, but defined them in that order—I typically have a long list of unanswered questions about any given study I do even after I finish the study and this is on my unanswered list of questions).

Our first observation is that the Bible dictates the Jewish calendar (and to some extent it dictates ours since we use 2008 for the number of years since Christ).

Our second observation is that a day is defined as starting in the evening (the word evening being used to describe all of the night-time by referring to the first part of the night) and a day is defined as ending with the morning (the word morning being used to describe all of the daytime by referring to the first part of the day)—or we could say it this way: a day is from sundown to sundown (not 24 hours).

Next week we’ll get into the rest of the days of the week in Genesis 1 as well as the Sabbath (the most commonly occurring Jewish holiday—we get our word holiday from combining the word ‘holy’ and the word ‘day’), but the names for the days of the week are, in Hebrew, simply ‘Day 1,’ ‘Day 2,’ ‘Day 3,’ etc.

OK, so since it appears that the Bible works from a small unit of time up to a larger unit of time, what would be the next largest unit up from a week? Months
New Moon
Turn to Genesis 7:11 (the first recorded use of the word “month” in our Bibles). The Hebrew word for month is chodesh (KHO-desh) and it means, “new moon.”

Wikipedia: A "new moon" is the day on which the first visible crescent of the moon is observed. It occurs 29 or 30 days after the preceding visible crescent.

This should force us to ask a few questions. First, how does our calendar work (so when we examine the Jewish calendar closer in the next few minutes, we’ll have a baseline for comparison), and second, why does a new moon have anything to do with the Jewish calendar?

The Gregorian calendar
How many days are in a normal year on our calendar? 365

Does every year have 365 days? No

Why not? Leap years occurring every fourth year, right? Wrong. Every fourth year except for years divisible by 100 and not divisible by 400 is a leap year. 1600 and 2000 were leap years while 1700, 1800 and 1900 were not.

How many months do we have? 12

Every year? Yes

How many days in each month? 28-31

Do the number of days in each month change? Yes (February for leap years)

Starting in January, what are our holidays? January – New Years’ Day, MLK; February – Valentine’s, President’s Day; March/April/May – Easter; May – Memorial Day; July – Independence Day; September – Labor Day; October – Columbus Day, Halloween; November – Veterans Day; December – Christmas

Months in the Bible
Several times in the Bible (Genesis 7:11; 8:4-5; 8:13-14; 1 Chronicles 27:1-15) months are identified by number only. There are verses commanding certain things to be done at the beginning of a month (Numbers 10:10; 28:11).

JewFAQ.org: In ancient times, when people observed the new moon, they would notify the Sanhedrin. When the Sanhedrin heard testimony from two independent, reliable eyewitnesses that the new moon occurred on a certain date, they would declare the rosh chodesh (first of the month) and send out messengers to tell people when the month began. People in distant communities could not always be notified of the new moon, so they did not know the correct day to celebrate. They knew that the old month would be either 29 or 30 days, so if they didn’t get notice of the new moon, they celebrated holidays on both possible days. This practice of celebrating an extra day has been maintained.
The Jewish calendar

The Jews use a lunisolar calendar (both the phase of the moon and the solar positions are important). The Buddhists, Hindus, Tibetan, Chinese and Koreans have all used lunisolar calendars in their histories. Lunisolar calendars are popular because of their relationship to creation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Month Name (Modern)</th>
<th>Month Name (NKJV)</th>
<th>Bible Reference</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Days</th>
<th>Gregorian Equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Nisan</td>
<td>Abib* Abib</td>
<td>Exodus 12:2; 13:4</td>
<td>fresh young barley ears their flight</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Mar - Apr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Iyar</td>
<td>Ziv*</td>
<td>1 Kings 6:1</td>
<td>brightness</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Apr - May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sivan</td>
<td>Sivan</td>
<td>Esther 8:9</td>
<td>their covering</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>May - Jun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Tammuz</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Jun - Jul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Av</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Jul - Aug</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Elul</td>
<td>Elul</td>
<td>Nehemiah 6:15</td>
<td>nothingness</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Aug - Sep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Tishrei</td>
<td>Ethanim*</td>
<td>1 Kings 8:2</td>
<td>enduring</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Sep - Oct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Cheshvan</td>
<td>Bul*</td>
<td>1 Kings 6:38</td>
<td>increase, produce</td>
<td>29/30</td>
<td>Oct - Nov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Kislev</td>
<td>Chislev</td>
<td>Zechariah 7:1</td>
<td>his confidence</td>
<td>29/30</td>
<td>Nov - Dec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Tevet</td>
<td>Tebeth</td>
<td>Esther 2:16</td>
<td>goodness</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Dec - Jan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Shevat (leap)</td>
<td>Shebat</td>
<td>Zechariah 1:7</td>
<td>a rod</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Jan - Feb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Adar I (leap)</td>
<td>Adar</td>
<td>Esther 3:7</td>
<td>glorious</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Feb - Mar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Adar II</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Feb - Mar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*denotes names recorded prior to the Babylonian captivity

Complexities of the Jewish calendar

As you look at the calendar printed on your handout, the thing you'll notice right off of the bat is the concept of a 'leap month.' The number of days in a 12 month lunar calendar is 11 days shorter than in a solar calendar. This would cause major problems, since many of the holidays are seasonally specific. To compensate, the Jews decided on a leap month to make up the difference.

JewFAQ.org: The months on [Jewish lunar calendars] "drift" relative to the solar year. On a 12 lunar month calendar, the month of Nissan, which is supposed to occur in the Spring, would [without any correction] occur 11 days earlier each year, eventually occurring in the Winter, the Fall, the Summer, and then the Spring again. An extra month is added on certain years to keep the calendar lined up with the proper seasons. Every 19 years there are seven leap years (the third, sixth, eighth, eleventh, fourteenth, seventeenth and nineteenth years).

An easy way to remember what year is a Jewish leap year is to use the following picture:

JewFAQ.org: If you are musically inclined, you may remember this pattern of leap years by reference to the major scale: for each whole step there are two regular
years and a leap year; for each half-step there is one regular year and a leap year.

Because of this leap month and the varying number of days in some of the months, a Jewish year can have 353, 354, 355, 383, 384 or 385 days. The months vary in length to insure that holidays do not fall on certain days of the week. Some holidays require fasting or prohibitions of certain types of work, and it would not be good for these to be adjacent to the Sabbath (which also requires certain restrictions meaning two days in a row of certain prohibitions).

In Biblical times, the decision to have a leap month was based on an agricultural decision: God’s Kingdom Ministries.org: Barley was the first crop to ripen in the spring in Canaan and Egypt. On the first day of [Abib], the priest would inspect a sheaf of barley to see if it had “eared out” yet. If so, it was announced to all the people that Passover would be observed in Jerusalem two weeks later. If the barley grain was still closed, with the grain covered by the husk, the priest would announce that they would have to wait another month before Passover could be observed lawfully.

So we see that the Bible has had an enormous impact on the Jewish calendar. However, the Bible does not stipulate the inclusion of a leap month. The priests and rabbis came up with the leap month system to insure that the holidays stayed in line with the seasons.

The problems with such a decision, whether or not the barley was ripe, is that if you have a long, cold winter, an extra month might be called for when it was not mathematically needed providing the potential for the calendar to get ‘off.’ To prohibit this, over a period of nearly 1,000 years the Jews developed (and finally made official in 1178 by Maimonides) a mathematical system of calculating the leap months to insure consistency with the solar year.

The accuracy of the Jewish calendar is quite good—it’s only off by one day every 224 years. I read that the Jews knew this when they established this system and decided that that level of precision was good enough since they were sure that the Messiah would come back for them prior to that deviation ever amounting to anything significant.

Application
1. God is a god of order (we see this in creation and we see this in His commands to His people to be observant of the world around them)

2. God commands that we pay attention to things (all of Creation screams out that God exists and that He is trying to communicate with us—and so we must pay attention)

3. We should strive to have a basic knowledge of Biblical history, culture and life in the Bible if we are to ever interpret and apply Scripture to our lives properly.

4. We should be aware of the restrictions on our Jewish friends. JewFAQ.org: All Jewish holidays begin the evening before the date specified on most calendars. . . . If all of the non-working holidays fall on weekdays (as they sometimes do), an observant Jew would need to take 13 days off of work just to observe holidays.
Jewish Holidays, Week 2: Sabbath

Anybody can observe the Sabbath, but making it holy surely takes the rest of the week. – Alice Walker

1. Etymology (Sabbath/Shabbat)
Our word ‘Sabbath’ comes from the Old Testament Hebrew word Shabath (shaw-BATH). When used as a noun, it simply refers to the day called Sabbath. When used as a verb, it means to cease, desist, rest, or put an end to (typically translated ‘rest’, it more literally means, ‘to cease’).

Wikipedia: For example, the Hebrew word for "strike" (as in work stoppage) is shevita, which comes from the same Hebrew root as Shabbat, and has the same implication, namely that striking workers actively abstain from work, rather than passively.

This is an important concept to solidify early in this lesson—that the Sabbath is not meant for laziness. It is not meant for sitting around and not doing anything—rather it is meant as actively abstaining from work in order to do good, to enjoy life, and to identify with the seven-day-a-week rhythm of life.

I think it’s important to spend some time thinking about how wise God was in His decision to command His people to purposefully cease from their work. This has been a lesson that I’ve struggled with all week long because, while not a legalist (and we’ll answer the question of whether a Christian should keep the Sabbath today at the end of the lesson), the bigger question for me has been—how often do I purposefully enjoy life? How often do I cease from work and focus on God? How often do we stop and unplug? I went to a funeral on Friday and we arrived about 30 minutes prior to the start of the funeral. We talked with the various family members for 10-15 minutes and then we sat down and were basically silent. I was struck by the impact of the purposeful silence and realized that I needed more of that in my life. It wasn’t laziness; it was purposefully not working and not focusing on work.

I hope this lesson challenges you to examine the balance in your life between working and not working.

2. Old Testament Examples
   a. God stopped: Genesis 1 & 2
   b. Sabbath balance: Leviticus 23
   c. Sabbath preparations: Exodus 16:22-30
   e. God ‘refreshed’: Exodus 31:16-17 – literally, ‘taking a breath’

3. New Testament Examples
4. Modern Applications

Wikipedia: Shabbat is a day of celebration as well as one of prayer. It is customary to eat three festive meals on Shabbat. These include dinner on Friday night, lunch on Saturday and another meal before the conclusion of Shabbat later in the afternoon.

Things to do during the Shabbat:

- **Recitation of kiddush,** or "sanctification," over a cup of wine before the first meal
- Meals begin with a blessing over two loaves of bread. It is customary to serve meat or fish, for Friday night dinner and Shabbat lunch. The third meal, eaten late Saturday afternoon, is generally a light meal.
- **Recitation of Havdalah,** or "separation," at the conclusion on Saturday night (over a cup of wine, and with the use of fragrant spices and a candle)

**Prohibited activities**

Observant Orthodox and Conservative Jews do not perform the 39 categories of activity (39 melachot) listed in Talmud Tractate Shabbat 7:2: sowing, ploughing, reaping, binding sheaves, threshing, winnowing, selecting, grinding, sifting, kneading, baking, shearing wool, washing wool, beating wool, dyeing wool, spinning, weaving, making two loops, weaving two threads, separating two threads, tying, untying, sewing stitches, tearing, trapping, slaughtering, flaying, tanning, scraping hide, marking hides, cutting hide to shape, writing two or more letters, erasing two or more letters, building, demolishing, extinguishing a fire, kindling a fire, applying the finishing touch, and transferring between domains

**Permitted activities**

Spending Shabbat together with others; Synagogue attendance for prayers; Visiting family and friends (within walking distance); Hosting guests; Singing zemirot (special songs for the Shabbat meal); Reading, studying and discussing **Torah** and commentary, Mishnah and Talmud, learning some Halakha and Midrash; **Sex** between husband and wife

5. Are Christians required to keep the Sabbath today? (by David Guzik)

**Colossians 2:16-17**

And the answer is? No

The Sabbath observed by Israel was a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. Praise God that we do not live in the shadows. We have a rest in Jesus that is ours to live in every day. However, though we are free from the legal obligation of the Sabbath, we dare not ignore the importance of a day of rest as God has built us so that we **need** one.

What about Saturday as opposed to Sunday? Sunday is more appropriate, being the day Jesus rose from the dead (**Mark 16:9**), and first met with His disciples (**John 20:19**), and a day when Christians gathered for **fellowship** (**Acts 20:7**).
**Temple Activities**

*John 2:13-16* — this record is similar to *Matthew 21:12-14*, but is not the same account—this account occurred at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry and the *Matthew 21:12-14* account occurred at the end.

The part of the temple that John refers to is the court of the Gentiles. The word, 'temple,' can mean several different things. Literally, it is both the sanctuary (the small area containing the holy of holies) as well as the entire court space around the holy of holies inside the temple walls (about 19 acres). From the outside in, you would walk through four different areas: the court of the Gentiles, the court of women, the court of Israel, the court of the priests. A wall surrounded the whole area, part of which remains to this day, known as "The Wailing Wall."

*Exodus 30:13* required that all men over the age of 20 pay a half-shekel each year for the upkeep of the temple. The priests would not accept foreign money, so money-changers were set up in the court of the Gentiles to change Roman or other money in to Jewish money.

Also here in the court of the Gentiles was the sale of animals for sacrifice. Different commentators give different views on this, but it is generally seen as condoned by the priests since if they were opposed, they would have driven out the sellers of sacrifices on their own. Jesus saw the room that these actions were taking up as violating *Jeremiah 7:1-7* (oppression). He was restoring the balance of accessibility.
It's interesting to note that John began this chapter with a conversion of water into wine and ended with a cleansing. God does the same with us.

Activities prohibited on Shabbat

Many rabbinical scholars have pointed out that these regulations of labor have something in common—they prohibit any activity that is creative, or that exercises control or dominion over one's environment. This comes from looking at Genesis 2:1-3 (the cessation of God's work (melachah) and Exodus 31:1-11 (constructing the tabernacle—also melachah). The 39 categories can be divided into four groups (baking bread, making a garment, making leather, building a house).

Baking Bread (11)

Planting
All activities that promote plant growth: watering, fertilizing, planting seeds, or planting grown plants

Plowing
Any preparation or improvement of land for agricultural use

Reaping
Removing all or part of a plant from its source of growth

Binding sheaves, Threshing, Winnowing, Selecting, Grinding, Sifting, Kneading

Baking
Cooking, frying, or any method of applying heat to food to prepare for eating

Making a Garment (13)

Shearing wool, Washing wool, Beating wool, Dyeing, Spinning, Weaving, Making two loops, Weaving at least two threads, Separating two threads, Tying, Untying, Sewing at least two stitches, Tearing for the purpose of sewing

Making Leather (9)

Trapping
Two conditions must be met:
1. The animal being trapped must be a wild animal. This means that one may put a pet in a cage.
2. The trapping action must seriously confine the animal. For example, closing the gate to a large yard on Shabbat cannot be trapping, even if there is a wild animal in the yard.

Slaughtering, Flaying, Salting meat, Curing hide, Scraping hide, Cutting hide into pieces, Writing two or more letters

Erasing
Erasing in order to write two or more letters
Building a House (6)

**Building**
The action of actually joining the different pieces together to make

**Tearing something down**

**Extinguishing a fire**
While extinguishing a fire is forbidden even when great property damage will result, in the event of any life-threatening fire one is required to extinguish the flames.

**Igniting a fire**
Making, transferring or adding fuel to a fire (many poskim ground their prohibition of operating electrical appliances in this prohibition). Note that Judaism requires that at least one light (ordinarily candle or oil) be lit in honor of Shabbat immediately before its start.

**Applying the finishing touch**
Completing an object and bringing it into its final useful form (i.e., using a stapler)

**Transferring between domains**
Commonly called "carrying"; more literally it means "removing and depositing"
Jewish Holidays, Week 3: High Holidays

The high holidays (also known as the ‘Days of Awe’) cover a ten day period (Ten Days of Repentance) from Rosh Hashanah (literally, ‘head of the year,’ the Jewish New Year) to Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement—the date on which the Israelites received atonement for the golden calf). The timeline below shows the dates of the more significant Jewish holidays this Gregorian calendar year.

The Jews believe that God makes a decision about each individual’s life on Rosh Hashanah but that the decision is not final until Yom Kippur. Therefore, the ten days from Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur are a crucial period when your fate hangs in the balance and you have a chance to mend your ways to alter the judgment in your favor (through repentance, prayers, charity, etc.). During these Ten Days of Repentance, the Jews engage in introspection and repentance. To prepare for this period of judgment, the month of Elul, the month prior to Rosh Hashanah, is also spent in preparation.

Biblical Basis

Leviticus 23:23-32

23 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 24 “Speak to the children of Israel, saying: “In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a sabbath-rest, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation. 25 You shall do no customary work on it; and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD.” [This is Rosh Hashanah even though the Bible never refers to it as such]

26 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 27 “Also the tenth day of this seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. 28 And you shall do no work on that same day, for it is the Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the LORD your God. 29 For any person who is not afflicted in soul on that same day shall be cut off from his people. 30 And any person who does any work on that same day, that person I will destroy from among his people. 31 You shall do no manner of work; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. 32 It shall be to you a sabbath of solemn rest, and you shall afflict your souls; on the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you shall celebrate your sabbath.” [This is Yom Kippur]
Calendar Confusion
You may be wondering why the new year begins in the seventh month. The Jewish year has four distinct starting points. The first month of the year per Exodus 12:2 is Nisan (Mar/Apr). The first of Tishrei (the seventh month of the year) is the beginning of the civil year (when the year in the calendar advances by one—Sep/Oct). The new year for counting animal tithes is Elul (the sixth month of the year—Aug/Sep). The new year for agricultural tithes is the 15th of Shevat (the eleventh month of the year—Jan/Feb).

Wikipedia: The Hebrew calendar is so designed that the first day of Rosh Hashanah will not occur on the first, fourth, or sixth days of the Jewish week (i.e., Sunday, Wednesday or Friday).

Rosh Hashanah
Shofar Sounds
Per Leviticus 23:24, Rosh Hashanah includes blowing a trumpet (shofar). Trumpets were also used to announce a new moon. The shofar is meant to arouse the Jews from spiritual slumber to focus on the moment and to represent the sobbing Jewish heart at their sins. A variety of sounds were made by the shofar (short and long blasts) with one long blast concluding Rosh Hashanah services.

Tashlich Thanks
The Tashlich (‘cast off’) is said on the first afternoon of Rosh Hashanah by a pool of water. These prayers are symbolic of the casting away of mistakes. This is the text of the prayer [from Aish.com]:

Who is like You, God, who removes iniquity and overlooks transgression of the remainder of His inheritance. He doesn't remain angry forever because He desires kindness. He will return and He will be merciful to us, and He will conquer our iniquities, and He will cast them into the depths of the seas. Give truth to Jacob, kindness to Abraham like that you swore to our ancestors from long ago. From the straits I called upon God, God answered me with expansiveness. God is with me, I will not be afraid, what can man do to me? God is with me to help me, and I will see my foes (annihilated). It is better to take refuge in God than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge in God, that to rely on nobles.

Dietary Directions
In contrast to Yom Kippur, Rosh Hashanah does not involve a fast. The most popular food-related custom is eating apples and bread dipped in honey to symbolize a sweet new year. After dipping the apple in honey, you say, “Blessed are You, Lord our God, king of the universe, who creates the fruit of the tree. Amen.” Then, after biting in to the apple, you say, “May it be Your will, Lord our God and God of our ancestors, that you renew for us a good and sweet year.”

Wikipedia: Foods with symbolic meaning may be served during Rosh Hashanah such as tongue or other meat from the head (to symbolize the ‘head of the year’).

Present Practices
Aish.com: It is customary to greet others with the words: “For a good year—You should be written and sealed in the good (Book of Life).”
Yom Kippur

Kippur is the Hebrew word for atonement. It is similar to the Hebrew word kippah (or yarmulke in Yiddish), which is a head covering worn by Jewish men.

Yom Kippur is observed by many secular Jews who may not attend synagogue on other days of the year (similar to Easter and Christmas Christians). Most Jews will fast and attend synagogue on Yom Kippur. Five prayer services occur at the synagogue on Yom Kippur, starting with Kol Nidre (the evening service where all vows are annulled between oneself and God—especially frivolous vows) and ending with Ne’ilah—an hour-long service during which everyone stands and the shofar is blown to conclude the service, followed by everyone saying, “Next year in Jerusalem!”

Historical Highlights

In Bible times, the High Priest (Kohen Gadol) conducted a sacrificial ceremony on Yom Kippur. He confessed his sins, the sins of the priests and the sins of the people, speaking the name of God as he did. Then he went into the Holy of Holies and sacrificed and offered incense. Four things came together: the man: High Priest, the place: Holy of Holies, the word: Tetragrammaton and the date: Yom Kippur.

The High Priest would perform the following: Wikipedia: Morning Offering, Garment Change #1, Bull as Personal Sin-Offering [pronouncement: Yod, Hey, Vav, Hey], Lottery of the goats (At the Eastern gate, the High Priest drew lots from a lottery box over two goats. One was selected “for the Lord,” and one “for Azazel” (to be a scapegoat). He tied a red band around the horn of the scapegoat.), Incense Preparation, Incense Offering (entering the Holy of Holies), Sprinkling of Blood in the Holy of Holies, Goat for the Lord as Sin-Offering for Kohanim [pronouncement: Yod, Hey, Vav, Hey], Sprinkling of blood in the Holy, Smearing of blood on the Golden (Incense) Altar, Goat for Azazel (The High Priest walked to the scapegoat and put his hands on it and confessed the sins of the entire people of Israel. The people prostrated themselves when he pronounced the Tetragrammaton [pronouncement: Yod, Hey, Vav, Hey] while the people confessed privately. The scapegoat was then sent off ‘to the wilderness’ (actually, the goat was led off a cliff to insure it did not return)), Preparation of sacrificial animals, Reading the Torah, Garment change #2, Offering of Rams, Musaf Offering, Burning of Innards, Garment change #3, Removal of Incense from the Holy of Holies, Garment Change #4, Evening Offering

Wikipedia: In Orthodox, most Conservative, and some progressive synagogues a detailed description of the Temple ritual is recited on the day. Sometimes, the assembly prostrate themselves when the High Priest pronounces the Tetragrammaton.

Religious Restraints

There are five things that Jews do not do during Yom Kippur: eating and drinking, washing, applying oils or lotions to the skin, marital relations, and wearing leather shoes. Aish.com: Throughout the year, many people spend their days focusing on food, work, superficial material possessions (symbolized by shoes) and superficial pleasures (symbolized by anointing). On Yom Kippur, we restore our priorities to what really counts in life.

It might be easy to think that Yom Kippur is a sad holiday since there are several things you do not do, but to an observant Jew, it is a time of joy due to the reconciliation with God and others that occurs.
Jewish Holidays, Week 4: Passover

Passover is from the Hebrew word, *pacach* (paw-SAKH), meaning to 'pass over,' or to 'spring over' and is an eight day long holiday sometimes referred to as the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

The First Passover (Exodus 12)
The first Passover occurred as a result of the hardnass of a Pharaoh's heart. The Israelites were slaves to the Egyptians and Moses went to the Pharaoh to have his people freed. Pharaoh did not and God sent a series of plagues (the water in Egypt turned in to blood, frogs, gnats, swarms of flies, plague on livestock, boils, hail, locusts, darkness, slaying of the first born) to change Pharaoh's mind. The first nine plagues only made Pharaoh mad. That brings us to Exodus 12:1-17, 29-40: the first Passover.

The Subsequent Passovers

The Modern Passover

Preparation
A great amount of preparation is done for the Passover. Chametz (leavening—anything made from the five major grains or anything that has fermented) must be removed from the house. Many Jews spend weeks cleaning their homes in preparation for Passover.

Wikipedia: The oral Jewish law (Halacha) requires the elimination of olive-sized or larger quantities of leavening from one's possession, but most housekeeping goes beyond this. Even the cracks of kitchen counters are thoroughly scrubbed.

Typically, a search is done for any leftover chametz the night before Passover. Either the head of the household (for more traditional families) or children (for more modern families) search for chametz with a candle, a feather and a wooden spoon.

Gifts
Since Passover is a time of getting together for family and friends, gifts are regularly exchanged. Traditional gifts include boxes of fruits and sweets, wines and flowers.

Seder
The Seder is the feast held on the first and second night of Passover. ‘Seder’ means ‘order’ in Hebrew. Wikipedia: Seder customs include drinking of four cups of wine, eating matzo and partaking of six symbolic foods (horseradish and romaine lettuce (bitter herbs) representing the bitterness of slavery; a thick mixture of chopped walnuts, wine, cinnamon and apples representing the
mortar used by Jewish slaves called charoset; parsley dipped into salt water symbolizing the tears of the Jewish slaves, a roasted shank bone representing the paschal lamb, a roasted egg representing the festival sacrifice) placed on the Passover Seder Plate and matzo placed on its own plate.

Four cups of wine are drunk during the Seder. Their meanings are derived from God’s statements in Exodus 6:6-7: “I will bring you out,” “I will rescue you,” “I will redeem you,” “I will take you.”

Seder (from JewFAQ.org)
1. Sanctification: A blessing over wine in honor of the holiday. The first cup is drunk and the second cup is poured at this time.

2. Washing: Washing the hands without a blessing, in preparation for eating the vegetable.

3. Vegetable: A vegetable (parsley) is dipped in salt water and eaten. Parsley is a good vegetable to use for this purpose, because when you shake off the water, it looks like tears.

4. Breaking: One of the three matzos on the table is broken. Part is returned to the pile, the other part is set aside for the afikomen (see below).

5. Story: A retelling of the story of the Exodus and the first Pesach. This begins with the youngest person asking The Four Questions.

From HappyPassover.net:
1. Why do we eat only Matzo on Pesach and not all kinds of breads and crackers like other nights? When Pharaoh ordered Jews to get out of Egypt after the tenth plague, they were in such a hurry that they hadn’t time to let their dough rise and bake their bread. Thus, they took the raw dough with them on their journey and baked it into hard crackers in the hot desert. Thus, we eat only Matzo on this day to remind us of their struggles.

2. Why do we eat bitter herbs at our Seder? The bitter herbs are eaten to remind us of the bitterness of slavery and harsh and cruel ways in which Jewish people were treated as slaves under the Pharaoh in Egypt.

3. At our Seder, why do we dip the parsley in salt water and the bitter herbs in Charoset? Parsley represents new life and Spring while salt water represents tears of Hebrew slaves. Parsley dipped in salt water thus represents new life that emerged from the tears and hardship of the Jewish slaves. Bitter herbs dipped into Charoset represent the bitter days of slavery. Charoset has a coarse texture like the clay used to make bricks for the buildings.

4. Why do we lean on a pillow while eating tonight and do not sit straight like other nights? Leaning on a pillow signifies the comforts of freedom. As slaves, our ancestors had little comforts. Thus, we lean on a pillow to assert that we are free now and can sit straight or lean on a pillow as much as we like.

At the end of the story, the second cup is drunk.

7. Blessing over Grain Products: A blessing for bread/grain recited over the matzo.

8. Blessing over Matzo: A blessing specific to matzo is recited, and a bit of matzo is eaten.

9. Bitter Herbs (Maror): A blessing is recited over a bitter vegetable (horseradish and/or romaine lettuce dipped in charoset), and it is eaten, symbolizing the bitterness of slavery.

10. Sandwich: In Rabbi Hillel’s honor, we eat maror on a piece of matzo, with charoset.

11. Dinner: A festive meal is eaten. Roast chicken or turkey is common as a main course.

12. Afikomen: The piece of matzo set aside earlier is eaten as "dessert," the last food of the meal. Different families have different traditions relating to the afikomen. Some have the children hide it . . . others have the parents hide it. The idea is to keep the children awake and attentive throughout the pre-meal proceedings, waiting for this part.

13. Grace after Meals: The third cup of wine is poured, and the Grace after Meals blessing is recited, and it is drunk. The fourth cup is poured; including a cup set aside for the prophet Elijah, who is supposed to herald the Messiah, and is supposed to come on Pesach to do this. The door is opened for a while at this point (supposedly for Elijah, but historically because Jews were accused of nonsense like putting the blood of Christian babies in matzo, and we wanted to show our Christian neighbors we weren't doing that).

14. Praises: Several psalms are recited (Psalms 113-118). A blessing is recited over the last cup of wine and it is drunk.

15. Closing: A simple statement that the Seder is completed.

The Passover Music (HappyPassover.net)

Passover music is joyful in its mood and the songs are meant to lighten the mood.

- **He is Mighty.** Generally sung as the Seder comes to a close. This Jewish hymn expresses hope that the age of Messiah will return and the sacred Temple will be rebuilt. In Hebrew, each line of this hymn starts with a different letter of the alphabet in alphabetical order.

- **It Would Have Been Enough for Us.** Describes some of the many favors that God bestowed upon the Israelites when He led them to freedom from Egypt.

- **Elijah, the Prophet.** This song is to be sung when the Cup of Elijah is poured and the door is opened in anticipation of his return.

- **Why is it Different?** Sung when reciting the Four Questions.

Passover Lamb

The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia: After the destruction of the temple the Passover became a home service. The paschal lamb was no longer included. Both John 1:29 & 1 Corinthians 5:7 show us that there is no longer a need for a Passover lamb as Jesus was ours.