

New Methodology is Against Scripture and Historical Reckoning

This year's reports and observations, in searching for barley in Israel to determine if the next new moon should be declared a month of *Abib*, has been seen by many as a parallel to what occurred in 2016. Now we share additional information why the decision was made that this March 7th new moon, in the North America Region, was a 13th month rather than a Biblical New Year.

We started reviewing, as we normally do, any visual reports being sent out from Israel. Gradually more and more information was being provided from one team in particular, because a deacon with us was there with them. He expressed that he wanted to learn from a man who is considered an expert in agriculture and is also an elder in the faith. We were kept in the loop and eventually a link to another website abibofgod.com was sent to us from them. However, what was posted on March 5th was a little startling, basically stating that an *omer* (about half a gallon of dry grain) could be obtained by one small field, and that is all that is needed as a Scriptural barley requirement. Much to our surprise, as the same author years previously *stated emphatically fields (plural) were needed.

We replied to both deacon and elder with the quote in question from abibofgod.com and opened the Scriptures for a quick review:

Brian Convery stated, "We have been getting questions about how much barley we need to find to declare the new year. Our belief system is simple. The scriptures tell us we need enough first of the firstfruits of barley to complete an omer. Please read that again so we are not misrepresented. First of the firstfruits of the Land as Exodus 23:19 directs us. It is even more enhanced when you add Ex. 22:29 to the command, do not delay to offer the first of your ripe produce. Throw in Mark 4:29 and that is what guides us. An omer is way short of being even a small field, however we do try to locate much more than would be needed to qualify for the First of (many/all) firstfruits. The harvest would not start for at least another three weeks after the month starts. That's it for us as to the barley requirement."

Given the statement above, I would ask that we consider the Scripture references:

"Do not delay *giving* your harvest and your vintage" (Exod. 22:29a).

1. Harvest is indicative of what is ready to bring in. In other words, the field or vineyard is ready for ingathering.

“Bring the first of the first-fruits of your land into the House of יהוה your Elohim” (Exod. 23:19a).

1. The choicest of the choice, but what choice is there in a field or vineyard that is not ripened first?

“And when the crop is ready, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come,” Mark 4:29.

1. A Hebrew Parallelism: "the crop is ready" and "the harvest has come" are saying the same thing.

There was no reply, other than a short statement asking us to remember the barley would not last 6 weeks. After reading it, we received a video (along with other images from other areas) from the same team. Showing, nearly endless straight lines of barley on raised tilled ground and, at least, according to their estimate, 100 acres or more. It was clearly a large cultivated and farmed area. In the same video, we also hear the statement sent to us that this will not last 6 weeks. They were happy, they were joyful and laughing, but never have I personally seen a field like this used as evidence to declare a Biblical New Year. Deuteronomy 11:10 is just one reason a cultivated field should not be used.

Fast forward to a teleconference with the same team. In attendance were Elder Robert Davis (YPTC) and Elder John Reece (YAIY), and several elders from other assemblies. We (i.e, Robert, John, and myself) had already reviewed all of the above. We also reviewed most, if not all, the various other reports; many of them having images and videos as well. They all said and showed patchy at best, though one individual was reported to have seen, in his opinion, roughly half a field of wild barley in *Abib* state, which was brought up at the meeting. But, even if true, would not qualify.

* **We all operated under this guideline.** Nehemia actually taught on his web site that in fact this is how ancient Karaites functioned. You can reach that instruction at; http://Karaites-korner.org/ancient_abib_reports.shtml. Oh that's right, it isn't there anymore. A sign comes up saying it has been removed. That actually took place shortly after he was confronted with this by other experienced inspectors who were not present in 2005. Don't fret however for I will quote part of it for you. “In Medieval Karaite discussions of the *Abib*, it is emphasized that the barley must not only appear in a certain form but must also appear in a large quantity to fulfill such verses as Lev 23,10 you will bring the sheaf of the beginning of your harvest [i.e. the barley has to be *Abib* in large enough quantities so that it can be harvested on the morrow after the Sabbath during Hag HaMatzot]. **It was generally**

agreed that the barley must be Abib in a majority of fields and in each field a majority of the stalks must be Abib. [emphasis mine]

One individual essentially asked, “Why such a stark difference in the reports?” This is speaking of well known reports from Hebrew in Israel and Devorah’s Date Tree compared, for example, to statements and conclusions from Abib of God and Elder Solomon Meyer (in team first mentioned).

Our conclusion is that the more conservative reports (Hebrew in Israel and Devorah’s Date Tree) are more in line with Scripture rather than some of these new methodologies we are now seeing.

Elder David Brett