

Abib Search Report, March 8, 2016

Before We Begin... Several Points:

1. I present this report in good faith as an account of my visit to Eretz Israel which began on Thursday March 3 and concluded early on March 7, 2016. I was accompanied on this trip by my wife, Michelle. I have visited Israel now six times in the past years to conduct similar reviews of the growing season. Michelle has accompanied me on four of these trips. As a farmer for most of my life, I have grown no fewer than 15 crops of Barley on my farm in the United States and have been part of the Abib and sacred calendar review process for more than 15 years. Our journey to review the growing season in Israel always begins with humble prayer before Yahweh and petitions of His guidance in the process. Yahweh has always answered that prayer as He has this year.
2. I have previously presented logical arguments in support of early Abib. Briefly, the entire determination of Abib in Biblical times was an integral part of the Agricultural season. The Israelites relied on the first crop of the year to feed their animals and replenish their own food supplies. There would be a tremendous amount of concern in those times then that the crop be certified Abib *as soon as possible* in order for the harvest to begin. In some cases, undoubtedly, the very survival of the people would depend on a timely approval of the High Priest to offer the wave sheaf. Talmudic record tells us that the High Priest would even “collate” a wave sheaf, bringing the most mature stalks of grain from various farms and various fields and producing a sheaf. A harvest delayed by a month would mean extended shortage of feed stuffs and the probability of a lost harvest as a month delay could mean a harvest lost in the fields. Another consideration has to be the seven-week interlude between the barley (offered at Feast of Unleavened Bread) and wheat (Offered at Shavuoth) crops. A delay in Abib to offer the Barley would definitely mean damage to the wheat crop seven weeks later. Imagine each farmer, knowing where and when he planted the first crop after the Feast of Tabernacles checking that crop each day, looking for the first sign of emerging heads and finding the most ripe stalk during the waning 12th moon; then choosing that stalk and bringing it to the priest for approval to harvest in the next month. It was for this reason that the grain was allowed to be parched for the meal offering, to give every opportunity to accept early Abib and allow a timely harvest of the crop. We should resist all of the artificial and non-scriptural delays that have been built in by Jewish tradition and faulty reasoning. Determining Abib is a simple process, yet a process that has always been based on a judgment call, at one time of the High Priest, now we are put into the unenviable position to make these judgments for ourselves.
3. I base my determinations on a number of factors as listed below. I recognize that the scriptures do not plainly say “look for Barley” or “this is what you shall seek”. Rather, the Word of Yahweh is simply to Moses that “this month is the first of months” (Exodus 12:2). It is for this reason that I include looking at all the factors that I do. The only requirement is that there be a sheaf of harvest-able grain to offer after the Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. We know from the Exodus story that the events transpired in the time of year when Barley was in heads, but wheat was not (Genesis

9:31-32). We also know the name of the Month is Abib (Deuteronomy 16:1), meaning young, green or emerging ears of grain. What has happened however is that there have been added a number of man-made definitions, assertions, and stipulations over the years that seem to delay confirming Abib. I continue to challenge the conventional thinking, in an effort to shy away from Jewish tradition, and seek the hand of Yahweh in the process.

4. I want to share that my research this year has been to draw better conclusions as it relates to agricultural grains and wild grains. In December 2015 I was able to conference with Dr. Heather Darby, a foremost researcher in production and research of ancient grains. The information from Dr. Darby, when combined with current agricultural research and some new data I've uncovered in reference to domestication of grain has convinced me that we need are on the right track with our approach to Abib. For years, we have allowed the Karaite Jews to set the narrative that only wild grains can be considered. As stated above, the logical arguments to why we should accept certain characteristic varieties of agricultural grains lead us to examine all grain crops, not outright rejecting agricultural grain because it is "modern". To this end I believe I have conclusive evidence that the theories about "wild-only" are not valid. I will present more on this in later writing and conversation once I have an opportunity to get Dr. Darby on the record in a proper interview and support her assertions with properly noted research. It's important to note that in past conversations with Israel Agriculture Ministry researchers that we have learned that they consider the varieties commonly reckoned as "wild grain" to be noxious weeds and not valid as grain crops. Often these "wild" varieties are found to not have grain even at full maturity. It is rational and valid to challenge the premise of seeking Abib only with these varieties. However, that being said, in order to bring those who do not directly agree with my premise, I continue to examine "wild" grain crops and include them in my determination and judgment.

For the purposes of this year's search, I will look at a number of factors to make my judgment on Abib. These factors include:

- Examination of wild grains
- Examination of volunteer agricultural grain
- Commercially planted agricultural grains
- Other Spring-planted crops
- Growth evaluation of perennial crops such as grape vines and fruit trees

Report From this year's Trip

Thursday, March 3:

- We landed safely on Thursday, just after lunchtime. After acquiring our car we headed South along Rts. 40 and 6 to the Lahavim junction. After seeing many fields of agricultural grain in full and developed heads along the way, we took Rt. 31 and Rt. 358 towards Lahav to find specific examples of current crops.
- From Lahav, we cut back towards the sea, along Rts. 310 and 241. Pictured here is grain typical of what we were finding in this Upper West area of the Negev. We found "wild" two-row barley that was late in dough stage and in significant volume to easily say there would be plenty for wave-sheaf offering of first fruit. By my experience, late dough stage such as what I was finding would be well mature in the three weeks intervening my inspection and the night of the wave-sheaf. Note also the presence of what some call "wild oats" in this photo.
- From this area we headed back north, cutting east towards Lachish. In the ground around Tel Lachish, we found several vineyards displaying growth of leaves, far beyond budding. Grapes in leaf is a sure sign of early season growth. Not all vineyards we found in this area were leafed out, but most displayed growth of buds.
- In the area of Bet Shemeth, and up into the Ayalon Valley, we found many more fields of agricultural barley in full and developed heads as well as apple orchards in full blossom. Fruit trees such as apple, pear, and cherry in blossom confirms early season. It is not always common to find such blossoming fruit trees this early in the season.
- We spent the night in Jerusalem. We observed blooming rose bushes on Mt. Zion and in the new City. Again, we don't always see the roses in bloom, another sign that we are witnessing an early Spring.



Friday, March 4:

- We spent Preparation Day visiting sites in and around the Old City and visiting the Mahane Yehuda market to acquire what was needed for the Sabbath.
- In the afternoon, we travelled north to Megiddo and the Jezreel Valley where we again found many fields of well-developed agricultural grain. In areas west of Tel Megiddo, along Rt. 66 and side roads, we saw additional “wild two-row barley” (pictured) that was also in dough stage. This was not universal, however, we found some wild grain that still had seeds with liquid (starchy milk).
- We continued up to the Galilee, staying overnight and Sabbath in Tiberias.

Sabbath, March 5:

- During the day portion of Sabbath, we took the opportunity to travel along the north shore of Kinneret and up into the Golan to where we typically spend a few hours for Sabbath Bible Study at the Banias Springs. Along the way, we went up Rt. 90 along the west edge of the Hula valley. Here we found volunteer grain growing along a fence row that was well advanced. This was wheat that had grown probably from scattered seed from last Summer’s harvest. Not fertilized or irrigated, it was in full and developed heads that were already in mature dough stage. Note that from experience and Scripture (Genesis 9:31-32) we know that wheat follows barley by several weeks. We also here, in the far north, found many fields of agricultural grain in well-developed heads. Of particular note were several fields of spring-planted sweet peas. These peas (pictured) were well advanced and in bloom emergence stage, which indicates a full four to six weeks of effective growing season already this year. Four to six weeks of growing season would also correlate to developed Abib grain.
- We checked areas of “wild” grain along Rt. 87 and side roads around Qatsrin and found similar to what we found further south, though much of it was just out of flower stage, with fully exposed heads.



1st Day of the Week, March 6:

- This morning we headed south out of Tiberias to the area of Kibbutz Kinneret. Here, on the ridge coming out of the Galilee basin along Rt. 767, we found many areas of “wild barley” which was found to be in various stages from post-flower to late milk/early dough stage. Near the town of Sharona, we found volunteer grain which was well-developed. I took a video of that grain being shucked and you can clearly see the whole grain emerging from the head and the advanced stage of development. I will post this video on the Yahweh’s Obedient Servants Ministry Facebook page later this afternoon. Bear in mind that today, the 1st day of the week, is

fully three weeks before the wave sheaf would need to be prepared. Grain crops mature from dough stage to harvest in approximately 14-17 days in good weather conditions. Dry grain at harvest stage is well beyond the threshold moisture needed to parch the grain.

- All along the upper Jezreel Valley west of Nazareth and over towards Haifa, we continued to see many fields of very well-developed agricultural grain. Along the sea coast we saw grain crops where the heads were fully ripe and beginning to bend down in maturity. It was rare and difficult to find agricultural barley in great area. Barley has fallen out of favor in Israel as a commercial crop and as a consequence wheat has moved to the forefront as the crop of choice. Again, it is important to note that wheat develops later than Barley in all situations and since the Bible never specifies Barley as the Abib crop, there is no problem with examining wheat as a marker for the season.

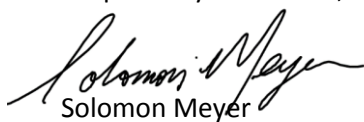
That being said, I always prefer to base my judgment on the stage of development found in the Barley crop.

- We concluded our evaluations as night fell, confident that we had accumulated enough data and evidence to make a proper determination. Our return flight to the United States left early Monday morning.



Conclusion: It is my judgment that there is significant and verified evidence that the season is well-advanced in Eretz Israel. In my opinion, there is sufficient fully mature grain, in both the “wild” and “agricultural” crops that a first of the first-fruits sheaf would be available to wave on the evening after the Sabbath of March 26, 2016 and that there would be sufficient grain (parched or raw) to be ground into the required meal offering at that time. Therefore, it is my expressed conclusion that the New Moon crescent we seek on the evening of March 9, 2016 will be the first of the New Year, and begin the month of Abib.

Respectfully Submitted,


Solomon Meyer

Please Join us for a conference call to discuss these findings on Wednesday Evening, March 9 at 8:00PM EST. Conference call is accessed by calling (405)421-0045 and entering conference ID 792371