

March 28, 2015

Dear Brethren,

I am hoping that you are all in good spirit and looking forward with great anticipation to the upcoming Passover, days of Unleavened Bread, and Wavesheaf day which starts the count to Pentecost or Feast of Weeks. These three great events are anchored in the first month of the biblical calendar year as defined by the Creator. They are vitally important to our faith and personal walk with and worship of God/Elohim to the point that it can be difficult to articulate it in words.

As in most years after the inspections in Israel, I receive some questions. Over the years it has been interesting to see the turn that they take as more and more brethren come to an understanding of the basics of the Abib Calendar. This year some have centered around why I look for barley across all of Israel yet only look to the Jerusalem area for the first crescent sighting. Normally I answer these questions in private emails as I have done once again this year, but it has entered my mind to answer them in a general reply which I can post on the site for any who may have asked it of themselves.

Many of you know I have answered these particular questions in the past in updates, reports, summations, and articles. There are many new folks coming to the understanding of a "different" calendar than what they have been led to believe is the biblical calendar so it is good to review. The web site service Linda and I offer for others use on the calendar gets a lot of visitors each year and especially in the weeks before and after the end of the 12th lunar cycle or month. It is not necessary for us to have direct contact with anyone who visits the site for we include all the information on it to give an answer for the hope which is in us. This is not a group think thing but a reflection of our way of worshipping God/Elohim. These are our own personal beliefs and the process we hold close in worshipping our Creator. No blowing trumpets, no money requested, no accolades in any way and certainly not a following of any sorts. We share them with any who wish to utilize them in the privacy of their homes. With that said it is wonderful to have fellowship with brethren from all over the world.

So let me answer why I (and Linda in many years) search the entire land of Israel for the first of the firstfruits of mature barley near the end of the 12th month. Let's start with the command given in Lev. 23:9-11.

"And the Lord/Yehovah spoke to Moses saying, Speak to the children of Israel (all of them not just the Jews), and say to them: When you come into the land (all of it) which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest."

This tells me that this command is relevant to the entire land of Israel as God/Elohim has defined it elsewhere in scripture. With that said there are some areas we do not venture into such as Gaza or portions of Israel now located in other countries. However we have been blessed in locating fields of early maturing volunteer barley in all 3 of the grain growing regions of Israel. These locations are permanent locations of early maturing barley. Some have asked why that is important. It is necessary to establish yearly patterns in each location. This helps us to discern how the barley will grow under certain

meteorological conditions which can have a profound effect on the rate at which the grain will mature. This information allows us to forecast when the grain will actually be aviv from year to year.

Some of the scriptural commands which shape what and why I do what I do personally are as follows.

Exodus 34:26, "The first of the firstfruits of your land (the entire land) you shall bring to the house of the Lord/Yehovah your God/Elohim."

Exodus 23:19, "The first of the firstfruits of your land you shall bring into the house of the Lord/Yehovah your God/Elohim."

Exodus 22:29, "You shall not delay to offer the first of your ripe produce and your juices."

Mark 4:29, "But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come." (Please read verses 26-29 for these are a second covenant explanation of the entire grain growing process and the importance to have the timing right).

I think it is self-explanatory that the first of the firstfruits from the entirety of the land is to be brought to the priest without delay. That is directed in the pattern of commands established in scripture. We could spend a lot of time here adding all the agricultural reasons for this as well but let's continue to focus on the basic scriptural answers for doing so and then establish the pattern which links these great events of the first month together which I mentioned at the onset of this letter as to why I do what I do.

In Deuteronomy 16: 1-12 we are given command and instruction to observe the month of Abib and to keep the Passover, days of UB, and the start of the seven week harvest unto Pentecost or feast of Weeks. Verse 9 specifically tells us, "You shall count seven weeks for yourself; begin to count the seven weeks from the time you begin to put the sickle to the grain."

That is just repeating or confirming for me what is stated in Lev. 23. It is all the same time frame and in Lev 23:15, it describes the seven weeks count but from the perspective of seven weekly Sabbaths being completed or seven perfect creation weeks, starting from day one through day seven (the Sabbath). It is obvious to me that all this activity of the first of the firstfruits of the grain harvest is centered around the month of Abib. So all the dates given here in Lev. are in the month of Abib; in fact the 14th (v-5), 15th (v-6), and 21st (v-8) are listed. So when specifically is this first of the firstfruits grain to be brought to the priest?

Verse 11; "He shall wave the sheaf before the Lord/Yehovah to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath (weekly 7676) the priest shall wave it."

I personally believe that this is the first day of the week, which we refer to as Sunday. It did not have a name given to it by God/Elohim just a number like the other five weekly days. Only the seventh day was named by God. All the other days of a creation week are defined around the Sabbath. So when we are told the day after the Sabbath, that is telling us the focus is on the first day of the week. So I use the first day of the week as the day the sheaf was commanded to be waved on our behalf by the priest during the days of UB. Thus when I travel to Israel each year prior to the end of the 12th month I look to the

established early fields we have located over the past 14 years to inspect their level of maturity. The maturity level I look for is whether the grain will be physiologically capable of reproducing themselves by at least the 15th day of the next month. If this is the case I know that the next visible crescent (my personal belief) will be the start of the month of Abib and the beginning of the new year.

For those of you who do not understand when grain is actually physiologically mature enough to reproduce itself there are several scales and tests you can utilize to do so but scripture gives us one that is foolproof one might say. That is found in Lev. 2 (the grain offering chapter) in verse 14.

“If you offer a grain offering of your firstfruits to the Lord/Yehovah, you shall offer for the grain offering of your firstfruits green heads (abib) of grain roasted on the fire, grain beaten from full heads.”

This is a very simple process to determine if the grain will be acceptable so that it can be ground into flour. It consists of two steps. The first being the grain is to be beaten from full heads. If it is mature enough it will be able to be hit with force and then the seeds dislodge, a mini winnowing one might say. If that happens then the seeds are roasted over fire in a pan. If they do not shrivel up but remain in a firm oval shape then they have met the minimum requirement for grain to be used for a firstfruit offering. This is often the state of maturity we find acceptable barley to be in. Seldom at the end of the 12th month do we find barley so mature that it does not require any further drying time, however that is not the case at the end of a 13th month or intercalated month. We can usually find the early fields are dry enough to harvest but not too mature that they will drop their seeds before the middle of the next month for use as a first of the firstfruits wave sheaf offering. That is why all the focus is placed on the grain at the end of the 12th month. This is similar to the focus of the first crescent at the end of the 29th day in my reckoning. By this I mean the end of a 13th month is a given as to the barley being mature as is the 30th day of a month a given for a new moon if not seen on the 29th. If the barley is physiologically mature at the end of the 12th month or will be by the 15th of the next month it is meeting the command given in Lev. 2:14. That would thus trigger the declaration of the Month Abib and the appointed times originating in it.

One of the specific commands we addressed earlier; “You shall not delay to offer the first of your ripe produce and your juices.” The Levites who resided throughout the land knew which fields ripened first from year to year in their various locations. They were well established in this understanding and would cut a wavesheaf quantity of stalks of barley and travel with it to the priests who resided in the area of the Temple. There are times when they would travel for several days to accomplish this task prior to the wavesheaf day to meet the command of bringing the first of the firstfruits of the land to the Temple.

This is a simple pattern of responsibility given to the Levites and the sons of Aaron. It was repeated from year to year. They waited on the Creator to give them the clearly visible physical sign at the end of the 12th month to know they would or would not be starting the new year and thus the month of Abib.

This is why I do what I do and have for the past 14 years continuously. Others have the same conviction. We come from many different walks in life and for that matter beliefs and understandings; however we do share this belief and understanding of the abib in common. We are very thankful that God/Elohim

has given us locations in the three major grain growing regions of Israel which we can return to year after year to establish, for our own personal belief system, what will be the start of the new year.

Let me clarify another question often asked while we are on this subject from year to year. It pertains to the equinox and why I do not use it to determine the month of Abib. Let's use this year as an example to illustrate what havoc it can cause in terms of grain harvesting. I think we all understand the relevance and relationship that God/Elohim has done in tying the harvest seasons in Israel to the appointed times of meeting listed in the plan of salvation in His yearly calendar. This is not a poke in the eye to those brethren who utilize this method. I am simply going to illustrate in agricultural terms and facts of what can and will happen in a normal year not subject to intercalating a 13th month in to bring the appointed times into sync with the growing seasons in Israel.

This year we have a division in the brethren who use the equinox as the method for determining the start of the year. The equinox occurred shortly after the conjunction this year, in fact in the same Gregorian daily reckoning. The conjunction is the criteria most equinox followers use as a new moon. One segment has kept their long standing teaching that they must start the new year at the conjunction occurring after the equinox. The other segment will start the month on the day in which the equinox was calculated even though the conjunction took place earlier in the day. This second segment will be in sync with the agricultural harvests in Israel this year. The first will not. By their reckoning the earliest that the wavesheaf day could be observed would be May 3rd if I am not mistaken. Please do the math. That means the barley crop which is mature enough to meet the minimum standards for a wavesheaf offering as I write this would be left in the fields for another six weeks or more. This is at a time of year when the rains have virtually ended, the east winds are blowing, and the temperatures increase often dramatically. The entire barley crop across the country would be already harvested or have dropped its seeds (for that is what it is designed to do) by the time they would be keeping wave sheaf day. There would be no barley for them to start a seven week harvest! That is a complete tragedy to me, and something to pray and fast about if we truly have love for one another. Please remember barley can germinate at 34 degrees Fahrenheit and has a maximum growing cycle of between 80-90 days in Israel if all the climatic mechanisms are balanced.

Now let's address the second part of the question as to why I only use the first crescent visible in the area around Jerusalem. Once again it is very personal to my belief and worship structure. Many of you who follow the maturing of the barley have a different understanding of the new moon, with some keeping the first crescent as seen from their own location wherever it is in the world, some use the conjunction, some use the last crescent, some use a mathematical calculation of the first crescent, etc. That is a personal belief between you and God/Elohim. Keep in mind I am speaking about the hope which is in me, and answering the question as to my belief and not yours. Let's start with what I believe to be the commandment central to the new moon day.

Numbers 28:11; "At the beginning of your months you shall present a burnt offering to the Lord/Yehovah." We can read on down here through verse 15 to get a complete listing of what was to be offered on this day pertinent to the new moon. This command is central to my understanding of where and when I need to have the first crescent visible on new moon day or the first day of the month. We

also see an important event that is commanded to take place on these days throughout the year as well as the burnt offerings.

Numbers 10:10; “Also in the day of your gladness, in your appointed feasts, and at the beginning of your months, you shall blow the trumpets (the two silver trumpets; yobel) over your burnt offerings and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; and they shall be a memorial for you before your God/Elohim; I am the Lord/Yehovah your God/Elohim.” We know for a fact that there were an evening and a morning sacrifice time period in each day. I happen to believe the evening sacrifices were offered after sunset at the start of a biblical day. I do think most of us understand what a day to God/Elohim is. So why do I believe these burnt offerings were conducted at the time of the evening offering?

Leviticus 6:8-9; “Then the Lord/Yehovah spoke to Moses, saying, command (not ask or suggest to) Aaron and his sons, saying; This is the law of the burnt offering; the burnt offering shall be on the hearth upon the altar all night until morning, and the fire of the altar shall be kept burning on it.” There are other scriptures as well but to me that is very convincing. I have had some who profess that the evening offerings take place at 3 pm in the afternoon. I simply respond by saying if that was the case then the sacrifice would be spanning two biblical days, the day it started on, and then bridging over into the next day starting at sunset until the next morning.

We are given the command in Lev. 23:37 that each offering and sacrifice had to be completed on its day. That means everything associated with it on the day it was convened unless specifically stated otherwise in scripture. Again these are personal convictions of mine based on scriptural patterns of instruction and command which I apply to my understanding of things surrounding the practices and rules of new moon observance in Temple times.

So with this being the case and knowing a lunar cycle is 29 and a half days in length, that tells me a month can only be 29 or 30 days in length and this offering can only take place on one of the two. This was also known to probably everyone living in Israel during Temple times. It was the responsibility of the Levites as well as the sons of Aaron to conduct these responsibilities. Let’s once again illustrate this all by doing the math so to speak. If the new moon burnt offerings were to be left on the fire all night, that tells me they had to be prepared to act upon them after sunset of that given day and offered throughout the night portion of that day (unlike the pagan reckoning society uses which has two night portions to one day portion). There is only one night portion to any biblical day. It always comes at the beginning following sunset. Let’s place ourselves in Israel after sunset on the 29th day during Temple times. Here we have different priests ready at the Temple to prepare the animals, grains, and drink offerings to be offered as commanded for a new moon day. The sun sets and they can’t see the crescent by the time it gets dark. Then they have clearly been given a signal as to Gods/Elohim intentions for the start of the month. It is to be the following night for there are only 29 or 30 day in any given biblical month. Now let’s say everyone is assembled to perform their responsibility after sunset on another 29th day. Unfortunately there is cloud cover, raining, haze, etc. preventing them from seeing the crescent. What do they do? The law of the crescent is quite simple in itself. We are told that the lights of the firmament were to be used as “signs” in Genesis 1:14. Sign here is #226 owth. Strongs tells us in the sense of appearing, a signal (Literally or figuratively). Vines tells us “sign, mark; as a reminder of one’s

duty such as Genesis 9:12 a rainbow.” Genesis 1: 15 tells us “And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light (something visible) on the earth; and it was so.”

This tells me that this signal or sign will be visible to the naked eye standing on the earth. So if I can't see this clearly visible sign after sunset on the 29th day regardless of whether it is cloudy, raining, or hazy that God/Elohim made it so and is making His will known. He is in control of the entire process as He tells us over and over again in scripture. He controls the weather for the maturing of the barley and for the visibility of the crescent. That is why I only use volunteer barley and not manipulated barley which is machine planted to fit man's schedule for economic reasons.

So once again let's get back to the 29th day, to scenario number two above. Everything is ready and prepared for the commanded new moon burnt offerings to commence including those individuals who will be blowing the two silver trumpets to usher in the awareness to all, that it is new moon day. Unfortunately the first crescent can't be seen anywhere in central Israel let alone the area around Jerusalem. Now how far do you think one could travel to see the new moon and be back to report it that evening to the priests who were standing ready to commence the activities surrounding the commanded offerings? This is a very important question I have had to ask myself and come to grips with.

Do you think one of the priests or Levites would have even considered travelling many days to Eilat to do so? Of course not, for that would be absurd, for it would take days to get back as well. Well how about Haifa in the north on the sea shore? Out of the question as well. There is no way they could have been back to the Temple that day to give witness to what they saw let alone that evening.

I think I am being clear and easy to understand why I look to the area around Jerusalem on the evening after the 29th day for the visible first crescent. These were the rules and logistics in place during Temple times. I choose to follow them in my belief structure. That is between me and God/Elohim just as yours are as well. We are all to seek out our own salvation with fear and trembling as the apostle Paul instructed us. I hope this answers the question about why I travel all over the land to inspect for the first of the firstfruits of grain but only look in the area around Jerusalem for the first crescent.

This is why I have posted the dates for the start of the year reflecting a Monday March 23rd first day starting at sunset the day before.

I will post this response to the question asked on the feast dates page and on the studies page as well so I can direct similar questions to it in the future. There are also many other postings involving this same subject on the site from over the years.

Hope you all have a joyous festival season!

Brian

