

Beth Tephila Messianic Jewish Congregation

(Under same management for over 5781 years)

SHABBAT SERVICE

**October 26th - 10:30 AM Lolo Community
"Synagogue"**

12:30 PM Oneg Shabbat



Parsha B'Reisheet (Genesis) 1:1 - 6:8

בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ:

"B'Reisheet bara Elohim et hashamayim ve'et ha'arets."

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."

וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה תְהוֹמוֹ וְחֹשֶׁךְ עַל-פְּנֵי תְהוֹמוֹ

הַמַּיִם: וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל-פְּנֵי

Veha'arets hayetah tohu vavohu vechoshech al-peney tehomveruach Elohim merachefet al-peney hamayim.

א

And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי אוֹר וַיְהִי-אוֹר:

Vayomer Elohim yehi-or vayehi-or.

And God said, "Let there be light;" and there was light.

וַיַּרְא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאוֹר כִּי-טוֹב

וַיַּבְדֵּל אֱלֹהִים בֵּין הָאוֹר וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ:

Vayar Elohim et-ha'or ki-tov

vayavdel Elohim beyn ha'or uveyn hachoshech.

And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness.

וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאוֹר יוֹם וְאֶת-הַחֹשֶׁךְ לַיְלָה וַיְהִי-עֶרֶב וַיְהִי-

בֹּקֶר יוֹם אֶחָד:

Vayikra Elohim la-or yom velachoshech kara laylah

vayehi-erev vayehi-voker yom echad.

And God called the light day, and the darkness He called night.

And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

Haftarah: Isaiah 42:5 - 43:10

Thus says God the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and its offspring, who gives breath to the people on it, and spirit to whose who walk in it. I am the Lord. I have called you in righteousness. I will also hold you by the hand and watch over you. And I will appoint you as a covenant to the people, as a light to the nations....

B'rit Hadasha: Rev. 22:6-21

The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and His servant will worship Him. They will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. Night will no longer exist, so they will need neither the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because ADONAI, God will shine upon them. And they will reign as kings forever and ever.

Psalm 1

How blessed is the man, who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. And he will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season. And its leaf does not wither. And in whatever he does, he prospers.

New Year -- New Torah Cycle

As we begin a new year and a new cycle of Torah reading, it is good to remember the destination of the year, of our lives, and of the Torah itself. We should not be surprised to read of this destination "in the beginning." Here we learn that creation is not an end in itself, but moves toward a goal...the completion of God's order and shalom which were inaugurated in the creation week. The destination is a fulfilled creation in which the glorious presence of God the Creator is evident throughout His entire creation.

Having finished the book of Deuteronomy, we learned about the death of Moses the "Man of God," "whom the Lord knew face to face." Joshua was chosen by God, "filled with the spirit of wisdom," and commissioned by Moses in front of all the people to take God's people into the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and their descendants. The book of Joshua begins, as the people cross the Jordan River to occupy their land. In the last forty years of Moses' life, God used him to equip His people to conquer the land. Moses taught the people God's law and set up the Levitical system of sacrifices, so that the sins of the people could be covered. God always equips His people to do His work. Today, our position before God is to always be open to His leading; to listen for that still, small voice of God's Ruach (Spirit) inside us. Then we must obey His calling and trust in His ability to accomplish through us that which He equips us to do.

"B'Reisheet" is the Hebrew title for the first of the five books written by Moses. It is taken literally from the first words of the book: "In the beginning..." Our English word "Genesis" is a translation from the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Tanakh (Old Testament). It means "origins." "This is the book of the origins of heaven and earth"(vs1). In the Torah portion for this week, we will see the "origins" of heaven and earth and the origins of Adam.

Proper Roles: God is Creator - Man is Part of God's Creation

As we look at the miracle of creation, let us not forget that creation was the doing of Almighty God ! " **B'Reisheet bara Elohim...**" "In the beginning, God created..."(vs1). "...God said, 'let there be...., and there was....'" The Hebrew word used for creation is "**bara.**" The usage of this word is something in scripture that only God does. God created something from nothing! So we see that God alone is the creator. God speaks His creation into existence (Psalm 33:6: "By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all of their host by the breath of his mouth"); God observes it is good; God blesses His creation. The creation is God's alone. Therefore God is sovereign over His creation. He made it, and He owns it. His creation of the earth and all that is in it is testimony to the greatness of God.

We should also take note that the Hebrew word used for "God" is a plural form, "**Elohim,**" rather than the singular, "**Eloha**" used in the Song of Moses, Deuteronomy 32:15 ("But Jeshurun grew fat and kicked...then he forsook God [**"Eloha"**] who made him...) This plural form allows for a plurality in the Godhead. "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness;..."(vs.26). Another example of the plurality of the Godhead is found in Genesis 19:24: "The Lord ("**Adonai**") rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord ("**Adonai**") out of heaven." While we worship only one God, this verse pictures two manifestations of God. God's Ruach is a third manifestation of God. (Exodus 35:31, "And He [**"Adonai"**] has filled him [Bezalel] with the Spirit of God [**"Ruach Elohim"**].....).

In between verses 1 & 2, some feel that the fall of Satan occurred. This is called the "gap theory." The Hebrew words "**tohu va-vohu**" that are translated "formless and void" or "desolate & waste" seem to be a chaos situation different from the rest of creation. Other places in scripture, these words are used to show the results of judgment (Jeremiah 4:23). So some feel that the judgment of Satan left the earth formless and void.



"God said, 'let there be light'; and there was light."

Without the Spirit of God within us, our lives, too, would be "formless and void," chaotic. Yet when the Spirit of God is moving in one's life, God produces miracles. **"God said, 'let there be light'; and there was light."** This Shabbat, we will discuss what is this "light" that God created and how it differed from "darkness" on the first "day" of creation. We will also discuss some theories as to whether these "days" are 24 hour days. We should note here that God didn't "make" light, as we might make light. God "created" light from nothing. The second day was **a day of separation**, waters from waters and the expanse of heaven from waters. The third day, God caused dry land to appear covered with all types of vegetation. On the fourth day of creation, God caused what we might call "time" to begin, divided into days, years, and seasons. The fifth day, God created sea creatures and birds. God made them with the ability to multiply "after their kind." Also this Shabbat, we will discuss what "after their kind" means in the light of theories of evolution.

One of the keys to understanding the creation as something accomplished by God alone is to notice the orderliness of creation. For each created thing, God has already prepared a place. For example, God first separated out dry land and caused vegetation to grow before He created the animals to inhabit the land. The orderliness of creation shows that creation was not a random event. **On the sixth day, God created man.** "Then God said, 'Let Us make man **in Our image according to Our likeness...**'" (1:26). Surely the creation of man must have been special to God, since man was created in "Our (plural) image according to Our (plural) likeness," and man was given the authority to rule over the rest of God's creation on earth. Since God has no image, **what do you think God meant by "in Our image according to Our likeness?"** Also consider **for what purpose did God create man in His image and in His likeness?**

One might take note that there were no kosher laws made for man at this time. Man could eat everything. How could this be? If kosher laws were given later, why would God not begin His creation of man with kosher laws? One might also wonder, why does God find it necessary to evaluate His creation..."and God saw that it was good?" Since there is no other creation against which to evaluate God's creation, one must decide that God's evaluation was for us; perhaps to interject God's standard of morality for us to appreciate.

Having completed all of His creation, God "rested." How does God rest? And **if He was totally finished with creation in six days, why did He create a seventh day?** This "extra" day must have been meant to be something special to God because He blessed this day and separated it from all the other days. By the way, why do we not see God telling Adam to observe a day of rest? Since we have seen that God told Israel through Moses to observe the 7th day as a day of rest, and we find that believers are going to observe the 7th day in the Messianic kingdom, why not begin the observance with Adam? Ask yourselves **for whom was the Sabbath given and for what purpose?** Could God's "resting" be a model for us to follow?

In **Chapter 2**, God placed Adam in a wonderful place, the Garden of Eden....but made him "cultivate **"le'ovdah"** (work) and keep" it (vs.15). Why would God provide such a wonderful place for Adam, but make him work for his living? The Hebrew word for "work" is related to the word for "service," **"avodah."** Can you see a relationship between our work and our service for God?

As we continue in Chapter 2 about the creation of Adam and his "helper" (vs18), this is the first time we see that part of God's creation was "not good." Adam was alone. Should we then conclude that it is God's plan for all men to be married? And what does it mean to become "one flesh?" Define what is meant for a man to leave his father and his mother, and cleave to his wife."



In **Chapter 3**, think about the real story behind the "apple" from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Since Adam was told by God about this tree before Eve was created, why does Adam put blame for eating from it onto Eve? Should one take from this picture of Adam and Eve that the woman is always at fault? Not unless man wants to live a short, miserable life! Perhaps there is a connection between disobedience (eating the apple) and a dysfunctional relationship between man and God and men and women. Rabbi Tony Eaton (UMJC) reminds us, "God gave to man His Torah, and in the proper time His Ruach so that all of us would be enabled to make good choices. Now it is up to us. As we wait the return of Messiah, we must renew our commitment to God's

ways, 'And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect". (Rom. 12:2).'" Disobedience to the Divine command led to the first of many exiles in scripture.

Notice that the consequences for sin are different for the man than for the woman. The woman will have pain in childbirth and be ruled over by her husband. The man will now be expelled from the garden of Eden and have to work the fields to provide food for himself and his wife. Both men and women will have to experience physical death. However, in the midst of God's judgment for sin comes the compassion of God's prophecy about the future coming of Messiah; coming from the seed of the woman (Gen.3:15) to provide God's atonement from sin and to remove the sting of death. Having just discussed "atonement" on Yom Kippur, this Shabbat we connect God's provision of atonement for men to the removal of the sting of death. God's prophecy is that the Messiah will crush the head of Satan, rendering Satan, who has the power over death, powerless. God's people whose sins have been forgiven have total assurance that they have been inscribed into God's book of eternal life. At death, like Moses (Deuteronomy 32:50), we will be "gathered to our people," in heaven and will await our loved ones on earth. Together we will praise God in the coming Messianic Kingdom and for all eternity!

Chapter 4 tells the story of Cain and Abel. We are told that two sons are born to Adam and Eve. One of them, whose name is Abel, is presented as a fine, God-fearing man, while God is extremely displeased with his brother Cain. As a result Cain becomes angry and sullen. Cain ends up killing his brother perhaps because of jealousy but with no apparent provocation by Abel. Since God is omniscient (all-knowing) and omnipotent (all-powerful), and He is just and righteous as well, why does He permit upright and honest individuals to suffer? God knew the thoughts of Cain, which is why **God said to Cain, "sin crouches at the door," and adds "it endeavors to gain mastery over you, but you may yet overcome it"**. Within Cain and also within us, **there is a struggle going on with us between our inclination to do what pleases God (doing good) and our inclination to give in to evil (doing what displeases God). God allows this struggle to run its course within us, rather than ensuring that human events always turn out justly**. This struggle is the source of evil - when we fail to overcome temptation - it is also the very source of all good. It is of the very essence of the humanness that God created within us. **God created us to grapple with the evil inclination and to choose good over evil, but that entails the possibility of us choosing evil. We are given free will to make bad decisions, and it is exactly that option that makes good decisions good. If God were to prevent all evil – removing our free will - good would lose all meaning**. Life would be emptied of its relevance to choose at all, rendering us decision-less people. God watched the crime unfold and did not intervene to preserve Abel. Do we blame God for giving us the choice between good and evil and then watching us choose evil without His interference with our decision? Should we not put the blame where it belongs on us; on our decision to do evil, rather than good. When 6 million Jews and others were killed by the Nazis, some people asked how a loving God could watch while so many of His people were murdered. How could a God or righteousness allow so much evil and not intervene? And even today we observe world news and say, why do some good people suffer, while God does not intervene? These questions have caused

some to abandon their faith in God. God was there in times past and is here with us today. If we abandon our faith, that's our evil decision because we then make ourselves to be God. We must continue on choosing the good that is all around us. By reading the scriptures and making decisions to choose the good that agrees with God's word to us, we fulfill God's plan for us: To allow God to be God in our lives and to live intimately with Him,

We see that some men are inclined to sin and are punished for their sin. The concept of punishment for sin is a certainty! If Cain could not sin against God and get away with it, why do we think we can do so? Do we think that the human population is so great today that God doesn't know all the evil that men do? The ultimate punishment from God for sin is to be sent away from His presence (vs.16). God accepted the sacrifice of Abel but not that of Cain. We must be sure that we have obtained the proper sacrifice that will please God, or we risk being sent away from His presence for all eternity. Just as we have seen in the Levitical, sacrificial system, God allows only one sacrifice that will remove man's sins from His sight. The sacrifice of the Messiah, Yeshua. "Surely He hath borne our grief's, and carried our sorrows...He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed....Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise Him;...(to) make His soul an offering for sin..."(Isaiah 53:4-10). Have you accepted God's sacrifice for your sins?

Chapter 5 begins the family documents of the genealogy of Adam down through Noah in chapter 6:8, mentioning Noah's three sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth. As you read through the genealogy, notice how long these people lived. Methuselah lived one hundred eighty-seven years before the mention of any of his children. Today in modern, liberal Judaism there is no thought given to the coming of a personal Messiah. It is felt that the longer we live, we will better know right from wrong. Therefore mankind will become better and better, until we are perfect and can usher in an age of enlightenment, ourselves. This idea of becoming better and better with age is totally disproved in Chapters 5 - 6:8. For it seem that the longer men live, the more sinful they become. In

Chapter 6:3, ..."the Lord said, 'My Spirit shall not strive (continue to restrain the punishment of sin) with man forever..." In fact, ..."the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually (vs.5)." It should be obvious to every individual that he is not becoming better and better with age. It should be equally obvious to every individual that having more time on earth only increases the totality of his sinfulness. Yet in the midst of a wicked society, "Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord."(6:8) Noah had a "change of heart" towards God and away from sin. Verse 9 calls him a "righteous man, blameless in his time;" because "Noah walked with God." Have you had a change of heart? Judaism calls this "Teshuvah," "repentance;" agreeing with God about specific sins, then "turning around" your life and walking away from your sins and towards God.

Genesis is a book about beginnings. There is no better way to begin our New Year, 5781, than for each of us to recommit ourselves to honoring God by walking in His way, uplifting each other, and being a good witness for Him in our community, including the House of Israel.

Shabbat Shalom



B'Reisheet (Genesis)