

Beth Tephila Messianic Jewish Congregation

(Under same management for over 5778 years)



Shabbat Service

December 30th – 10:30 AM Lolo Community "Synagogue"
12:30 PM Oneg Shabbat & Interactive Torah Study

"Blessed are those whose way of life is blameless; who live by the Torah of Adonai.
Blessed are those who observe His instruction; who seek Him with all their heart." Psalm 119



VaYechi "and he lived..."

וַיְחִי יַעֲקֹב בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם שִׁבְעַת עָשָׂר שָׁנָה וַיְחִי יַמֵּי יַעֲקֹב שְׁנַיִם חֲמִידָה
שִׁבְעַת שָׁנִים וָאַרְבָּעִים וּמֵאָת שָׁנָה:

Vayechi Ya'akov b'erets Mitsrayim shva esreh shanah.

Vayehi yemey Ya'akov shney chayav sheva shanim v'arba'im ume'at shanah.

"And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years.

The length of Jacob's life was one hundred and forty-seven years." 47:28

[And it was (the) days of Jacob, years of life-his, 7 years and 40 and 100 years]

לֹא יָסוּר שֵׁבֶט מִיְהוּדָה וּמִחֹקֵק מִבֵּין רַגְלָיו עַד כִּי יָבֹא שִׁילוֹה וְלוֹ יִקְחָת עַמִּים:

Lo-yasur shevet mi-Yehudah umechokek mibeyn raglav ad ki-yavo shiloh v'lo yikhat amim.

"The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet

until Shiloh comes. And to Him shall be the obedience of the nations." 49:10

God's Provision for His People

We have come to the last Torah portion of Bereshit (Genesis). We began the Torah portions of Bereshit October 22nd, so it has been about 2 3/4 months since we read how God created the world and everything in it, including men and women.

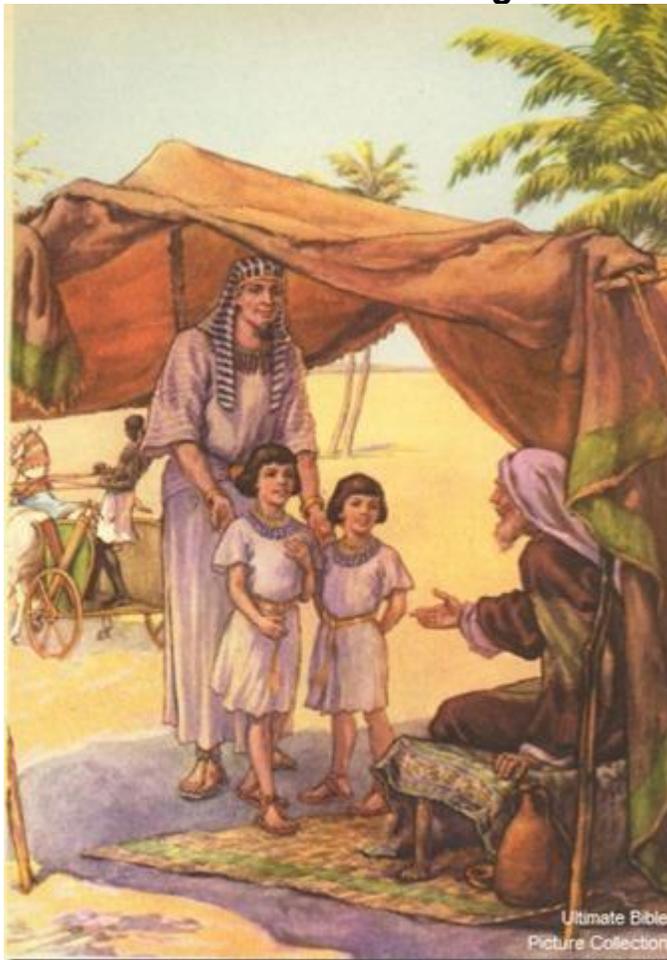


To mankind, God gave the power to rule over His creation, but men instead chose to disobey God, thus separating themselves from Him. Yet in His mercy, God made a way for sinful mankind to again become reconciled to God. Even before Torah was given, God made the first animal sacrifice to clothe Adam and Eve. Throughout the book of Genesis, we read that the patriarchs sacrificed an animal, as they came into the presence of God. From all the people of the earth, God chose Abraham and his descendants to become His people. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob received God's covenantal blessing and promise to bless them and to keep them; to bless those that blessed them and curse those who cursed them; to give them the "promised land," part of which is today called Israel; to make them into a great nation through which all the peoples (the pagan, Gentile nations) would be blessed. God settled His people in the land He promised them but found that the influence of the surrounding Canaanite nations was corrupting them. So God make provision for His people to become a nation in Egypt, away from Canaanite influence. God sent Joseph ahead of his family to Egypt and prospered him to become second in power to Pharaoh in order to preserve His people in Egypt. God allowed that part of the world to have seven years of bumper crops, and told Joseph to store food for the seven years of famine to follow. When the famine came, God told Jacob

to move his family to Egypt, where He would make them into a great nation. Jacob came to Egypt with his whole family, and by the decree of Pharaoh, they were allowed to settle by themselves in Goshen, Egypt's the most productive area. There they were given an allotment of food provided by Joseph. "They acquired property... were fruitful and became very numerous" (47:27).

In this last Torah portion from Genesis, we will read about the deaths of Jacob and Joseph. Yet even after their deaths, God continued to make provision for His people to flourish in Egypt, making His people into a great nation, according to His promise to Abraham and his descendants.

A Time of Blessing



After the reconciliation of the dysfunctional family of Jacob in Egypt, Jacob would ensure the continuation of his family heritage through the blessing of his children. The last seventeen years of the life of Jacob were probably the most comfortable years of his life. He lived in a very fertile area and was given all the food his family needed to survive the famine. His family lived by themselves free from the corrupting influence of the Canaanites and protected from enemies by Pharaoh. Even today, as we put our spiritual focus on God, He protects us from corrupting influences of those around us. The physical circumstances God allows to come into our lives are for our benefit (Romans

8:28).

When Jacob felt that he was dying, he called Joseph to make him swear that he would take Jacob back to their "promised land" for burial in the cave of Machpelah, where Abraham and Isaac had been buried. Later, Joseph brought his two sons to Jacob for blessing.

Jacob recounted to Joseph"God Almighty appeared to me at Luz (Bethel) in the land of Canaan and blessed me, and He said to me, 'Behold, I will make you fruitful and numerous, and I will make you a company of peoples, and will give this land to your descendants after you for an everlasting possession'" (48:3-4). Based upon God's revelation to him, even while his family was living in Egypt, Jacob was able to pass on ownership of the "promised land" to his children. The words "everlasting

possession" make it abundantly clear that God passed the deed to the land of Israel to the descendants of Jacob, whether or not they were actually living in the land.



With gratitude to God for allowing him to see Joseph and his two children, Jacob adopted Joseph's two children as his own, guaranteeing each of them a portion of land along with Jacob's other children. Although Reuben was the first-born and should have received a double-portion of inheritance, Joseph was the actual recipient of the double-portion through the individual inheritance of his two sons. Yet with the adoption came a surprise. Joseph had lined up his children, Manasseh and Ephraim in birth order, so that Manasseh, the first-born, would be the first one blessed. However, when Jacob blessed Joseph's children, Menashe and Ephraim, he crossed his hands, placing his right hand (symbolizing strength and greatness) over Ephraim's head, while using his weaker left hand to bless the older son Menashe. Although Jacob knew from experience that there was ill-will generated by favoring Joseph over his brothers, he nevertheless seemed to favor the younger son over the older. What lessons may be gleaned from here about giving deferential treatment to one's children? The answer is that deferential treatment produces dysfunction, only if the children are not willing to follow the choice of their father.

We remember that Jacob was also the younger brother of Esau. Jacob was given preference over Esau by his father, Isaac. Today, all of Israel remembers this blessing as the model blessing of fathers for their male children: "May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh" (48:20). **Hebrews 11:20,21** remind us that these blessings were given by faith, trusting in God's direction that the younger brother should have preference over the older brother. To Joseph, Jacob gave the town of Shechem, foretelling that God would also bring Joseph back to the "promised land" to Shechem to be buried. Jacob then calls each of his sons to come before him for an individual blessing.



This Shabbat we will look at the blessing of each son from Genesis 49 and Deuteronomy 33, paying special attention to the blessings of Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, and Joseph. Could it be that God has given His protocol to us that we also should bless our children? From the standpoint of the children, would they want to live the kind of obedient lives that would receive the blessing of praise (like Judah) from their father? Gary Smalley's book The Blessing tells us that all children, even adult children want to have the approval of their parents. We will discuss how we as parents can

bless our children, and how we as children can ask our parents for their blessing. As we have observed from the last several Torah portions, repentance is necessary for reconciliation, and the end of the process of reconciliation is blessing. The ultimate reconciliation is to be reconciled to God through the atonement of Messiah. Therefore the blessing we should impart to our kids is the knowledge and awareness of their need to receive God's blessing through their personal relationship with Him in Messiah. Our legacy to our kids is to pass along God's blessing to them.

Our Ultimate Blessing

After blessing each of his sons with the "blessing appropriate to him" (49:28), Jacob gave them instructions to bury him with Abraham and Isaac. Then he gathered himself into his bed, breathed his last breath and was "gathered to his people." From this Hebrew expression, we, too, can have confidence that our final blessing as believers in Messiah, Yeshua, will be to go immediately into the presence of our loved ones, who have died and gone to heaven. Our ultimate blessing will be to be in the presence of God! The fulfillment of our legacy to our kids will be when they are "gathered to their people," and we again see them in the presence of God.

Finishing the Race: The Deaths of Jacob & Joseph

Joseph was allowed by Pharaoh to fulfill the burial instructions of his father, Jacob. The brothers returned to Hebron with a great company of horses and chariots for the burial. They buried Jacob in the cave at Machpelah that Abraham had purchased as a family burial site. After the death of their father, the rest of the brothers worried that Joseph might now seek revenge for their previous action against him. But Joseph assured them that they should not be afraid because what they had meant for evil, God had meant for their good to preserve their lives in accordance with His plans for them. Joseph lived to be 110 years old. Until his death, he provided food and safety to preserve and prosper his people. As he was about to die, Joseph told his brothers that God would take care of them and bring them back to their land. Joseph asked them to take his bones with them, when they returned to the "promised land." Throughout his life, Joseph had kept his faith alive and acted on it. Like Joseph, we may never hear God directly talking to us, but we also must keep alive our faith in God and act on it. So like Joseph and Timothy, we can say, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (2Tim:4:7)....And, I have passed on to my kids, as my legacy to them, the blessing of God.

Chazak, Chazak, v'Nit'Chazek!

Be strong, be strong, and may we be strengthened!

Announcements & Prayer Requests

1) Next week we will begin Exodus, "Shemot" שמות, which contains 11 Torah portions and will conclude in March. It is necessary to have a full understanding of Exodus to appreciate Passover just two weeks later. So please **make it a priority** to study all the individual Torah portions in Exodus. We have a complete, interactive discussion of each Torah portion every Shabbat. Make plans to attend every service to complete your Passover experience.