

Beth Tephila Messianic Jewish Congregation

(Under same management for over 5778 years)

SHABBAT SERVICE

Saturday, July 21st 12PM Home of Wally & Jeannette Tucker
Oneg Shabbat & Interactive Torah Study



Covenant Politics In our Continued Political Season

Our sages have said, "The faults of a generation rest with its heads and leaders."



Deuteronomy 1 - 3:22

Verse 1

אלה הדברים אשר דבר משה אל-כל-ישראל בעבר הירדן
אלה הדברים אשר דבר משה אל כל ישראל בעבר הירדן

Eleh ha-d'varim asher diber Moshe el-kol-Yisra'el b'ever ha-Yarden

These are the words that Moses spoke to all Israel across the Jordan

במדבר בערבה מול סוף

בין פארן ובין תפל ולבן וחצרת ודי זהב:

במדבר בערבה מול סוף בין פארן ובין תפל ולבן וחצרת ודי זהב

bamidbar ba-Aravah mol Suf bein-Paran u-vein-Tofel v'Lavan va-Chatserot v'Di Zahav.

in the wilderness in the Aravah opposite Suf, between Paran, Tophel, Laban, Haereth, and Dizahab

Verse 8

ראה נתתי לפניכם את-הארץ באו ורשו את-הארץ אשר נשבע יהוה לאבותיכם

ראה נתתי לפניכם את הארץ באו ורשו את הארץ אשר נשבע יהוה לאבותיכם

Re'eh natati lifneichem et-ha'arets bo'u ureshu et-ha'arets asher nishba Adonai la'avoteichem

"See, I have placed the land before you;

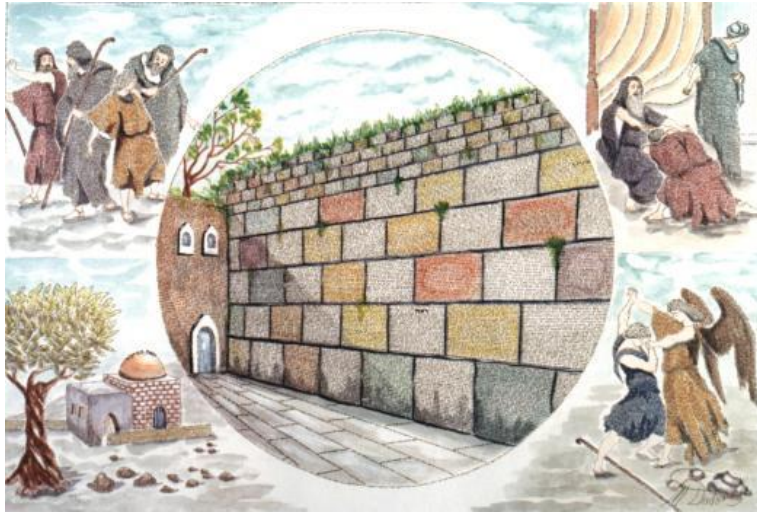
go in and possess the land, which the Lord swore to give to your fathers

לאברהם ליצחק וליעקב לתת להם ולזרעם אחריהם:

לאברהם ליצחק וליעקב לתת להם ולזרעם אחריהם

I'Avraham I'Yitschak ul'Ya'akov latet lahem ul'zar'am achareihem

to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to them and their descendants after them."



Deuteronomy: Moses reflects & imparts his legacy

As we love our own children, Moses loved the people whom God entrusted to him. In Deuteronomy we see that Moses acted like a "mother hen," giving God's instructions to the people. Moses knew that God would lead His people into the land He had promised to give to Abraham and his descendants. But Moses also knew that the peoples' enjoyment of the land; being able to dwell in all of the land and live in peace, prosperity, and security was totally dependent on their keeping their part of their covenant with God. **What is unique through the centuries about God's covenant with the Jewish people is that God, Himself, is the covenant maker, and the Jewish people as a whole have promised to keep the covenant.** "All the words (the 10 words which the Lord has spoken, we will do" (**Exodus 24: 3**). Therefore all Jews are responsible for one another to keep the covenant....no excuses! **If every Jew is responsible for keeping the covenant, then it follows that every Jew must know the covenant provisions and also teach them to their children.** The story of our people is that we learn about our relation to God, teach our children, and model it behaviorally in our daily lives, as a light to the nations. **We might call our agreement with God Covenant Politics, a political structure based upon our shared history and destiny.** God has taken an entire nation to be His partners in creating a society that honors Him. God's part of the covenant continues to be like our father, protecting us and preserving us. Moses knew that his people had a history of taking their focus away from following God, resulting in self-centered grumbling, complaining, and rebellion. Moses knew that the people would have battles to fight ahead of them. He knew that they would have to obey God in order for God to fight for them. Moses had already seen the seduction of the people into idolatry and immorality by the Moabites. They would be going from a lifestyle of wilderness living to living in towns and cities surrounded by various immoral and idolatrous peoples; from having food and clothing provided for them by God to a lifestyle of farming and raising livestock for food. Lastly, Moses also knew that He would not be allowed to take his people into their "promised land." **Following God's direction, Moses would transfer his authority to Joshua (Num. 27: 18-20). Therefore, Moses wrote Deuteronomy for the people, as a reminder for them to obey God's laws in order for them to experience God's power, direction, and protection in their lives.** So in Deuteronomy, as a "mother hen," he was trying his best to **teach God's wisdom to God's people.** Deuteronomy represents the last effort of Moses to impress God's words into the hearts of the Jewish people, giving them their best chance for "abundant living" in their promised land. This is the point in the last month of his life where Moses ceases to be a liberator but transforms into a teacher, **Moshe Rabbenu**, Moses our teacher. **His new job as a teacher is to teach the people who Jews they are and why they will do what Jews are supposed to do.** Moses a transformative leader, casts a vision for his people, teaching them **who they are and why they must obey God's covenantal provisions.** **Jews are the covenantal descendants of the covenant God originally made with Abraham and his descendants.** In writing

Deuteronomy, Moses, our teacher, recapitulates the miraculous story of the Jewish people. No other book in the Bible so encapsulates and dramatizes all the key elements of Judaism as a faith and a way of life. **Moshe Rabbenu** also writes Deuteronomy for us, teaching us that when leaders become educators, they change lives!!!

As we read Deuteronomy, let us also make a fresh commitment to God to keep His commandments; to keep the focus of our lives on serving Him, looking to Him as our shepherd and living the abundant life promised to His sheep (**John 10:14-16**). "I am the good shepherd, and I know My own, and my own know Me. Even as the Father knows me, and I know the Father, I lay down my life for the sheep. **And I have other sheep which are not of this fold. I must bring them also,** and they shall hear My voice, and **they shall become one flock with one shepherd (sheep from different folds become one flock in Messiah.)** For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down my life that I may take it again."

These are God's Words of Life

"**Eleh ha-d'varim**," "these are the words" is the Hebrew title for the last of the 5 books of Moses. "These are the words which Moses spoke to all Israel...." The Hebrew Bible uses the first few words of a book for its title; for example, "**Bereshit**," "In the beginning...." (Genesis) and "**Bamidbar**," "in the wilderness...."(Numbers). The Hebrew Bible shortened the title to "**D'varim**" pronounced "**Devarim**." Hellenistic Jews called the book, "**Mishneh Ha Torah**," meaning "second law" because it seemed to be the giving of a second law to the second generation of Israel. The Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Tanakh, mistranslated the Hebrew word, "**Mishneh**" "this second law" and therefore entitled the book Deutronomium touto from which the English title, Deuteronomy, is derived. The same Greek word, "**Mishneh**," is translated "**copy**" in Deuteronomy 17:18. **Rather than a "second law,"** we should consider Deuteronomy as a copy or a regiving of the same law of Moses to the second generation of God's people, who left Egypt. Other titles for the book of Deuteronomy are: **Sefer Tochachot** - Book of Admonitions; **Sefer Hazicharon** - Book of Remembrance. Deuteronomy was written around 1407 - 1410 B.C.E. in approximately the last month of Moses's life.

Moses Rebukes (**Tochacha**) the People

(For whom the Lord loves He reproves, even as a father, the son in whom he delights. **Proverbs 3:12**)

While still East of the Jordan, encamped in the plains of Moab across from Jericho, Moses, considered Israel's first prophet, exhorted his people to resist the unbelief of their parents that resulted in a total of 40 years of "desert vacation" and to go into the land of Israel to possess their inheritance. Fresh from their victory over Sihon, King of the Amorites, and Og, King of Bashan, Moses began with a chastisement or rebuke of the people. Simply by mentioning the various locations where their parents rebelled from following God, according to Rabbinic tradition, Moses brought into view their sin of disbelief:

"In the desert" -- the time they complained "if only we would have died in the desert" (**Exodus 17:3**)

"In the Araba (Plain)" -- their worship of Baal Peor in the Plains of Moab (**Numbers 25**)

"Opposite Suf" -- the trouble they made at the shores of **Yam Suf**, the Red Sea (**Exodus 14:11**)

"Tophel" and "Laban" (meaning "libel" and "white") -- their libeling the white manna (**Numbers 21:5**)

"Di Zahav" (literally "too much gold") -- the sin of the golden calf (**Exodus 32**)

Because of their disbelief, an 11 day journey of about 140 miles took 40 years. Finally, as the second generation were about to enter the land, Moses imparted to them the means by which they could resist unbelief and follow God. "Moses spoke to the children of Israel according to all that the Lord had commanded him to give to them..." Traditionally, Moses taught the people all 613 commandments, the whole Torah. The principle for us today is that obedience to God's law is also our means of resisting unbelief and "walking with God.

Moses reminded the people that God had instructed their parents at Mt. Sinai to go into and possess the land that He had promised to give to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and their descendants. Then to give permanence to their inheritance, Moses named the sections of the land they were to possess:

- 1) The Hill Country of the Amorites -- the land East of the Jordan
- 2) The Arabah -- the Jordan rift valley, including the Hulah valley, the Sea of Galilee, the Jordan valley, and the Dead Sea.
- 3) The Hill Country -- including the upper and lower Galilee along with Judea and Samaria
- 4) The Lowlands -- the Shephelah and Sea of Lakish
- 5) The Negev desert around Beersheba
- 6) The Sea Coast -- the plains of Asher, Sharon, and the Philistines.

According to the promise of Messiah (Matthew 8:11), in the kingdom of heaven even gentiles will ..."come from the east and west and recline at the table with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob." Notice that the "table," God's land promises, belongs to Israel (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob). Thus, the land of Israel belongs to Jews, and gentiles are invited guests. Since God had already kept His promise (Genesis 15:5; 22:17) to multiply them, God will also keep His promise to give His people the land of Israel as their everlasting inheritance.

Too Much **Tsuris** (troubles, woes)

At times I think I have too much **tsuris**, and I only have one child.....Moses had a "sea" of children. We, Jews have been known to vocalize our difficulties. Moses could not "bear the load and burden of you and your strife," so God allowed him to appoint judges ("**shoftim**") and police ("**shotrim**") to enforce the decisions of the judges.

Judges were to be Jews, who judged the people according to God's righteousness, as found in His law and did not show partiality. When judges judged righteously, their judgment would be God's judgment. Since Moses had unique access to God, He would still judge "difficult" cases (ex. the inheritance of the daughters of Zelophehad, Numbers 27). The application for us is the knowledge that when our burden becomes too great, we are to ask God to provide help for us, and allow Him to do so. We may also consider letting our needs be known in the congregation, so that when we have too much **tsuris**, God may use us to pray for and/or to meet each other's needs.

Kadesh-barnea: The Point of No Return

Moses reminded the 2nd generation about the disbelief of their parents at Kadesh-barnea. Having been given God's instructions to go and to possess the land of their inheritance, God's people exhibited disbelief in God's ability to perform for them what He had promised. Moses told them, "The Lord your God who goes before you will Himself fight on your behalf, just as He did for you in Egypt before your eyes....(Deuteronomy 1:30). "But for all this, you did not trust the Lord your God....(verse 32). Their **disbelief** was the basis of their grumbling, their **evil talk** (**lashon ha-ra**) about God, their rebellion against God's appointed leader, Moses, and the lying report of 10 of the 12 spies calculated to scare the people to achieve their own desires: a return to Egypt.. They refused to obey God and therefore reached "a point of no return." While God would still forgive their sin (Numbers 14:20), they had reached a point where no amount of repentance would avert God's judgment....38 years of "wandering" in the desert and prohibition from entering into their "promised land." Their actions are summarized in verses 43 and 45, ..."I spoke...but you would not listen...Instead you rebelled...and acted presumptuously....Then you returned and wept before the Lord; but the Lord did not listen to your voice nor give ear to you."

Continued disobedience to God always leads to a "point of no return," after which we will pay the consequences of our rebellion. It is much better for God's people today to hear His words of life and do them.

Kadesh-barnea: A Second Opportunity for a New Generation

Chapter 2 jumps 38 years into the future. God again declared, "**rav-lachem**," as we might put it today, "**enough already!**" They had been circling the Mount Seir range of mountains for 38 years, while their parents died in the wilderness, and now was the time for the 2nd generation to turn and go possess their inheritance....if they had learned from the errors of their parents and could trust and obey God. During their time in the desert, while the first generation had given up on God, God had not given up on His people. God had not forsaken His promise to Abraham and his descendants. God had taken care of His people and provided for them. Now He would lead them past the inheritance of their "cousins" Edom (Esau) and Moab and Ammon (sons of Lot) and into the land of their own inheritance.

Verses 10-12 and 20-23 are obvious scribal insertions after the death of Moses that added information about some of the tribes in the area, and how Israel drove out the tribes in their "promised land" and took over their land.

As Israel passed Edom, Moab, and Ammon, into the East side of the Jordan River, God hardened the heart of Sihon, King of the Amorites, who went to battle against Israel. He fought against Israel and was defeated. This was part of God's "holy war" that would put fear into the hearts of the enemies of Israel. All the people of the Amorites would come under God's "**Cherem**" (totally devoted for destruction) judgment. Everyone would be killed. There would be no survivors. Following God would lead to the total destruction of their enemies. While the first generation could not trust God, and the cities of their enemies had walls that appeared to them to be "sky high," the second generation who trusted and followed God would find "**there was no city (wall) that was too high for us; for the Lord delivered all over to us**" (2:36).

Chapter 3 detailed Israel's conquest of Og, King of Bashan. Again, God's people of the 2nd generation believed God, when He told them not to fear Og. He would deliver Og and all his cities into their hands. They captured 60 fortified cities and left no survivors but took the animals and spoils of the cities. The land of these kings was the land given to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh. In exchange for their inheritance East of the Jordan River, which was conquered by all Israel, these 2 1/2 tribes were commanded by Moses to join with all Israel in conquering the rest of their inheritance West of the Jordan River. The Torah portion for this week concludes with a promise that is applicable for us as well. God's people of the 2nd generation trusted God and saw for themselves the evidence that God fought for them and kept His promise of an inheritance for them. **This Shabbat, as we remember the tragedy of the first generation who failed to trust God, and the tragedies that have befallen our people on the 9th of Av (Tisha B'Av), let us again commit ourselves to trust the God of our forefathers, looking forward to the eternal inheritance that He has promised all, who put their trust in Him!**

SHABBAT SHALOM



Reflections on Tisha B'Av

9th of Av, July 21st

taken from comments by

-- Orthodox Rabbi Hanan Schlesinger

This Shabbat we remember the 9th of Av (Tisha B'Av), the day in which many tragedies have occurred throughout Jewish history, including the destruction of the first and second Holy Temples in Jerusalem in 586 BCE and 70 CE, the expulsion of the Jewish community of Spain in 1492, and the mass deportation of the Jews of Warsaw en route to Treblinka in 1942. Tisha B'Av is commonly observed with fasting and other expressions of mourning.

The present is no different from the past. World anti-Semitism and anti-Israelism, Iranian's nuclear threat to annihilate the State of Israel – it's all nothing new. It is part of an inexplicable pattern that goes back to the dawn of our history. I cannot explain it, but as terrible as it is, it only adds to my conviction that there is something ineffable about the Jewish destiny, something that defies the odds and the normal patterns of history. Who can avoid the conclusion that we have been singled out by a Force greater than it all?

-- Torah Tidbits

Every year, people say that they hope this will be the last sad Tish'a b'Av. And then the following Tish'a b'Av comes along and we are still fasting and still sitting on the ground, and still mourning the loss and lack of the Beit HaMikdash.

Enough already! How many times do we have to fast on Tish'a b'Av? How many times can we keep saying, let next year be different? The key is that **we have to change**. **Are we still talking Lashon HaRa?** Are we still bad-mouthing others?

-- Louis (on Tisha B'Av)

Each year on Passover we ask the question, "Why is this night different from all other nights?" This year again I ask the question, "Why could this Tisha B'Av be different from all others preceding it for the United States?" On all other Tisha B'Avs, when the United States existed, there has been another that followed the next year. Could it be that this Tisha B'Av might be our last in the United States, as we know it today? Of course, God is totally in control of world events and will preserve Israel, but is the United States guaranteed continued prosperity, as we have today? History has illustrated the rise and fall of nations whose leaders stood with Israel and then turned their backs on Israel. Recent events prompt me to ask whether our former leadership has turned our back to Israel. Our former leadership signed an agreement with Iran which will allow Iran to build a nuclear bomb. Furthermore, it has come out that a secondary deal with Iran enjoins the United States to guarantee Iran's protection from either a cyber attack or an air attack by Israel. **God will protect Israel, but woe to the United States** if we become Israel's enemy! History has not been kind to those nations who have been enemies of Israel. **Genesis 12: 2, 3,7** "And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; **And I will bless those who bless you, and the ones who curses you I will curse**. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." "And the Lord appeared to Abram and said, 'I will give you this land.'" **Deuteronomy 1:8** "See, I have placed the land before you; go in and possess the land, which the Lord swore to give to your fathers; to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to them **and their descendants after them**."