

Beth Tephila Messianic Jewish Congregation

(Under same management for over 5779 years)

SHABBAT SERVICE

September 22rd – 10:30 AM Lolo Community "Synagogue"
12:30 PM Oneg Shabbat



Parashat Ha'azinu (Give ear!) -- Deuteronomy

32

הָאָזִינוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֲדַבֵּרָה וְתִשְׁמַע הָאָרֶץ אִמְרֵי־יָדַי

Ha'azinu hashamayim va'adaberah vetishma ha'arets imrey-fi.

Give ear, O heavens, and let me speak; and let the earth hear the words of my mouth.



"Then Moses spoke in the hearing of all the assembly of Israel the words of this song..."

There's Just Something About A Song!

Just before the death of Moses, God told him that the people would forsake God and turn to other gods (**Deut. 31:14-18**). Therefore God instructed Moses to compose his final message to the people in song-form as a "witness for Me against the sons of Israel..." so that "...it shall not be forgotten..." (vs 19,21). Moses was to "take this book of the law (Deuteronomy) and place it beside the ark of the covenant...as a witness.." (vs 26). Every seven years, the priests would read the whole law to all the men, women, and children. Therefore, why would God instruct Moses to compose a song for the same purpose? The obvious answer is: There's Just Something About A Song. Reading God's law every seven years would not be nearly as memorable as always having God's law on their mind. People who market products on television and radio understand that a catchy jingle keeps their product on the minds of their potential customers. God used a song format so that His final words to His people would not be forgotten. One of the easiest ways to memorize scripture is to make up a song to fit the words of scripture. Then periodically sing the song. You'll find that the words of scripture are easily memorized in song format. This song was to be taught to the people; "put on their lips" (31:19). When the people "sang" the "Song of Moses," they were putting God's word into their hearts.

As His people "act corruptly," turn away from Him, and become a "perverse and crooked generation" (vs 5), God wanted His people to know that He is the one who had delivered them out of Egyptian bondage and brought them safely to the edge of the land that He promised to give to them. God knew that when the people become prosperous and materialistic, they would forget "the God who gave you birth" (vs 18). Then God would hide His face from them, leaving them to the consequences of their perversions. Because they made God jealous, God would make them jealous "with those who are not a people" (vs 21). Many feel that this is a reference to the Church. **Romans 10:19** quoted **Deuteronomy 32:21**. And **Romans 11:1-2** stressed that God had not forsaken His people. **Romans 11:11** said that Jews have not completely fallen away from God. Yet through Jewish transgression of God's law, "salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them (the Jews) jealous." Therefore one of God's purposes in bringing salvation to gentiles was to provoke Jews to jealousy. Even Paul, the "apostle of Gentiles" desired to "move to jealousy my fellow countrymen..." (**Rom.11:13,14**).

When God's people "reached the end of their rope;" when "the day of their calamity is near" (**Deuteronomy.31:35**); "When He sees that their strength is gone" (vs 36); when they understand that "there is no god besides Me" (vs 39); THEN will God "avenge the blood of His servants,"..."render vengeance on His adversaries,"... and "atone for His land and His people" (vs 43). Before his death, Moses' last exhortation to the people was the conclusion of his song. Moses told them to observe all the words of God's law, so that by obeying God, they would prolong their days in the land God is giving to them. Sometimes it takes us "hitting bottom" before we realize our need to obey God's law and live a Godly life. We, too, should remember that obeying God is not something to take lightly but indeed is OUR life and OUR length of days in the land God has given to us.

Getting on God's Kind Side

by Messianic Rabbi, Dr. Jeffrey Enoch Feinberg & Pat



Thank God, the Covenant has a Great Ending; "In this way, all Israel will be saved, as it is written, 'and this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins'" (Rom. 11:26a, 27). But didn't the New Covenant already begin with **Yeshua's** death? Why then is Paul talking to the Romans about taking away Israel's sins? Some of the foundations for understanding this Scripture come from **Ha'azinu**, a prophetic poem that tells how Israel can wind up oppressed by her enemies, hostile to God, and lost in understanding of what God is doing to redeem the world from sin and its consequences.

Ha'azinu--Give Ear!--details Moshe's last shot to keep his people from winding up like him, dying in exile outside the Land in an unmarked grave. Moshe implores the people to teach this prophetic poem as a song to be placed in the hearts of the kids, across generations, to the end-of-time. The prophetic poem details the entire history of Israel under the Covenant, and it forecasts that one day the kids will be born in exile, speaking the language of a foreign nation, and having no idea that they are growing up in exile as a result of the "sins of the fathers." The song is to be Scripture's reminder that God is true to His word and that the kids can grow up and become a generation that takes heart, turns to the Lord, and repents the sins of the fathers, so that their death-in-exile is not in vain.

Remember that in this Covenant relationship, Israel pledges loyalty to God as her sovereign; and in exchange, God promises to protect Israel from enemies and to be her God. However, the Covenant has both carrots and sticks. The carrots are blessings that arise from covenant obedience, but the sticks are the curses that come from failure to show covenant loyalty (**chesed**) to God. Israel can choose--either to stay on God's "kind" side, or else incur the curse (just punishment for sin), that is, walking off the path of covenant obedience. Moshe sternly warns Israel not to go off whoring with the eyes, coveting with the heart, and then rushing with the body to idolatrous practices that break the Covenant, at least on Israel's side of the ledger. Let's remember that all human beings have the same kinds of eyes, hearts, and bodies as the children of Israel. And let's please take this Covenant into our own hearts, when we read about the agreement God has made with Israel. Remember that God holds us and His people to higher

standards. We are held to standards that rise above those of the **kohanim** [priests] of old, and Yeshua is our Kohen Gadol, our High Priest. Moreover, Israel is ordained to be **mamlechet Kohanim v'goi kadosh** (a kingdom of priests and a holy nation). Let's look at how all this is described in Moshe's prophetic poem.

Tigay, Deuteronomy, JPS, p. 299

God's Faithfulness and Israel's Lack of Faithfulness (Dt. 32:1-6)
God's Blessings in Covenant Relationship (Dt. 32:7-14)
Israel Forsakes God, who Birthed Her (Dt. 32:15-18)
God Judges Israel for Idolatry (Dt. 32:19-25)
God's Mercy--Israel's Failure to See (Dt. 32:26-29)
God Judges Israel's Enemies (Dt. 32:30-35)
God Shows Loyalty to Israel, Despite Her Idolatry (Dt. 32:36)
God Punishes Enemies Measure-for-Measure (Dt. 32:37-42)
All Nations Sing God's Praises with Israel in the Midst (Dt. 32:43)

The structure of this poem can be understood as a giant chiasm, an X-shaped literary structure. This means that the following verses are inter-related: Thus, God's faithfulness (vv. 1-6) is ultimately rewarded, when, at the end, Israel sings God's praises in the midst of all nations (v. 43). The covenant with Israel is birthed in blessing (vv. 7-14). But eventually, Israel turns to other gods; and God, true to the covenant agreement, allows the nations to conquer Israel. Still, the nations go too far in punishing Israel, and so they eventually reap judgment from God (vv. 37-42).

Israel's main problem is that she grows fat from the affluence that comes from enjoying incredible blessing (vv. 15-18). Lusting for more, Israel turns to fertility gods to cloy herself in drunkenness and idolatrous festivity. God's response is to overcome evil with good, by maintaining covenant loyalty to Israel, despite Israel's wayward ways. Thus God maintains Israel, even as she spends more than three thousand years going down the accursed DEAD end road of Destruction, Exile, Assimilation, and Death of nationhood (v. 36).

Greed Brings the Curses by Zack Feinberg

The Song of Moses is written in the Torah in poetic form with two divided sub-columns, making this song very distinct and easily recognizable within the Torah scroll. We note that for the first 13 verses, every verse starts on the right column and contains either 1 full line (2 sub-columns) or 2 full lines (4 sub-columns). Each of the first 13 verses follows this poetic form with a regular and ordered structure, and the content of the first 13 verses describes times when Israel is blessed by the LORD and follows his commands. In verse 14, however, Israel becomes greedy. We note that instead of the standard even number of sub-columns (2 or 4), verse 14 greedily stretches to 5 sub-columns in length. It is only after Israel grows greedy and abandons the LORD's covenant that God's judging side emerges and the curses ensue. The form of verse 15 (and onwards) starts on the left sub-column and ends in the middle of the row. Just as an I-beam depends on

perpendicular form to provide structural support, this beam loses all structural integrity if the vertical beam is askew. Similarly, the cascading structure of verses 15 onwards does not have a sturdy foundation and is prone to buckling under pressure. This unsteady structure is representative of Israel's state of a free fall operating outside of God's covenant. The form is consistent with the content of these verses as God becomes a jealous God when we have abandoned Him to make sacrifices to a "no-god" (Deut 32:17). This unstable form continues all throughout the time that the LORD is angered and curses the people of Israel.

Yet, God has sworn that He will never let Israel disappear, lest the nations boast and jeer that God could not even run His own nation. Instead, judgment starts in the House of the Lord, when God judges Israel for idolatry (vv. 19-25) and ultimately punishes Israel's enemies for abusing their God-given power over Israel (vv. 30-35). At the intersection of the chiasm, God is saying that he would have wiped Israel out, including even the memory of Israel, except for His covenant relationship. The failure of both Israel and the nations to understand from experience lies at the heart of the chiasm! (Dt. 32:26-29)

We have to be honest here. Our collective participation in national idolatry and our collective role in crucifying the King brought the full measure of the curse of the Covenant that God promised upon our nation. But God was faithful to preserve us in spite of our idolatry and in spite of our leadership role in demanding the crucifixion of His Son. Of course all nations, led by Rome and later by the Nazis, also hurried to do the deed. It is **Ha'azinu** that tells us about God's covenant kindness (**chesed**) and mercy. Under both the Romans and the Nazis, there was terrible cannibalism and a third of corporate Israel was killed off. Yet each time, we failed to learn from experience. Today our people ask, "Where was God?" Some respond to the experience of the Holocaust by saying, "There is no God," while others say, "He is aloof from us." Yes, **Ha'azinu** says all this would happen under the covenant, were we to choose the path of idolatry and whoring after the gods of other nations.

All the while, **Ha'azinu** pleads for Israel to wake up and turn back to the Lord of the Covenant: "See now that I myself am He; There is no god beside me; I put to death, I bring to life; I have wounded and I will heal; And no one can deliver out of my hand" (Dt. 32:39). God swears an oath to safeguard Israel and take "just and defensive vindication" upon Israel's enemies. Then must we once again take the road that culminates in the DEAD end? Must we live corporately as a nation that is lost in exile, assimilating, growing fat, and worshiping the foreign gods of other nations? How can we pray for the "salvation of all Israel?" How can we be in God's face until He brings about a corporate salvation? Just what does Paul mean when he says, "And in this way all Israel will be saved" (**Rom. 11:26**)? In what way? God brought the Gentiles to faith when they were not seeking Him, in fact, when they were in abject disobedience. Is it any wonder that Paul says, "God has shut up all in disobedience that He might show mercy to all!" (**Rom. 11:36**)? Will the Thomases who doubted God's salvation until they saw or heard with their own eyes and ears, characterize the remnant that is saved? Or can our intercession as a Messianic Jewish movement be INTENSE enough that God wakes up our people before the end? Let's pray hard for a national awakening--now, before Messiah is sent. God will surely hear our hearts that cry out for our people!

Are you sold out, 100%, in your life to God? Of course you are imperfect and perhaps a tad lazy and a tad too comfortable. And of course there's still daily sin in your life, which you either label as serious or not so serious. What would you say if the lights in your cities went out? What would you say if a nuclear bomb were to go off in a city somewhere? What would you say in the chaos of a world gone ominously silent, or berserk? Are you so tight with God now that your faith would only grow with increased hardship? If you can't cry out yes! to this question, then you need to "Give Ear!" and take the **Ha'azinu** poem to heart! You need to sanctify your priorities to put God first now. There's no time to wait for later.

What can you do, then? You can say the Sh'ma every morning when you rise and every evening when you go to sleep. And you can pray every day for the peace of Jerusalem! It is through the effectual and fervent prayer of His people that God shows kindness in His Covenant dealings with us as a people. Remember, the Days of Noah are times of justice, times of judgment, and times of Messiah's Return. We all desperately need the kindness of God to stand in the day of justice and judgment.

You need to be on God's kind (**chesed!**) side now. You need to sow and reap **chesed** in your life and in the way you deal with others. You need to rest in the peace that passes understanding when things are going haywire all 'round you. To maintain humility, you need to pray for things that are bigger than yourself.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem. And get ready for that day when all nations sing God's praises, with Israel in their midst! When you inquire into the well-being of Jerusalem, every day is your rehearsal for the greatest time to come! And what's more, you'll be kinder and gentler to others, because God is revealing His covenant kindness in you, through you ... and one day, to all Israel.

Parashat V'zot haB'rachah -- Deuteronomy 33-

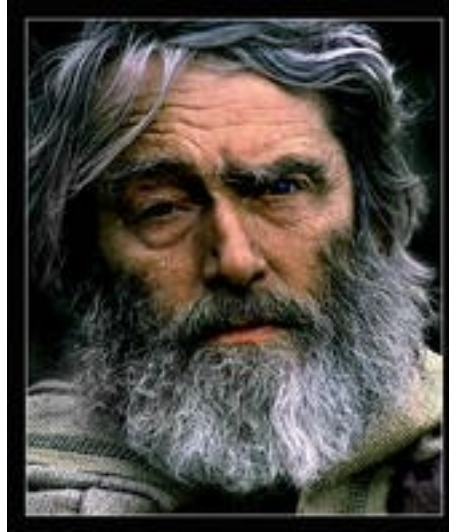
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וְזֹאת הַבְּרָכָה אֲשֶׁר בֵּרַךְ מֹשֶׁה אִישׁ הָאֲלֹהִים אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לִפְנֵי מוֹתוֹ:

V'zot hab'rachah asher b'rach Moshe ish ha'Elohim et-b'ney Yisra'el lifney moto.

And this is the blessing with which Moses the man of God blessed the sons of Israel before his death.

The Legacy Of Moses -- The Blessings of God



There is a tradition of the Jewish people found in Bereshit (**Genesis, Chapter 49**) and Devarim (Deuteronomy) Chapter 33. Before the patriarch of the family dies, he gathers the family together to bless them. Through these family blessings, the patriarch cements the closeness of the family and passes on to them the religious traditions God has established. Abram in Genesis 12 heard God's voice, telling him to "Go forth from your country....to the land which I will show you...." and immediately left every family comfort to follow the leading of God. Abraham obeyed God's voice immediately and without question in Genesis 22, asking him to "...Take now your son, your only son, whom you love....and offer him....as a burnt offering...." Before Abraham died, he "...gave all that he had to Isaac..." (**Genesis 25:5**). Isaac acceded to God's prophecy to Rebekah (**Genesis 25:23**) that their older son would serve their younger son and boldly states that fact to Esau, "Yes, and he (Jacob) will be blessed" (**Genesis 27:33**), passing on to Jacob ..."the blessing of Abraham to you and to your descendants.." to "..possess the land...which God gave to Abraham" (**Genesis 4**). And Jacob passed on to his children his legacy, as he pronounced on them the blessings of God in Genesis 49. In Chapter 33 of Deuteronomy, Moses knows his death is close at hand, so he gathers together his "family," the twelve tribes of Israel to individually bless them by tribes and therefore pass on to them God's legacy.

The Development of the "Man of a God" into a Leader

In order to appreciate the progression of "family" in the life of Moses that brings us to this place in Biblical history, we should make a short detour to recall the development of

Moses, "the man of God." God first called to Moses from the burning bush in **Exodus, Chapter 3**, telling him that he would be God's messenger to Israel to free them from Egyptian captivity and to take them to their "promised land." Moses, unlike the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, was at first reluctant to obey the voice of God. The continued objections of Moses to obey God are recorded in 1) Exodus 3:11, "...Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?" 2) Exodus 4:1, "What if they will not believe me...?" 3) Exodus 4:10, "Please, Lord, I have never been eloquent..." 4) Exodus 4:13, "Please, Lord, now send the message by whomever Thou wilt." (Send someone else.) Yet Moses acquiesced to the voice of God and asked permission from his father-in-law to take his wife and sons to return to Egypt. His people in Egypt believed his message from God, but Pharaoh did not. Pharaoh increased their work-load, causing the people to reject Moses. This just the first of many such rejections of Moses' leadership. Each time Moses experienced "failure," he returned to God in supplication. Each time God gave Moses supernatural strength to continue to obey Him. This protocol continued in the face of rejection due to Pharaoh's hardened heart; at the Red Sea, ("Is it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness?"); when they worshipped the golden calf; when they rejected God's leadership at Kadesh Barnea; with their continued complaining about food and water. Moses continued to seek God's strength and direction, and God never failed him. Moses continued to lead the people towards the land of their inheritance until God told him that his days on earth were over. Then, according to tradition, Moses gathered together the people, who had become his family, to equip them with God's blessing to take possession of their "promised land."

I mention the reluctant leadership of Moses because many of us can identify with his reluctance to follow God's voice to become leaders. We tend to focus on our perceived abilities or lack thereof instead of focusing on God's ability to accomplish His will through us.... or maybe in spite of us. Therefore we see rejection as failure, depressing us, and weakening our ability to continue. Yet when we turn in supplication to God, God supernaturally strengthens us, gives us renewed purpose and direction, and never fails us!



The Blessings

In the last portion of **Chapter 32**, God tells Moses that he should ascend Mt. Nebo to die "...and be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother died on Mount Hor." God again gave two reasons for the death of Moses prior to finishing the job of conquering and distributing the land. In verse 51, the "you" is in the plural form, meaning that God held

both Aaron and Moses guilty. Both were guilty of publicly disobeying God's instructions and then in anger taking credit for the salvation of the people (providing water); thus usurping God's authority. God would allow Moses to see the land from Mt. Nebo, however.

So before climbing Mt. Nebo, Moses gathered the people by tribes to give each tribe an individual blessing. Moses recounted the manifestation of God to His people, Israel, in fire and lightning, bringing with Him the law mediated by angels. All of God's holy people were in His hands and received His law. God was their king, when the tribal leaders assembled to receive God's blessings through Moses. We will discuss each of the blessings in depth on Shabbat. Reuben had evidently been in decline, since losing the rights of the firstborn, as seen in Jacob's blessing in **Genesis 49**. The blessing of Moses was that in the future the tribe of Reuben would survive. Simeon is omitted here in order to preserve the symmetry of 12 tribes, although in Jacob's blessing, Simeon was grouped with Levi. Their blessing in Genesis had them scattered in the land because of their anger. Simeon was eventually absorbed by their larger neighbor Judah. Judah is blessed with military success by Moses. One of the largest tribes. Judah is praised by the other tribes as the leader of a powerful tribe in **Genesis 49**. The prophecy that Messiah will come from his tribe was also given to Judah. The blessing of Levi had to do with their tribal duties. As the tribe of

Moses and Aaron, it was significant that they would be the priestly tribe that would observe God's word and keep His covenant. They would also be teachers of God's laws and ordinances, whose work would be blessed by God. God would prevent anyone from interfering with the work of the Levites! Since I am also a Levite by birth (Levinson & Levy - mother's side), I cling to this tribal blessing and pray that I am worthy to follow in the footsteps of my ancestors. And like my ancestors, I'll have to try to curb my "anger, for it is fierce" and my "wrath, for it is cruel" (**Genesis 49:7**). Benjamin was called "the beloved of the Lord." The tribe of Benjamin dwelled in the land on which the temple was located in Jerusalem. Where the blessing of Genesis 49 spoke of their ability to fight, the blessing of Moses speaks of their dwelling in the security of God. The blessing of Joseph represented the joined blessings of both of his children Ephraim and Manasseh, heirs to the double portion given to Joseph. They were blessed with some of the most productive land in Israel. Ample rain would yield choice produce. They would have military success. Of the two brothers, Ephraim would be the larger. Joshua came from the tribe of Ephraim. Zebulun and Issachar were the last two sons of Leah and were mentioned together for joint blessings. Zebulun would be successful in commerce ("your going forth"). Issachar would be blessed in their daily lives ("in your tents"). Although neither tribe was directly connected to water, in the Messianic kingdom, the source of their prosperity will come from the sea....perhaps the Mediterranean or the Sea of Galilee and ..."the hidden treasures of the sand" (oil?). Gad was a powerful tribe that was given some of the best land East of the Jordan River. They distinguished themselves in battle by fighting with the other tribes for their land West of the Jordan River. Dan, "a lions' whelp," had the potential for strength. Samson came from the tribe of Dan. Although originally given land in the South just above that of Judah, Dan migrated North and became prominent in the Bashan area. Naphtali would enjoy the blessing and favor of God. Their territory would extend to the "sea and the South," probably the Sea of Galilee. Asher, whose name means "blessed" or "happy," will be blessed with sons and favored by the other tribes. The prosperity of Asher was due to their production of olive oil. Asher was one of the Northern tribes that would be responsible for security from invasion from the North.

The individual blessings of Moses by tribes now continues with a general bless over all Israel. Moses understands that the blessings of the tribes and corporately the nation come from the righteous and almighty God of Israel. As long as God's people chose to dwell with Him, they would live in the peace and security He provided, as He drove away their enemies and provided the rain to ensure their prosperity.

Moses' last words of blessing were words that any father would wish for his children, as they follow the God of Israel: "Blessed are you, O Israel. Who is like you, a people saved by the Lord, who is the shield of your help and the sword of your majesty! So your enemies shall cringe before you, and you shall tread upon their high places." The legacy of Moses to "his children" was to follow the God of Israel and trust in Him alone for their physical and spiritual salvation. May this also be our legacy to all "our children!"



MOSES VIEWING THE PROMISED LAND.—Deut. 34 : 4.

Moses Finishes Well

By rabbinic tradition, Chapter 34, the last chapter in Deuteronomy was written by Joshua, describing the death and burial of Moses, the filling of Joshua with God's power, and the final epitaph of Moses.

As God instructed, Moses climbed Mt. Nebo, the highest point in the Abirim Mountains about 8 miles East of the Jordan River, to Pisgah, a ridge that extended out from Mt. Nebo. From that vantage point, God supernaturally showed Moses the whole land of Israel's inheritance. "This is the land which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob saying, 'I will give it to your descendants;' I have let you see it with your eyes, but you shall not go over there." What Moses saw would have extended over 120 miles to the North, Westward to the Mediterranean Sea, and Southward to the end of the Dead Sea. God gave Moses the gift of "seeing" the finished work that he was not able to accomplish, but

that God would accomplish. Nothing could please a father more than knowing that "his children" would receive their final, Godly inheritance!

After receiving his reward from God, "Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord" (literally, "by the mouth of the Lord"). Rabbinic tradition believes that God kissed Moses, as he died. Then God, Himself, buried Moses in an unknown place in the valley below, preventing God's people from making a shrine and worshipping Moses instead of God, and preventing others (like the Romans) from making it into a pagan shrine. Moses lived to be 120 years old, a full life. The people mourned for him for 30 days, the same as they had mourned for Aaron.

In **Genesis, Chapter 12**, God promised to give a land to Abraham and to his descendants. Now through Joshua, God would fulfill His promise. God filled Joshua with His Spirit, which was His personal commissioning, providing Joshua all he needed to accomplish God's mission. We have previously seen God's public commissioning of Joshua in **Numbers 27:18**. And we have previously seen the filling of others like Bezalel and Oholiab to accomplish a specific task for God. Today each of us who has accepted the sin atonement of Messiah has experienced the filling of the Spirit of God to enable us to accomplish God's will.

Since the time of Moses until the coming of Messiah, there was no one else to whom God spoke face to face; there was no one else who had such an intimate relationship with God as did Moses. Moses was the mighty man of God because he allowed God to do His work through him. If we would be mighty men of God, we, too, should allow God to accomplish His work through us! Hebrews 3:5 compares the faithfulness of Messiah to the faithfulness of Moses. Both were faithful to accomplish their appointed mission; Moses, God's servant who built the tabernacle, and Messiah, Yeshua, who presides over the heavenly tabernacle and over all creation. So as we close the book of Deuteronomy and open the book of Genesis ("*in the beginning*"), let us remember the faithfulness of Moses as our prototype. If he could remain faithful to God, so can we. Let us also remember the faithfulness of Messiah for "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being*" (John 1:1).

Chazak, Chazak, v' Nit' chakek!

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

SHABBAT SHALOM



Sukkot
&
Annual Business Meeting
Shabbat, September 29th, 11 AM
Levinsons