

Beth Tephila Messianic Jewish Congregation (Under same management for over 5772 years)



Shabbat Service

January 14th - 10 AM Lolo Community "Synagogue"
12:30 PM Oneg Shabbat & In-depth Torah Study
10 AM Lolo Community "Synagogue"
12:30 PM Oneg Shabbat

"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

Shemot -- Names

Exodus 1:1 -- 6:1

"And these are the names of the children of Israel, who came to Egypt with Jacob;
they came each one with his household."

וְאֵלֶּה שְׁמוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הַבָּאִים מִצְרַיִם אֶת יַעֲקֹב אִישׁ וּבֵיתוֹ בָּאוּ:

V'eleh **shemot** b'ney Yisra'el haba'im Mitsraymah et Ya'akov ish uveyto ba'u.

רְאוּבֵן שִׁמְעוֹן לֵוִי וְיְהוּדָה: יִשָּׁשׂכָר זְבוּלֻן וּבִנְיָמִן: דָּן וְנַפְתָּלִי גָד וְאַשֶׁר:

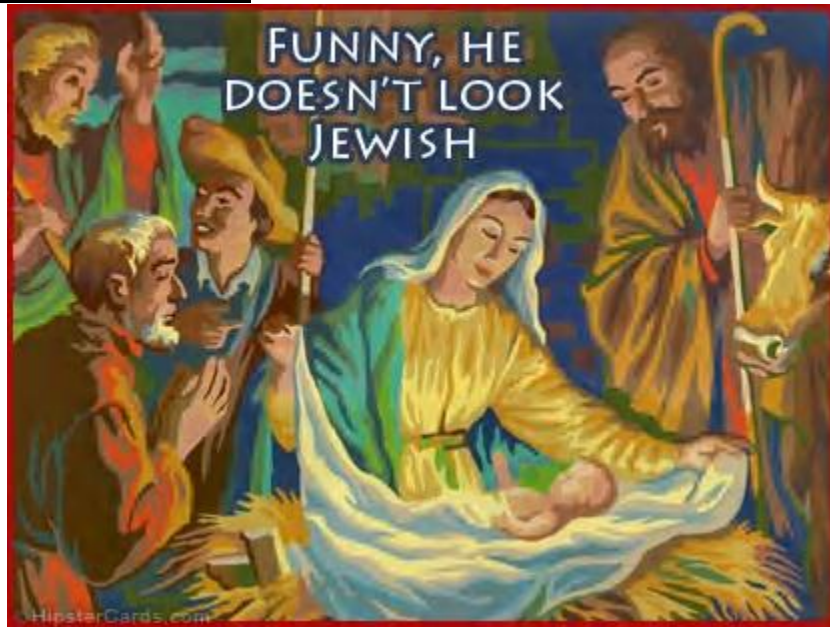
Re'uven Shim'on Levi viYehudah. Isachar Zvulun uVinyamin. Dan v'Naftali Gad v'Asher.

Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Benjamin,
Dan, Naphtali, Gad and Asher.

From Genesis to Exodus

"And these are the names of the sons of Israel...." connects Genesis 46:8 with Exodus 1:1. Nachmanides (Ramban, Rabbi Moshe ben Na'á,¥man) suggests that while Bereisheet and Shemot are two separate books within the Torah, Exodus is the sequel to the text of Genesis. Genesis begins with God intimately walking with his people in the Garden; Exodus concludes with the Divine Presence, once again, literally dwelling with his people in the Mishkan. Where Genesis is God's book of creation, Exodus is God's book of redemption. In Genesis, God chooses one man, Abraham, who exhibited active faith in God by leaving behind his comfortable, idolatrous life and following God to parts unknown. Because of Abraham's faith, God made an everlasting covenant with him and his descendants to give them "the land I will show you." God promised to make Abraham into a great nation. God also promised to bless Abraham and his descendants. To illustrate His promise of blessing, God said He would bless those who blessed Abraham and his descendants and curse those who cursed Abraham and his descendants. Throughout history we can observe that God has kept his promises. Nations and individuals who have blessed Jews have been blessed themselves, while they continued to bless Jews. Furthermore, God promised Abraham that through Him (Messiah, son of David) ..."all the

nations (people-groups) of the earth shall be blessed" (12:3). Incidentally, "all" the nations of the earth includes both Jews and Gentiles.



Abraham transmitted his faith to his chosen son, Isaac, and Isaac to his chosen son, Jacob. Jacob would produce 12 sons through whom God would make a nation, fulfilling his promise to Abraham. However, at the end of Genesis it became apparent to God that Canaanite influence was corrupting His people. In order to prevent the assimilation of His chosen people into the idolatrous, Canaanite culture, God worked through His faithful servant Joseph, to remove them from Canaan and bring them into Egypt. There God provided them the fertile land of Goshen, where they could prosper into a mighty nation, while remaining separate from the influence of the gods of Egypt.

This Shabbat observant Jews around the world will begin to read the second book of the Torah, the book of Exodus in preparation for observing Passover. Exodus contains 40 chapters, which we will read this year in 10 Torah portions. Just over 6 two weeks after finishing Exodus, we will celebrate Passover, a remembrance and celebration of God's delivering His people from Egyptian bondage into freedom in their "promised land." Remember to attend services these next 10 Shabbats for an interactive discussion of each Torah portion, so you will be better prepared to really appreciate the Passover experience.

From the Promised Land to Egypt

God called Abraham and his descendants to become His people and to follow Him to a land that He promised them would be theirs forever. In faith, Abraham followed God's leadership and journeyed to Canaan. We followed their family as Abraham and Sarah had Ishmael and Isaac. Ishmael was given his inheritance away from the "promised land," so that Isaac alone remained in the land as God's chosen inheritor of His promise. Isaac and Rebecca also had two children, Esau and Jacob. Jacob inherited the birth right and God's blessing, while Esau was given his inheritance in Edom. Jacob had twelve children by two wives and their two hand maids. These twelve children would become the leaders of the twelve tribes of the nation of Israel and inhabit the land promised to them and to their descendants by God.

The Jewish People in Egypt

As long as the Pharaohs of the Semitic Hyksos dynasties, the 16th and 17th dynasties prevailed, the sons of Jacob prospered in the land. Then a Hamite, Egyptian leader, Acnose (1570 -1546 BCE), led a revolt which over-threw the Semite Hyksos dynasty. Acnose established the Egyptian 18th dynasty, which was totally against any Semite harbinger from the past. One could say they were "anti-Semitic." Those from the conquered Semitic dynasty were either killed, enslaved, or driven from Egypt. Their statutes were defaced. Their records were destroyed. All traces of them were removed. This was the "new king, who did not know Joseph" in Exodus 1:8, who enslaved the

Hebrews. Yet the Hebrews remained such a numerous people that the next Pharaoh, Amenhotep (1546 - 1526), thought they might be populous enough to revolt. He was the Pharaoh who decreed that the Hebrew midwives should kill all the male children, while allowing the female children to live. He figured that the females would grow up and, having no Hebrew males to marry, would marry Egyptian males and thus assimilate the Hebrew population, while still providing the numbers necessary for his workforce. During this time Moses was born to a couple from the tribe of Levi, Amram and Jochebed. His mother first hid him from Pharaoh's men and finally placed him in a water proof basket among some dense reeds alongside the bank of the Nile River, instructing her daughter Miriam to watch over him.



"When she could hide him no longer, she got him a wicker **basket** (**tevah**, which is the same Hebrew word for the **ark** of Noah) and covered it over with tar and pitch. Then she put the child into it, and set it among the reeds by the bank of the Nile" (2:3). It was there that Hutshepset, the daughter of the next Pharaoh, Tutmose I (1526 - 1512), found Moses.



She decided to rear him herself. She gave him an Egyptian name, including the name of their dynasty, "mose." He probably also had the name of one of the Egyptian gods attached before "mose" like the other Egyptian males. She asked the mother of Moses to nurse him for her until he was weaned. Then she reared him in the Egyptian court. Tutmose I also had a son, who would become Tutmose II (1512 - 1504) upon the death of his father. He, too, had a son, Tutmose III (1504 - 1447), who was very young at the time of his father's death. Being so young, Hutshepset, ruled as queen for him, and Moses remained in court. As he grew up, the young Pharaoh resented Hutshepset. So when she died, he looked for an excuse to remove her "son," Moses. When the Pharaoh heard that Moses had seen an Egyptian beating a Hebrew (which of course was allowable) and had killed the Egyptian (also allowable for someone in court), Pharaoh tried to kill Moses. However, Moses, now forty years old, escaped and fled into Midian, where he became a shepherd for the next forty years, taking a wife, Zipporah, and having two sons, Gershom and Eliezer.



A Personal encounter with God

In Midian, present-day Saudi Arabia, while pasturing his flock, he saw an amazing occurrence. A desert bush was aflame and kept on burning, but was not burned up. A Rabbinic Midrash from Shemot Rabba 2:5 says that this illustrates for us that "no place is devoid of the Divine Presence." As Moses investigated, God's voice came out of the burning bush. God was calling Moses to return to Egypt to liberate His people from the next Pharaoh, Amenhotep II (1447 - 1425). Moses, who answered God's gracious call with the Hebrew words "**hineni,**" meaning "**here I am, I'm willing to do whatever you ask,**" was quite reluctant, when he heard what God wanted him to do. He made several excuses why he could not go. However God, in His graciousness to Moses, made allowances that overcame the excuses of Moses, even providing Moses with supernatural signs to show the people and Pharaoh that he was sent by God. One of the allowances was that the brother of Moses, Aaron, would accompany him to speak to Pharaoh God's words through Moses. Just before leaving for Egypt, God mentioned to the reluctant Moses that He would harden Pharaoh's heart, so that Pharaoh would not listen to him. "The king's heart is like channels of water in the hands of the Lord; He turns it wherever He wishes" Proverbs 21:1.

Pharaoh's Hardened Heart

We will eventually see that numerous times Pharaoh will harden his heart toward what he knows is God's will. Finally God will harden Pharaoh's heart. Then we ask ourselves, why does God harden someone's heart? Is that fair? We find our answer to these questions by examining Pharaoh's heart throughout Exodus, rather than waiting until God finally hardens his heart, and we wonder why. What are the intermediate steps that Pharaoh takes that get him to the point that he no longer is capable of

listening to God's voice through Moses? It is important that we understand that hardening one's heart is a process, rather than something that occurs suddenly and without warning. This concept is important for us to understand, so that we do not find ourselves in the position of Pharaoh, having hardened his heart in opposition to God's plans for His people. It was and is God's plan to send man His redeemer, Messiah, Yeshua, so that His people can appropriate the redemption that only He can provide and be reconciled to God. Pharaoh hardened his heart to God's plan. We must learn from **Shemot** to open our hearts to the redemption He has provided!

When Moses initially approached the people with God's plan, they believed him. However, when he delivered the same message to Pharaoh, he replied, "Who is the lord that I should obey His voice to let Israel go: I do not know the Lord..." (5:2). So the Pharaoh not only did not let the people leave, he increased their workload. The people blamed Moses for their travail, and Moses complained to the Lord that he (Moses) had done harm to the people....by doing what God had told him to do. However, God told Moses that he would see that Pharaoh would acquiesce to His wishes and let the people go. Ironically, it was Joseph who told an earlier Pharaoh what the Hebrew God was about to do (Gen. 41:25) to Pharaoh and the country. That Semitic Pharaoh listened to God's voice through Joseph and profited. This anti-Semitic Pharaoh did not listen to Moses and therefore had to be shown the power of the God of the Hebrews. Even today, God's promises to His people will be fulfilled! No country (even the United States) nor king had better stand in the way of God's fulfilling His promises to His people. And even today, God's desire is for each of His people to experience the redemption provided by Messiah, Yeshua! Redemption begins for us, as it did for Moses, with a personal encounter with God. Just as Moses did not earn his encounter with God through Mitzvot (doing good deeds), we, too, must rely on the grace of God. God had prepared him through his life experiences in the court of Egypt and in his years of shepherding sheep, providing sometimes rough and difficult lessons. It is only after we, too, have a personal encounter with God that we can hear and respond to His calling for our life's work, "**hineni!**" Moses was eighty years old before he had his personal encounter with God. My prayer for each of you is that you do not wait that long for your encounter with God. Look to the atonement for sin provided by Messiah, Yeshua, and pray for God's response. He will not disappoint you. Just be prepared to say "**hineni**" to God, as did Moses.

SHABBAT SHALOM