

In the Beginning, God!

Shalom and Blessings in 2006: a new calendar year, a new "beginning."

Begin 2006... in the beginning!

Genesis 1:1 "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

JRAH TAW OYM_wH TA OYHLA AR_b TY_wAR_b

B'resheet bara Elohim et hashamayim v'et haaretz

Many of us begin reading the Bible afresh as a new year dawns, hence, our focus this month is on the first sentence of the Torah, in English and Hebrew.

What does the first sentence of the Bible tell us when we read it in English and draw conclusions from the text:

- God always was. No one created Him.
- God is the Sovereign of the universe.
- God created everything. Nothing came into being except at God's command.
- God is omnipotent and vast in scope.
- God appreciates beauty and favors the colors blue and green (look up, down, and around)!

What does the first sentence of the Bible tell us when we read it in its original language - Hebrew? Much more. The first word in the Holy Scriptures has layers of meaning in Hebrew.

TY_wAR_b (b'ray -SHEET) begins with the letter bet b. As we explain in the second program in the Alef-Bet series (NOW AVAILABLE IN A 6 VOLUME DVD SET!), the letter bet stands for a "house." The ancient word picture for bet actually looked like a tent or house. That the Bible begins with this letter is significant. God's word begins with an underlying spiritual greeting of "Welcome home." "Enter the Father's House." The bet in Genesis 1:1 is an oversized letter in the Hebrew version of the Bible. God's house is big enough for all of us! His house is also a house of "blessing," the word for blessed "baruch" also beginning with the letter bet.

L. Grant Luton points out in a fascinating book on the Hebrew Alef-Bet **In His Own Words** that the first letter of the Bible in Genesis 1:1 also represents Yeshua, the Messiah. Follow us closely: The Hebrew word for house is TY_b (beit). The three letters of the word house are part of the word b'raysheet TY_wAR_b. The remaining three letters, _wAR, spell the word *rosh* or "head". Therefore, we see in b'raySHEET, a "house" containing the "head." Who is the head according to the Brit Hadasha? **Yeshua**.

*"Unto you therefore which believe He is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made **head of the corner.**" 1Peter 2:7 (KJ)*

*"...but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the **head** - Christ (Messiah) - " Ephesians 4:15 "And He is the **head** of the body, the church, **who is the beginning**, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence." Colossians 1:18*

*"and you are complete in Him, who is the **head** of all principality and power." Colossians 2:10*

Begin 2006... in Yeshua!

If Yeshua is the "head," what is the house? His earthly body or tabernacle. Yeshua was God "housed" in human flesh. John 1:14 in the B'rit Hadasha clarifies this: *"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."* We are blessed by what L. Grant Lutz says regarding Yeshua's earthly house: *"The rabbis teach that the Torah is spiritual in essence, and is merely clothed in parchment and ink. This truth is illustrated even in the way Torah scrolls were once prepared. When a lamb was sacrificed, its hide was saved and used for parchment upon which God's words would be inscribed. In the same manner, the Word was clothed in skin, the flesh of Yeshua, the Lamb of God. We know that Yeshua is the living Torah - the Word of God - clothed in human flesh."*

John 1:1 in the New Covenant parallels Genesis 1:1 and reveals an important truth. *"In the beginning (b'ray-SHEET) was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning (b'ray-SHEET) with God."* (John 1:1-2) Those who first heard John's words knew that this Jewish disciple was referring back to Genesis 1:1, placing Yeshua at creation and calling Him the "Word of God." Yeshua was not only "in the beginning," but also in the first word of the Bible which means "in the beginning!"

Yeshua is found in yet another place in the first sentence of the Holy Scriptures: *B'raysheet bara Elohim et hashamayim v'et haaretz*. The fourth word, *et* TA, is a common little Hebrew word that is usually a definite article, i.e. "the." However, it consists of the two letters which are also the first and last letters of the Hebrew alef-bet, the *Alef* and the *Tav*. In the Book of Revelation, Yeshua, the Word of God, refers to Himself as the "Alpha and Omega." He most probably used Hebrew letters when He said this and would have referred to Himself as the *Alef* and the *Tav*. Yeshua, the Messiah, the *Alef* and the *Tav* (the first and the last), was involved in the creation of the world (see John 1:3, I Corinthians 8:6). God created all things through Yeshua. Isaiah 48:12-17 gives us a beautiful picture of Messiah as Creator:

"Listen to Me Jacob, even Israel whom I have called. I am He. I am the first (alef), I am also the last (tav). Surely, My hand founded the earth, and My right hand spread out the heavens. When I call to them, they stand together. Come near to Me, and listen to this. From the first I have not spoken in secret, from the time it took place, I was there. And now the Lord has sent Me and His spirit."

Who is the "Me" in the passage above? Verse 17 tells us: *"Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel."* Yeshua is the Redeemer of His people Israel.

If we place the seven words of the first sentence of the Torah on a menorah, it looks like this. Notice the word at the center: *Et TA* the Alef and the Tav - Yeshua, the Light of the World. This fascinating truth is dramatically portrayed on our "TAV" program.



There is much more in the first sentence of the Torah. The verb ARb, *bara*, pronounced *ba-RAH*, means to create something from nothing. Therefore, this word is used in referring to God's ability to create, never man's. Man "makes" or "forms," but never creates something out of nothing. Only the Creator can do this. Hence, *bara* ARb, has a definite connection with divinity. *Bara* contains another Hebrew word that many of you read in your Bibles: Rb *bar*. This is actually an Aramaic word, meaning "son," i.e. Bar-timaeus (son of Timaeus), Bar-Jonah (son of Jonah). If we separate the *alef* A from the other two letters in *bara*, we get: *bar* Rb = son (of) A. So the first two words of Genesis can be read: "In the beginning (was) the Son of alef. Traditionally, A, the first letter of the Alef-Bet is the letter that represents God, and just happens to consist of three parts even though it is only one letter.

The third word in the Torah is OYHLA *Elohim*, pronounced EI-o-HEEM. It is the first name for God found in the Bible. There are different opinions concerning the root from which *Elohim* is derived. Some scholars say it comes from *El LA*, which means strong or mighty and contains the general idea of God's greatness, glory, and omnipotence. The other possible root is *Alah* which means to declare, or to swear (an oath) and describes the God who stands in a covenant relationship which is ratified by an oath. There is a deep truth emanating from this interpretation of *Elohim*. It shows us a God who not only covenanted with the creation, but with Himself concerning the creation (See Psalm 110:4 for an example of this type of oath.). In either case, with a root of *El* or *Alah*, *Elohim* includes the idea of an all-powerful God.

Elohim is actually a plural noun. However, it is usually accompanied by verbs and adjectives in the singular, i.e., *bara* (create), is in the singular in Genesis 1:1. When the word *elohim* is used to refer to heathen gods, plural adjectives are used. This differentiates the pagan gods from the God of Genesis 1:1, a God who has plurality within His unity.

Please note: Genesis 1:1 speaks of one God, not three, a covenant-God who created, and who is committed to re-create and restore. The mystery of His "plurality" will only be understood when we get to Heaven. *"Therefore He says, 'Look to me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth! For I am God (Elohim), and there is no other. I have sworn by Myself, the word has gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that to Me every knee shall bow and every tongue shall take an oath'."* (Isaiah 45:22-23).

Begin (or begin again) Studying Hebrew in 2006

We invite you to learn with us as Dr. Danny Ben Gigi, former professor of Hebrew at Arizona State University, teaches us about the Hebrew Alef-Bet on twenty-two programs, packaged as a set of six DVDs. Enjoy the DVDs yourself or give a set to your pastor (rabbi) or congregation. Individual discs are packaged as follows: Volume 1 - Alef, Bet, Gimel, and Dalet. Volume 2 - Hey, Vav, Zayin, and Chet. Volume 3 - Tet, Yood, and Kaf. Volume 4 - Lamed, Mem, Noon, and Samech. Volume 5 - Ayin, Pey, Tzadik, and Koof. Volume 6 - Reysh, Sheen, and Tav. The individual disc can be purchased for \$15, the entire set for \$75. We highly recommend the entire set, but if you are not able to, consider ordering Tet which features Jonathan and Jesse Lash

ministering at the end of the program (especially those of you who have prayed for our sons over the years. You will see the answer to your prayers!).

Our Mercy Mission 2004 group will surely be blessed by the Noon and Reysh discs which include segments from our mercy mission to Eretz Yisrael. To see what happened when the Ruach HaKodesh descended on both of us in a powerful way during TV production, order the Vav program. Would you like to see the spot under the Western Wall in the tunnels which is closest to the Holy of Holies. Request the Koof program. Interested in Pro-Life? You'll find the Israel segment on the Chet program very moving. Want to be kissed by God? Ask for Dalet. To find out about the spirit of revelation, choose Hey. Watch the Kaf program if you want to visit the Kotel in Jerusalem and see a number of boys becoming Bar Mitzvah. Each program is special, with beautiful banners by Elaine Caruso of Sion's Rose Ministries and specially chosen music at the end to close the time of ministry.

Many thanks, once again, to the sponsors of the Alef-Bet programs and to you our Jewish Jewels family, who make it possible for the programs to go out on the airwaves throughout the USA, Europe, Australia, Israel, Canada (new!) and anywhere else in the world where satellite dishes pick them up or the internet is available.

Begin 2006 Blessing Israel

Most of our Jewish Jewels family understand the biblical concept of blessing Israel and the Jewish people, but there are millions around the world who do not! Genesis 12:3 and Psalm 122:6 hold little or no meaning for them, and they are not in touch with God's heart concerning Israel. An excellent book by Sandra Teplinsky, **Why Care About Israel?**, very clearly and accurately presents God's plans, purposes and passion for His people Israel. This Messianic Jewish author has a timely, prophetic message for the Church as it relates to Israel. Many of you have written to tell us that your pastor "just doesn't understand" about Israel and the Jewish people. Give him this book, pray for him, and expect the blessings of God to be poured out upon your congregation!

Another "Beginning" in 2006

Beginning January 1, 2006 Neil will embrace an additional assignment from the Lord: Messianic Rabbi and leader of Temple Aron HaKodesh, a Messianic Synagogue in Ft. Lauderdale, FL. Our rabbi of 28 years is retiring, and Neil has been asked to take over the congregation until the Lord lets us know what other plans He has. We know that this is the will of the Father and have accepted the call by faith, in obedience to His voice, fully recognizing the daunting challenge and great responsibility involved. For those of you who do not know, Neil was the one whom God called to begin Temple Aron HaKodesh in July of 1976. We were attending a church at the time, and Neil went to a 6 AM morning prayer meeting. When he got down on his knees, he began to feel an intense grief – coming from the depths of his soul – his "kishkes." He said to God, "What is this, Lord?" The Lord answered, "This is how I feel about the lost sheep of the House of Israel." Neil replied, "What do you want ME to do about it?" God: "I want you to start a Messianic Synagogue." We did not know what a Messianic Synagogue was back then! But the Lord was faithful, and after Neil sought the Lord and settled the issue of whether or not he was to

be the "leader" (rabbi) of the congregation (God said, "No."), we began Temple Aron HaKodesh in our home. Soon after, the Lord sent a Messianic rabbi and let Neil know that He had other plans for him.

We have been at Temple Aron HaKodesh all these years, Neil serving as the "chief elder" and advisor to the rabbi. The time has come for him to assume a new role. The congregation is one of the largest in the world, approximately 400 members and meets on Friday nights and Saturday mornings. Neil will be ministering in the Word at least once a weekend, often twice. We covet your prayers for wisdom, strength anointing and grace as we seek to feed Yeshua's sheep. The ministry of Jewish Jewels will continue as always, with Sheryl Campo, our very dedicated and competent Office Manager handling the day-to-day ministry business. We have such a loving, faithful, excellent staff at Jewish Jewels that Neil feels comfortable delegating considerable responsibility to them. Please pray for a smooth transition at Temple Aron HaKodesh as Neil assumes His new position. Pray also for a speedy recovery from Hurricane Wilma for the Temple Fellowship Hall, Classrooms and Offices. The roof blew off and the building needs to be rebuilt from scratch. The sanctuary was spared, PTL.

GOD HAS A PLAN FOR US. He has a plan for you too! It also might mean change, or relocating, or added responsibility, or greater dependency on Him. May we all delve deeper into the love of God and trust that "where He guides, He provides." Yeshua is coming. We must reap the harvest.

May your blessings be multiplied, and your joy in Yeshua be full in 2006.

Love in Him,

Neil and Jamie

Thank you for your cards, letters, prayer requests and questions. We try to give a personal reply whenever possible, but now with our increased responsibilities, it may be difficult. Please know that we do pray for you daily! — and read every letter!! WE COVET YOUR PRAYERS. ♥ Neil