

Tikkun Olam: Repairing the World...

a treasured moment in time....



The 150 year old Torah Scroll was laying open on the dining room table to the first chapter of Leviticus, & Wally, Louis, & Noel were picking out the Hebrew words that were suppose to be read that day, with a yad.



How can I even describe the beauty of that moment? And why was the Torah Scroll on the dining room table & not laying open in a proper Torah place in a synagogue?

Well... The quest for a Torah Scroll began about 8 years ago. Louis announced that in order for us to be an official Messianic Jewish Congregation we had to have a real Torah Scroll, & it couldn't be just a little one... When he told the congregation how much it would cost to obtain a used one, it raised more than a few eyebrows! A brand new one cost about \$40,000, or more. A good used one cost somewhere in the vicinity of \$5,000 to \$10,000. When I first heard of it about 4½ years ago, I thought, "You've got to be kidding! We could help a lot of people for \$5,000, & we don't even have our own building to meet in, so why is this our goal?"

But that wasn't all that Louis had in mind, oh no! He's also been determined right from the start that his whole congregation would be able to *read & understand* the Hebrew written in the Torah Scroll!

And Louis would tease us & say, "You know, in most Jewish synagogues, the honor of reading the Torah Scroll to the whole congregation always goes to the highest bidder!" We would all look back at him with wide eyed amazement, because most of us were disenfranchised to begin with & couldn't ever even imagine having an extra \$5,000 to purchase a Torah Scroll. And certainly none of us would ever dream of having the unspiritual audacity to bid for the honor of reading it in front of a bunch of people! But what Louis really wanted was for us to have the courage to stand in front of the congregation & learn to read the opening verses of each week's Torah portion in Hebrew. He even made it easy for us to do so by printing it clearly at the

beginning of his Torah Appetizers (Bible Study notes) that he passes out each week: It has the Hebrew Script, & the transliteration, & the English translation all together. But we all sat there staring at him, silently questioning in our minds, "You want us to do what? Run that by us again!" My son was high school age at that time, & learning Hebrew, so I being the Mom that I am, would make him get up there & comply with Louis' request!! He did an awesome job & never complained. But Louis remained undaunted in the pursuit of his goal, so he said to us, "You should go to Chuck Nagel's Hebrew class. He's not going to be with us for much longer, & you should take advantage of this opportunity... and he fits into the category of being a scribe..."

Well, Louis was right. Chuck was in his 70s. Many years prior he had retired from the Air Force, & then became a Lawyer, & then quit his practice in a law firm because it compromised his faith. At the same time he also began studying Hebrew. By the time I became his student, he had been studying the language for about 38 years. He was very much a scribe. He also had a passion for Creation Science. Because of this, he started all his Hebrew students out by teaching them how to translate Genesis 1:1 from Hebrew to English using a Hebrew lexicon. He said that if we did it that way, we would eventually learn Hebrew. After I had been in his Hebrew class for 3 or 4 months, one day I heard him talk about how he had just finished translating Genesis chapters 1 through 11. Because of my own Creation Science research, I decided that that was what I was going to do too. That was about 3½ years ago. By the grace of Adonai I've now finished translating Genesis chapters 1 through 11. In the process, the Hebrew language is something that I have come to view as a priceless treasure, & my God given heritage!

So what exactly is a Torah Scroll? It's a scroll, usually made out of sheep skin if it is a large one, & parchment if it's small, that contains the entire first five books of the Old Testament, all hand written in Hebrew. The goal is to go through the entire Torah annually together as a congregation. Around the globe, the Jewish community begins with Genesis sometime in September or October [The dates change every year] & finishes up at the end of Deuteronomy about twelve or thirteen months later, depending on the Jewish calendar, & then begin the whole cycle again! The first Torah Scrolls came from Moses, and God told him what to write! I'm not exactly sure when the tradition of going through the entire Torah annually began, but it was well in place before the B'rit Hadashah (New Testament) was written. We are able to figure out when different events took place in the B'rit Hadashah because of what passages of scripture were being read during those events.

So why is reading a Torah Scroll considered to be 'Tikkum Olam' (repairing the world)? Because it's the instructions manual for doing such a thing! (And the understanding for everything else written in both the Old & New Testament begins in those first five books!) And for many of us who have Jewish roots, it's the way back home to our heritage.

Did I mention Creation Science? Why is that so important? God says that He made the world in six days [see Exodus 20:11], and according to the Jewish Calendar He did so 5770 years ago! He says in the Torah that He's bigger than the whole universe, but at the same time He created your eyes & your ears! Look at it this way: Most of us as children had play-sets, those make-believe environments that we put our dolls or trains or other toys into. We were outside those environments & we had control of what went on in them. In a similar way, God is bigger than our whole universe, yet He knows all the details about each one of us! The atheists say that the world evolved of itself, but God says that He, God, does not lie, ever! All the scientific evidence that I have researched verifies that God does indeed tell the truth, and that atheists continually tell 'fisherman's fishy stories'!

Beth Tephila meets at Lolo Community Church on Saturdays, beginning at 10 am. We also have our own website at bethtephila.org where Louis' weekly Torah Appetizers can be found.

Baruch atah Adonai, notayn ha Torah!