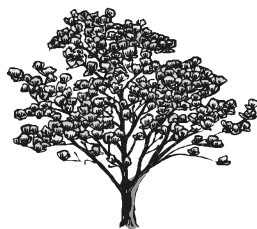


~ In Home Prayer for Israel ~
Shabbat (Saturday Morning) January 2, 2010

Tu B'Shevat – Sunset January 29, 2010



Tu B'Shevat (Hebrew: ט"ו בשבט) is a minor Jewish holiday in the Hebrew month of Shevat, usually sometime in late January or early February, that marks the "New Year of the Trees" (Hebrew: Ilanot'Rosh HaShanah La ,ראש השנה לאילנות). Customs include planting trees and eating dried fruits and nuts with which the Holy Land is praised in Deuteronomy 8:8, the seven species include wheat and barley; grapevines, fig trees, and pomegranates; olive oil and honey. In Israel, the first day of Spring and the flowering of the almond tree, which grows wild around the country, coincides with Tu Bishvat. This is the season in which the earliest-blooming trees in the Land of Israel emerge from their winter sleep and begin a new fruit-bearing cycle.

Tu B'Shevat is a festival celebrated by Jewish people everywhere. It symbolizes their love for Israel and shows their feelings for trees and plants as living, fruitful things. Tu B'Shevat can also remind us that, when God created the world, He gave us the responsibility to nurture and care for all His wonderful gifts. The name for this day can be found in the Talmud, but long before that the Torah showed the way. For example, the Bible says that fruit trees may not be cut down even in time of war (Deuteronomy 20) and the Torah (teaching) itself is called the "tree of life" (Proverbs 3:18). There are many references to trees in the Bible which show our love of trees and how they were used in matters of religious importance. In biblical times, when Jewish people were married, branches were cut and used to build the *huppah*, the traditional wedding canopy. (We look forward to the wedding of the Lamb and His bride. Revelation 19:7). Jesus is the true vine, our God and Father the gardener, and we are the branches He prunes or cuts off so that we will be even more fruitful. (John 15:1-3) Believer's are grafted into the Olive tree (Israel) and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root. (Romans 11:17).

At the beginning of the 20th century, existing woodlands were largely ravished by the ruling Turks. Since 1948 over 80 million trees have been planted. Trees were needed to provide shade in the desert, to supply a source of wood and crops and to aid in land conservation

This monumental task has been accomplished through the planting of tree seedlings at the sites of new forests by Israeli school children and under the auspices of the Jewish National Fund, an organization dedicated to helping Israel reclaim her land through United States donations which support the planting of trees. Plant a tree...Visit: <http://www.jnf.org/support/tree-planting-center/>

In Israel today, Tu B'Shevat marks the end of the rainy season. In 1949, on the first Tu B'Shevat of the Jewish state, thousands of people gathered to plant life-giving trees in a forest which will one day contain six million trees—the number of Jews who died in the Holocaust. It is named the "Forest of the Martyrs."

We are also reminded of how Israel has bloomed under the loving care of the *halutzim* (the pioneers) and subsequent generations. Jewish settlers have worked wonders of reclamation in the cool northern regions of Galilee, in the hot waterless plains of the Negev and in the tropical coastal areas.

Jewish farmers introduced grapefruit and varieties of oranges into Israel. They developed crop rotation so that the soil would not become worn out and barren from growing the same plants over and over. A quarter of a century ago there were few vegetables grown in Israel because the soil was too dry. Pioneers sank wells to tap underground water sources. Today there are thousands of acres of truck farms. Agricultural miracles have been worked using innovative irrigation and drip methods, the use of brackish and desalinated water, and greenhouses.

When you visit Israel, you will find a great variety of wonderful growing things. Apples and pears grow in the cooler regions, Galilean farms produce peaches and apricots, the Jordan valley specializes in groves of bananas, persimmon, avocado and papaya. Along the shore of the Mediterranean, a large citrus belt, oranges, grapefruits and lemons flourish.

Although Tu B'Shevat is the New Year (Rosh Hashanah) for *trees*, Jewish people, Messianic Believer's, and God-Fearing Gentiles attach special significance to this holiday because "Man is [compared to] the tree of the field" (Deuteronomy 20:19). Through cultivating strong roots – faith and commitment to God – we produce many fruits—Torah (study of God's Word) and Mitzvot (good deeds). Ezra 7:10; Psalm 119:105; James 2:14, 3:13; 1 Peter 2:12

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers. Psalm 1:1-3

PRAYER POINTS:

1. In praise of God and promises fulfilled; the Word made flesh in Messiah Emmanuel, and His finished work:

Then the trees of the forest will sing, they will sing for joy before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth.

1 Chronicles 16:33; *Sing for joy, O heavens, for the LORD has done this; shout aloud, O earth beneath. Burst into song, you mountains, you forests and all your trees, for the LORD has redeemed Jacob, he displays his glory in Israel. Isaiah 44:23*; *All the trees of the field will know that I the LORD bring down the tall tree and make the low tree grow tall. I dry up the green tree and make the dry tree flourish. "I the LORD have spoken, and I will do it." Ezekiel 17:24*

You will live in joy and peace. The mountains and hills will burst into song, and the trees of the field will clap their hands! Where once there were thorns, cypress trees will grow. Where nettles grew, myrtles will sprout up. These events will bring great honor to the Lord's name; they will be an everlasting sign of his power and love." Isaiah 55:12-13

And the LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Genesis 2:9; *but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."*

Genesis 2:17; *After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life. Genesis 3:24*

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. Isaiah 7:14 "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" — which means, "God with us." Matthew 1:23

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. John 15:1-2

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." Galatians 3:13

2. Praise be to God for the Jewish People and Land of Israel:

"The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." Genesis 12:1-3

Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so. The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. Genesis 1:11-12; I will send you rain in its season, and the ground will yield its crops and the trees of the field their fruit. Leviticus 26:4; I will increase the fruit of the trees and the crops of the field, so that you will no longer suffer disgrace among the nations because of famine. Ezekiel 36:30

3. For Jewish people to turn back to their God and the Word of life for wisdom, knowledge, and protection:

Return, O Israel, to the LORD your God. Your sins have been your downfall! Hosea 14:1; See, I have taught you decrees and laws as the LORD my God commanded me, so that you may follow them in the land you are entering to take possession of it. Observe them carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear

about all these decrees and say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the LORD our God is near us whenever we pray to him? **Deuteronomy 4:5-7**

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding. To him belongs eternal praise. **Psalm 111:10**; The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, **Proverbs 1:7**; For the LORD gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. **Proverbs 2:6**; My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, **Proverbs 3:1**; Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you; love her, and she will watch over you. **Proverbs 4:6**; And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him. **Luke 2:40**; And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men. **Luke 2:52**;

4. For all nations to hunger and thirst for the righteousness, truth, and peace of the God of the Bible:

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. **Isaiah 9:6**

Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this. **Isaiah 9:7**

You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you. **Isaiah 26:3** The fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever. My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest. **Isaiah 32:17-18**

But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. **Isaiah 53:5** For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. **John 1:17** You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. **Acts 10:36**; For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, **Ephesians 2:14**

5. For the Prime Minister of Israel, its leaders, the believer's in Messiah, and the local churches:

For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. **2 Chronicles 16:9**; Think how you have instructed many, how you have strengthened feeble hands. Your words have supported those who stumbled; you have strengthened faltering knees. **Job 4:3-4** My soul is weary with sorrow; strengthen me according to your word. **Psalm 119:28**; Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord. **Acts 9:31**; Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thorn bushes, or grapes from briers. **Luke 6:44**; Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness. **Genesis 15:6**

"In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the Torah and the Prophets. Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road is easy that leads to destruction, and there are many who take it. For the gate is narrow and the road is strewn with obstacles that leads to life, and there are few who find it. Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves," **Matthew 7:12-15**

6. For the President of the United States, leaders of all nations, and people everywhere to stand with Israel :

At that time the LORD set apart the tribe of Levi to carry the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the LORD to minister and to pronounce blessings in his name, as they still do today. **Deuteronomy 10:8**; for the LORD your God has chosen them and their descendants out of all your tribes to stand and minister in the LORD's name always. **Deuteronomy 18:5**; While the whole assembly of Israel was standing there, the king turned around and blessed them. **1 Kings 8:14**; How happy your men must be! How happy your officials, who continually stand before you God, and hear your wisdom! **1 Kings 10:8**; It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in princes. **Psalm 118:9**; Do not put your trust in princes, in mortal men, who cannot save. **Psalm 146:3**

Ezra opened the book. All the people could see him because he was standing above them; and as he opened it, the people all stood up. **Nehemiah 8:5**

To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the Spirit of heaviness; that they might be called **TREES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS**, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified." **Isaiah 61:3**

7. Timely moisture and rain to prepare the soil and human hearts for new life. As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. **Isaiah 55:10-11**

8. Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem ...and God's invitation to join Him in the NFC Tour and Prayer Journey to Israel.