

Notes: Shabbat – December 31, 2011

Start: 10 AM

Order of service:

1. Meet and greet
2. Introduction
3. Announcements
4. Liturgy – Ma to vu, Sh'ma, Avenu
5. Music
6. Message
7. Time of prayer
8. Aaronic Blessing
9. Kiddush
10. Oneg

Title: It isn't enough to know that Adonai exists.

Introduction:

As we have been traveling through Genesis with each week's parshah, we have witnessed the progression of Adonai's relationship with Avraham and his descendants...Yitz'chak, Ya'akov and now Yoseph.

Through their journeys, the people they have come in contact with have experienced first hand, the impact of Adonai, the God of Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov.

But, how much did it truly change their lives?

Torah Blessing

Genesis 41:32 – 40

Gen 41:32 Why was the dream doubled for Pharaoh? Because the matter has been fixed by God, and God will shortly cause it to happen.

Gen 41:33 "Therefore, Pharaoh should look for a man both discreet and wise to put in charge of the land of Egypt.

Gen 41:34 Pharaoh should do this, and he should appoint supervisors over the land to receive a twenty percent tax on the produce of the land of Egypt during the seven years of abundance.

Gen 41:35 They should gather all the food produced during these good years coming up and set aside grain under the supervision of Pharaoh to be used for food in the cities, and they should store it.

Gen 41:36 This will be the land's food supply for the seven years of famine that will come over the land of Egypt, so that the land will not perish as a result of the famine."

Gen 41:37 The proposal seemed good both to Pharaoh and to all his officials.

Gen 41:38 Pharaoh said to his officials, "Can we find anyone else like him? The Spirit of God lives in him!"

Gen 41:39 So Pharaoh said to Yosef, "Since God has shown you all this — there is no one as discerning and wise as you —

Gen 41:40 you will be in charge of my household; all my people will be ruled by what you say. Only when I rule from my throne will I be greater than you."

Yoseph is summoned to Pharaoh to interpret his two dreams for which Yoseph does.

We witness Pharaoh's response...

Pharaoh is aware of the existence of Adonai, because of Yoseph interpretation.

As a result of Yoseph's interpretation, Pharaoh makes him second in command of Egypt, in order to retain the Spirit of God in Egypt.

Yet does he pursue Adonai?

Does anything in Pharaoh's life change?

Looking back, Lavan didn't want Ya'akov to leave because while he was there, he experienced a true blessing from Adonai, yet his life didn't change.

Lavan could be identified as an opportunist, schemer and deceiver...

Gen 30:27 Lavan answered him, "If you regard me favorably, then please listen: I have observed the signs that Adonai has blessed me on account of you.

Gen 30:28 Name your wages," he said; "I will pay them."

Gen 30:29 Ya`akov replied, "You know how faithfully I have served you and how your livestock have prospered under my care.

Gen 30:30 The few you had before I came have increased substantially; Adonai has blessed you wherever I went. But now, when will I provide for my own household?"

Gen 30:31 Lavan said, "What should I give you?" "Nothing," answered Ya`akov, "just do this one thing for me: once more I will pasture your flock and take care of it.

Lavan himself recognized that it was because of Ya'akov's presence

Is it truly sufficient to recognize that Adonai exists, without a change in our lifestyle?

In each case, Lavan, held onto his idols and Egyptian life was centered around the polytheistic culture of many gods.

They had both experienced who Adonai is through others, yet never pursued a direct relationship of their own.

We see a similar scenario when Sha'ul was in Athens:

A society heavily influenced by polytheism...if one god was good than many gods must be better...

Sha'ul would introduce them to Adonai...

Act 17:16 While Sha'ul was waiting for them in Athens, his spirit within him was disturbed at the sight of the city full of idols.

Act 17:17 So he began holding discussions in the synagogue with the Jews and the "God-fearers," and in the market square every day with the people who happened to be there.

Act 17:18 Also a group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers started meeting with him. Some asked, "What is this babbling trying to say?" Others, because he proclaimed the Good News about Yeshua and the resurrection, said, "He sounds like a propagandist for foreign gods."

Epicureans denied the existence of a purposeful God and believed the universe originated by chance.

- They mocked popular pagan gods and mythology
- They viewed the soul as materialistic...when one died it would dissolve and dissipate
- Goal of life was gratification

Stoics believed that “God” was a mere word that stood for some vague spirit of reason in the universe.

- The soul was corporeal (physical) and at death was absorbed into this “God”
- Pleasure isn't good and pain isn't evil because nothing matters
- Reason is considered a guide, but when reason can't find a reason to live, suicide becomes the reasonable action.

Two very divergent groups

Act 17:19 They took and brought him before the High Council, saying, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting?"

Act 17:20 Some of the things we are hearing from you strike us as strange, and we would like to know what they mean."

Act 17:21 (All the Athenians and the foreigners living there used to spend their spare time talking or hearing about the latest intellectual fads.)

Sounds like times haven't changed, even in 2000 years.

This is Sha'ul's response to their question regarding wanting to know more about this “new teaching”

Act 17:22 Sha'ul stood up in the Council meeting and said, "Men of Athens: I see how very religious you are in every way!

Act 17:23 For as I was walking around, looking at your shrines, I even found an altar which had been inscribed, 'To An Unknown God.' So, the one whom you are already worshipping in ignorance — this is the one I proclaim to you.

As with Pharaoh and Lavan, Sha'ul is saying that to know Adonai exists isn't sufficient.

Act 17:24 "The God who made the universe and everything in it, and who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in man-made temples;

Act 17:25 nor is he served by human hands, as if he lacked something; since it is he himself who gives life and breath and everything to everyone.

Act 17:26 "From one man he made every nation living on the entire surface of the earth, and he fixed the limits of their territories and the periods when they would flourish.

Act 17:27 God did this so that people would look for him and perhaps reach out and find him although in fact, he is not far from each one of us,

Act 17:28 'for in him we live and move and exist.' Indeed, as some of the poets among you have said, 'We are actually his children.'

Act 17:29 So, since we are children of God, we shouldn't suppose that God's essence resembles gold, silver or stone shaped by human technique and imagination.

Act 17:30 "In the past, God overlooked such ignorance; but now he is commanding all people everywhere to turn to him from their sins.

In past weeks we have talked about repentance – t'shuvah.

What many miss is that repentance requires two actions, not just one.

We must first turn from our sin, the same manner in which Sha'ul is instructing

The second part of t'shuvah is to return to Adonai.

If we only do one part without the second, we will easily succumb to our old nature and therefore return to our old ways.

How do we know what sin is?

Did Sha'ul have a Brith Hadoshah writing in his hand?

We know what sin is from Torah.

Act 17:31 For he has set a Day when he will judge the inhabited world, and do it justly, by means of a man whom he has designated. And he has given public proof of it by resurrecting this man from the dead."

Was the book of Revelation revealed to Yochanan yet?

We find these things first in the Tenach.

Act 17:32 At the mention of a resurrection of dead people, some began to scoff; while others said, "We want to hear you again on this subject."

The concept of resurrection was foreign to all nations with the exception of Israel, because they would experience it first hand as a result of Yeshua. It was also spoken of in scripture in relation to olam ha ba...the world to come.

Act 17:33 So Sha'ul left the meeting.

Act 17:34 But some men stayed with him and came to trust, including the High Council member Dionysius; there was also a woman named Damaris; and others came to trust along with them.

At this time, many of the people in Athens Sha'ul was talking with, weren't ready for the Hebrew scriptures. However, those who became "God-fearers" would meet in the synagogue as seen earlier in Acts 17:17

Act 17:17 So he began holding discussions in the synagogue with the Jews and the "God-fearers," and in the market square every day with the people who happened to be there.

It isn't enough to know that Adonai exists.