

In the Beginning

✖ Last week, *Simchat Torah* was celebrated in synagogues all over the world. Immediately upon reading the last portion of Deuteronomy, the Torah scroll containing the Five Books of Moses, is rolled back to the beginning, to B'resheet and Genesis 1:1-5 is read.

This way we remember that the Torah is God's never-ending teaching for right living. It's a handbook for how to obtain blessings in our lives. This is a fun time, when we actually "dance" around the ark or building, holding the scroll in our arms. It's always exciting to have a new beginning, which is why we enjoy Simchat Torah so much.

B'resheet begins the Bible and it begins by describing how God formed light out of darkness. The days of creation are explained, and culminate with the creation of humans on the sixth day. Finally, there was Shabbat, the seventh day, the Sabbath, a cessation of work and effort.

According to the Sages of Israel-the rabbis who wrote before the time of Messiah-the seven days of creation foreshadowed the seven millennia that would follow.

They wrote, "The world is to exist six thousand years," based, in part, on Psalm 90:4. "For a thousand years in your sight are like a day when it passes by." Whether the psalmist was providing poetic expression or theological truth, the idea was also held by the followers of Yeshua. Peter wrote, "With the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years is like one day" (2 Peter 3:8).

Consider this: The Rabbis said that in the first two thousand years after creation there was desolation. Looking back, they were right. Humankind just wasn't following the ways of the Creator. In fact, the events of the Tower of Babel, which came

after the great flood in Noah's time, showed how difficult it was for humanity to hold godly way.

That's when God called Abram, who promoted the concept of One God. That was necessary to enable His creatures to trust the instruction necessary to receive the blessings God had for them. The first two millennia were characterized by confusion.

In the next two thousand years, the Sages say the Torah flourished. Abram really initiated this through his faith, but it still took time for the Torah, the Way, to be brought to Israel. The Children of Israel had to grow in number in the incubator of Egypt. Moses had to receive the teaching on Mt. Sinai. The people had to be called back to follow Torah by Israel's prophets.

The next two thousand years, from the time of Yeshua to the present day, saw the spread of his Kingdom, what some people call the "Church age" or the "Dispensation of Grace," both terms that don't capture all that needs to be said. The Sages had predicted that the Messiah would come at the end of the 4,000-year period, which is why many Jews were looking for him and asked Yeshua whether or not he was the One.

Sadly, many of my people missed the Messiah, but thankfully, many did not. Some scholars say there were a million Jewish Yeshua-followers by the end of the first century, CE. These two "days," two millennia, line up with the rabbinic expectation of a coming Messiah/Savior.

The final day of Creation was the Sabbath, a day of rest and worship. This day provided the pattern for what Christians call the Millennium, the thousand-year reign of the Messiah. The Sages call these 1,000 years, a Sabbath.

It's becoming fairly well accepted in theological circles, that echoes of biblical statements and incidents in the past are heard later in history. Some scholars argue that what

happens to Israel, also happens to Israel's Messiah and vice-versa. As one example, just as Israel spent time in Egypt, so, too, Messiah was sent to Egypt to escape Herod's decree to kill Jewish baby boys.

Given these sorts of patterns, it's not surprising that the six days of creation in Genesis would echo loudly throughout history, culminating when the seventh day would come. When Yeshua returns to reign as King, he will establish a Sabbath across the Creation. When we rest on the 7th day Sabbath, it sets a pattern for what is yet to come, 1,000 years of rest with the Messiah, who, as Matthew records, is "Lord of the Sabbath."

The Rabbis calculate that we have just entered the year, 5770, i.e. 5770 years since the beginning of history. If this is so, then we are almost at the end of the third 2,000-year period. Now, I'm not saying that Yeshua will reign over the earth in exactly 230 years, but it sure does seem like something's happening in our world in preparation for his return.

In creation, God set in motion the Completion. Even though the world has stood for nearly 6,000 years without the Messiah's physical presence, a day is coming soon, perhaps in our lifetime, when that 6,000-year period will be over and the Sabbath/Millennium will begin. I personally look forward to that Sabbath. How about you?

You will enjoy reading Messianic Rabbi Russel Resnik's book, *Creation to Completion: A Guide to Life's Journey from the Five Books of Moses*, available at www.creationtocompletion.com or by calling 800-410-7367. He writes about this concept.