

PRAYER UPDATE FROM ISRAEL (January 18, 2011)



RIGHTEOUS JUDGEMENT

The Torah and Haftarah Portions for this week focus on the righteousness and justice which are the foundation of God's throne—and the necessity of godly wise JUDGEMENT among His people. The readings (see Torah Section below) begin with the vision necessary for choosing judges (Exodus 18:21), end with the coming of Messiah and establishment of the Messianic Kingdom “with judgment and justice” (Isaiah 9:7)—and in the middle are the Ten Commandments.

1. PRAY FOR LEBANON

“How the oppressor has come to an end! How his fury has ended! YHVH has broken the rod of the wicked, the scepter of the rulers, which in anger struck down peoples with unceasing blows, and in fury subdued nations with relentless aggression...Even the pine trees and the cedars of Lebanon exult over you and say, ‘Now that you have been laid low, no woodsman comes to cut us down.’ ” (Isaiah 14:5-8).

“The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars, Yes, the LORD splinters the cedars of Lebanon. He makes them also skip like a calf, Lebanon and Sirion like a young wild ox...and in His temple everyone says, ‘GLORY!’” (Psalm 29:5-6, 9b).

“Come with me from Lebanon, my bride, come with me from Lebanon...You have stolen my heart, my sister, my bride...” (Song of Songs 4:8-9).

This week, perhaps even later today (Monday), the UN investigation into the assassination in 2005 of former Lebanese prime minister Rafik Hariri is expected to release its results. It is widely expected to connect a number of the radical Shiite Hezbollah party members to the killing of the Sunni Hariri. Hezbollah has been expecting this and has been pressuring Saad Hariri, son of the slain Rafik and the present Prime Minister to stop cooperating with the tribunal. Saad, backed by the U.S., has refused to stop cooperation; so this past Wednesday the Hezbollah party pulled out, toppling the government. It is not known what will happen next. A Friday New York Times article entitled, “For Lebanese, Crisis has become a Way of Life” spoke of “a

country that pivots on some of the most overarching conflicts in the Middle East: the struggle between Iran and America, the prospect of war with Israel and the flaring of sectarian [i.e. Sunni Muslim, Shiite Muslim and Christian] tensions. The next weeks or months will determine essentially whether the Shiite Muslim movement Hezbollah will decide who rules this Mediterranean country..." ("For Lebanese, Crisis has become a Way of Life: Shadid, Anthony & Nada Bakri, The New York Times, January 14, 2011). The article goes on to cautiously suggest that things might, as at some times past, be resolved through extended negotiations. However, should the Iranian- and Syrian-backed Hezbollah decide that this is its time to strike, sparking Lebanon into civil war, and should the Shiite group gain ascendancy, Israel may find herself faced with some grim decisions regarding a nation run by an entity with tens of thousands of rockets and missiles presently positioned on its southern border pointing our way. It is estimated that many of these missiles are now capable of reaching Tel Aviv and beyond.

PLEASE PRAY:

*That truth be presented to the world in the release of the UN tribunal.

*That no regional wars will break out before their times (Ecclesiastes 3:8). That believers will be in their positions (see Torah notes for last week) before any such outbreaks.

*That Israel will receive accurate intelligence reports regarding the military connections between Hezbollah and her allies and supporters—and will have wisdom in how best to make use of those reports.

*That powers of violence set against God's covenant land of Israel and oblivious to His regard for the "Beauty of Lebanon" will have their power broken.

*That many hear "the voice of the LORD" in Lebanon, and trust in its power. For courage, hope and guidance of Believers in Lebanon...in spreading the truth that God is calling a Bride out of that country (see Song of Songs passage above).

*As in Ezekiel 31:15, Lebanon at present finds herself "clothed in gloom". Hosea 14:5-7 using the metaphor of a cedar of Lebanon, speaks of being rooted, with growing young shoots; of having fragrance and being famous for her wine. Pray that that land may weather the storms, and be restored to its redemptive place and purpose...putting down roots into righteous soil...releasing the fragrance of the knowledge of God in His Messiah (II Cor 2:14) and that out of her gloom she discover the wine of holy joy.

2. SPIRITUAL CENTER FOR 'OTHER GODS' IN THE DESERT

"You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image...you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God" (Exodus 20:2-4—from this week's Torah Portion).

The Orthodox operated Arutz Sheva news service carried a story yesterday regarding proponents of a new Buddhist center who have allegedly signed an agreement with the Central Arava Regional Council allocating them hundreds of acres in the desert south of the Dead Sea on which to build a 'spiritual university'. According to the article, the project is headed by an Israeli woman living in the states who is a "Lama" (Buddhist spiritual guide). A visit to one of her sites does indeed speak of "Creating an International Spiritual Center in the Middle East" and has a map delineating the proposed location "straddling the borders" of Israel and the Kingdom of Jordan. An anti-missionary organization quoted in the Arutz Sheva article claims that the non-profit organization which applied for the land on which to build the "university" is "based on and operating in accordance with the international principles of Buddhism", and all the material distributed by the organization "suggests that the center will be devoted to the study of Tibetan Buddhism"; yet during contacts with the Interior Ministry to gain the necessary permits, not a word was spoken about Buddhism, with all paperwork merely using the words 'spiritual university'. In closing, the article observes, "An important part of Buddhism is devotion to the Buddha, and this includes bowing to images of the Buddha as well as to religious superiors, something which is literally idol worship, clearly prohibited in the Ten Commandments", and quotes a letter sent to the Ministry of the Interior, "Buddhism is idolatry in every sense of the word and there is no doubt that every step possible must be taken to stop the construction of this idolatry center" ("Warning Issued against New Buddhist Center in Israel": Benari, Elad; Arutz Sheva: news@israelnationalnews.com, 14 Jan 2011.).

Unfortunately, (false)-spiritual education is nothing new in Israel. Children in early grades of secular schools are started early-on on yoga and New Age techniques. And a terraced tribute to the Bahai religion extends from the top of Mount Carmel to its base in Haifa. Satan knows that his time is short, and desires to take any advantage to weaken the returned people of God and put off the awakening of their knowledge of "Whom they have pierced." The Bahai shrine was on land purchased before Israel became a nation. This latest is a particularly blatant invasion, demanding Holy Land from its returned stewards.

PLEASE PRAY:

*That the fear of the Lord come upon the Ministry of Interior and the Central Arava Regional Council, and the decision to release land for the establishment of this Buddhist training center be cancelled.

*For a powerful reawakening in Israeli Jewish hearts of the significance of the Torah, of God's Law revealed in it to Humanity, of the responsibility of Israel to whom "were committed the oracles of God" (Romans 3:2).

*That the darkness of false religion be exposed for what it is in Israel...that the Light of the Knowledge of God through Messiah shine into the darkness.

*That God raise up young people and old, students and teachers equipped to share in the power of the Holy Spirit the message of Truth, that there is "One Name given under Heaven whereby we must be saved".

THIS WEEK'S TORAH PORTION:

From ancient times there has been a weekly portion (Parashah) from the first five books of Moses (The Torah) and an ending (Haftarah) from the Prophets read on the Sabbath in synagogues around the world. This portion is given a Hebrew name drawn from the opening words of the Torah passage. An illustration of this practice appears to have been recorded in Luke 4:16 where Yeshua (Jesus) arrived in the synagogue in Nazareth and was asked to read the portion (Isaiah 61) from the Prophets. We have found that in perusing these weekly readings, not only are we provided opportunity to identify in the context of God's Word with millions of Jewish people around the world, but very often the Holy Spirit will illumine specific passages pertinent that week in our intercession for the Land and people of Israel. All texts are those of English translations of the Scriptures.

The readings for this week are called Yitro (And "Jethro"—the Priest of Midian).

TORAH: Exodus 18:1—20:26

HAFTARAH: Isaiah 6:1—7:6; 9:6-7

NOTES

*Exodus 18:21-22: "Furthermore, you shall select out of all the people able men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain; and you shall place these over them as leaders...let them judge the people at all times..."

Moses is counseled by his father-in-law to set up a system of "judges" amongst the people. Yet the word for "select" here is not the same as that for "chose" in verse 25. Rather it is Hebrew "hazeh"—to watch, envision, see prophetically, foresee. It is of critical importance that the choosing of leaders of godly fear, truth and honesty in the Body of Messiah be done with supernatural vision and prophetic insight.

*Exodus 19:4b. "...I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself." Compare Deuteronomy 32:10-12, "He found him in a desert land and in the wasteland, a howling wilderness; He encircled him, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye. As an eagle stirs up its nest, hovers over its young, spreading out its wings, taking them up, carrying them on its wings, so YHVH (the LORD) alone led him, and there was no foreign god with him."

*Exodus 19:5. "And now, if you will truly heed My voice and guard My covenant, you will become for Me a treasure among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine." Compare Psalm 25:10, "All the paths of the LORD are grace and truth (Heb: chesid and emet), to such as guard His covenant and His testimonies."

PLEASE PRAY: For Israelis to realize that God still longs to "bring her to Himself", that He has released a New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-33) in the blood of His Son Yeshua, in whom

“grace and truth are realized” (John 1:17); that as she embraces that Covenant, she will find that He is still speaking, and as she hears and responds to His voice, she will find again the treasured place in His heart.

*Exodus 19:6, 10. “You shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation... ‘Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes.’” Revelation 1:5-6 teaches that becoming a kingdom of priests and a holy nation comes about through the love of Yeshua and the washing away of sins by His blood.

*Exodus 19:16-20. “Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thundering and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the shofar was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled... Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because YHVH descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. And when the blast of the shofar sounded long and became louder and louder, Moses spoke, and Elohim answered him by voice. Then YHVH came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain. And YHVH called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.” Compare Hebrews 12:18-29, “For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, and the sound of a shofar and the voice... But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn registered in Heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Yeshua the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel. See that you do not refuse Him who speaks... Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. FOR OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE.”

*Exodus 20:4. “You shall not make for yourself a carved image... you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I am YHVH your God, a Jealous god...” This word for “Jealous” (kana) is used in its noun form in the last sentence of this week’s Reading from the Prophets, Isaiah 9:7. However, there it is translated “zeal” (through which the LORD will establish the government of His SON forever). Righteous jealousy or zeal is always released on behalf of someone or something which is intensely loved. However, when activated in the flesh for selfish motives, the same word is translated “envy”.

*Exodus 20:13. “You shall not murder.” In some older English translations the word “kill” was used. But the word for kill and that for murder are different words in the Hebrew.

*Exodus 20:21. “So the people stood afar off, but Moses drew near the thick cloud where God was.” This “thick cloud” (araphel) is translated “deep darkness” in Isaiah 60:2. But that darkness is over the “peoples”, and will be dispelled by the rising of the LORD, when His glory shall be “seen.” Today in Modern Hebrew araphel means “fog”—and Israel for the most part is “in a fog” regarding finding her God. PLEASE PRAY: For the veil to be removed from the eyes of God’s ancient people—that a light rise in their hearts and God’s glory will be seen—that they will be drawn into the “Cloud of Unknowing” to discover the One who has known them from afar and drawn them in lovingkindness.

*Exodus 20:26. “Nor shall you go up by steps to My altar, that your nakedness may not be exposed on it.” It was God who first provided suitable clothing for hiding that which had awakened shame in Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:21). It would only be through the work of the Son that all humankind can again find themselves clothed, in His righteousness, and our shame taken away. “Clothe yourselves with the Lord Yeshua Messiah, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature” (Romans 13:14).

An exceptionally powerful Haftarah
Isaiah 6:1-7:6; 9:6-7

The readings from the Prophets for this week (Isaiah 6:1-7:6) contain, in parallel to the manifestation of the LORD’s presence in power on Mount Sinai, the awesome revelation of Holiness made to the prophet Elijah. Before the holy presence of the LORD “high and lifted up”—with the seraphim, and the Voice, and shaking and smoke Isaiah sees himself as unclean and his lips as unclean. Yet his lips are touched with the coal, his iniquity is taken away and his sin purged—and he is given a message for his people, a message describing the “veil” which would settle upon the House of Israel, and which continues until the present day...and the promise of a remnant. After a shorter message of instruction related to current events, the reading incredibly leaps two chapters to Isaiah 9:6-7, “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder. And his name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over his kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of HOSTS will perform this!”

PLEASE PRAY: For divine revelation of the Holiness of the LORD to accompany this reading—and of His Zeal and Jealousy which has already seen the birth of the “Child”—who will soon be released to return and rule over His kingdom in judgment and justice forever!



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[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week 23-29 January Mishpatim (“Now these are the Judgments which you shall set before them”) will be, TORAH: Exodus 21:1—24:18; HAFTARAH: Jeremiah 34:8-22, 33:25-26]