

Prayer Update From Israel (January 7, 2013)



1. RAIN, RAIN, RAIN

“You, O God, sent a plentiful rain, whereby You confirmed Your inheritance, when it was weary” (Psalm 68:9).

“Be glad then, you children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God; for He has given you the former rain faithfully, and He will cause the rain to come down for you—the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month” (Joel 2:23).

As we write (Monday afternoon) there is intermittent heavy rain, with high winds sometimes mixed with sleet in Jerusalem—there is even the possibility of snowfall in the capitol sometime between now and Thursday evening. In fact, yesterday’s newscasters were calling for the strongest week of rain in Israel “in recent memory”—for precipitation in one week “equal to the average rainfall for the entire month of January.” Israel continues to be blessed with unusually heavy rainfalls during this season of the “Former Rains” (the so called “Latter Rains” begin around Passover). December saw the Sea of Galilee rise with the largest increase for that month in the past 20 years. Although due to years of drought the Sea lies still two meters below its optimum depth, it is now rapidly on the rise; the normally sluggish Jordan River which exits it on the south is surging. We are so thankful for this great blessing!

PLEASE PRAY:

* *“Gratefulness with us to God for this plentiful “confirmation of Israel’s inheritance”.*

* *That many in Israel will acknowledge the love and faithfulness of the One from whom this comes—and “rejoice in the LORD our God!” For the Body of Messiah in Israel to “see and know, and consider and understand together”—and stand up and declare— “that the hand of the LORD has done this, and the Holy One of Israel has created it” (Isaiah 41:20).*

** That the rains would continue, through both the time of the former and the latter rains (Zechariah 10:1)—that the Sea of Galilee and the large underground aquifers from which Israel pumps its water supply will be filled by May.*

** That the Land and the atmosphere over Israel would be protected and cleansed by the God who “sends out His command to the earth...Who causes His wind to blow, and the waters flow...Fire and hail, snow and clouds; stormy wind, fulfilling His word” (Psalm 147:15, 18b; 148:8—NOTE: SEE NO. 2 BELOW).*

2. “OF THE TERROR BY NIGHT...THE ARROW THAT FLIES BY DAY...” --- CHEMICAL WEAPONS, WINDS, AND ANGELS.

“You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow that flies by day, nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday” (Psalm 91:5-6).

*“Therefore, we will defend this border against both infiltration and terrorism...I also submit to the cabinet the fact that the Syrian regime is very unstable, that the question of chemical weapons here worries us. [Israel is coordinating with the United States and others]...so that we might be prepared for any scenario and possibility that could arise.” —Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at meeting of his Cabinet this Sunday Morning in Jerusalem (Quoted in: “Israel Plans to Construct a Syrian Border Fence”: by Isabel Kershner: *The New York Times.com*, January 6, 2013).*

This week the *Jerusalem Post* ran a story based on the testimony of “a senior military source” and “a Home Front Command source” about preparations which have been underway by the IDF Home Front Command in preparing Israeli hospitals for “*a range of security threats, including large-scale missile attacks and chemical attacks.*” According to the article, the exercises “*include training hospital staff to deal with conventional missile attacks, mass-casualty incidents and ‘mega-mass casualty incidents,’—involving 1,000 or more injuries.*”

We should mention that the article also claimed that “*the preparations have been planned three years in advance, and bear no relation to current events or recent threat assessments*” and that “*the threat of a chemical attack from neighboring Syria is very low, but the defense community’s contingency planning includes steps to both prevent and cope with such a threat.*” The article closed with several other statements quite obviously positioned to further put Israeli citizen’s minds at ease regarding the probability of an eminent conflict resulting in many casualties (“IDF preparing hospitals for missile and chemical attacks”: *JPOST.com*, January 3, 2013 6:42IST).

That said, there is a very serious concern in Israel about what may happen, perhaps within the near future, regarding the largest stockpile of lethal chemical weapons in the world positioned a few miles to our northeast (along with thousands of missiles capable of delivering many of them to almost any point in Israel). This week there were further allegations of the Assad regime’s having made use of some of these weapons in the war raging in Syria. Should sound evidence document a marked turn of Assad’s forces

towards the use of such weapons or their transfer to his allies (i.e. Hezbollah forces in southern Lebanon), an attack by either Israel or international forces to destroy them would very possibly take place. Unless such an operation was done quickly and with minute precision, there is good reason to believe that the Syrian leader might retaliate with a massive attack on Israel.

PLEASE PRAY:

*** That this part of the world would be spared a conflict involving the use of chemical weapons.**

*** That should a transfer of such weapons be made for the purpose of their use against either Syrian or Israeli citizens, it will be apprehended by sharp and accurate intelligence reports and brought to a permanent halt with a minimum loss of life.**

*** That should (God forbid) an attack with these weapons against Israel be eminent, the God “*who causes His wind to blow*” (see above) will station angels to war using the very winds, so as to divert this death from those in both Israel and Syria “*who will inherit salvation*” (Hebrews 1:14). We take the movement of powerful weather systems into Israel this year very seriously in this respect. *The greatest physical impediment to chemical weapons warfare is powerful winds and stormy weather.* A literal rendering of Psalm 104:4 reads, “*He makes His angels WINDS; His ministers flames of fire (lightnings)*”.**

3. CRITICAL ELECTIONS IN TWO WEEKS

“Who is the man who fears the LORD, He will instruct him in the way he should choose” (Psalm 25:12).

Israel is two weeks away (Tuesday, 22nd January) from general elections which will determine the next government—Prime Minister, Cabinet Ministers and members of the Knesset. It is estimated that 5,660,000 of Israel’s almost eight million population are eligible to vote. Things can change quickly in Israeli politics. A few weeks ago, Mr. Netanyahu’s *Likud-Beiteinu* party seemed impregnable, with enough seats to insure it power to do whatever it wished, with probably little need for the patching-together of disparate parties usually necessary in forming an Israeli coalition. Now that may no longer be the situation. A new entity calling itself “The Jewish Home” party has come into being. Led by 40-year-old newcomer Naftali Bennett, it already appears to be siphoning away seats from *Likud-Beiteinu*. Bennett is the son of American Jewish immigrants. After serving in an elite military unit, he went on to found a software company which, within six years, he was able to sell for a reported 150 million dollars. A charismatic speaker, Bennett, among other things, stands strongly in opposition to the creation of a Palestinian State in Judea and Samaria, basing his stance on the Biblical accounts of God’s covenant with the Hebrew fathers. It is already estimated that he could win at least 15 seats with his new party. Meanwhile, former Foreign Minister and Prime Minister candidate Tzipi Livni is working hard to convince Labor and others to join her in formation of a left-of-center block, strong enough to, if not unseat, at least create a formidable obstacle to Netanyahu. Not to be outdone, a number

of *Haredi* (Ultra-Orthodox) parties are also threatening to form their own ‘block’, in order to have power to gain the particular Cabinet seats they feel essential to ensure the reception of their demands (funds for their schools, exemption from military service, control of the Ministry of the Interior, which determines “who is a Jew” and “who may be allowed citizenship”, among others).

Only God could have held the incredibly diverse and disparate amalgam of parties together which was Prime Minister Netanyahu’s portion when he took office three and a half years ago. We find it interesting that one week following the upcoming elections comes the Torah Reading *Yitro* (Exodus 18:1-20:26), in which God released the essential principals for “Government” into Israel through Moses’ father-in-law Jethro—followed shortly thereafter by release of His Law, the *Ten Commandments* upon which all righteous governing since have been based! Only He can bring together a leadership for our country which will govern righteously and under His influence in the turbulent season ahead.

PLEASE PRAY:

- * **That a government which can operate righteously under divine influence will be brought into place in the upcoming elections.**
- * **That traps and schemes of the enemy for evil in the elections will be exposed.**
- * **That the upcoming government will be one which can come into strength and unity with its Prime Minister to make decisions necessary for the protection and prosperity of the country.**
- * **For the present acting Prime Minister, Benyamin Netanyahu, that during these two weeks he will be strengthened to operate in his position with integrity, uprightness and courage.**

THIS WEEK’S TORAH PORTION:

From ancient times there has been a weekly portion (Parasha) 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 6-12 January 2013 are called *Va’Era*—“And I Appeared” (to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob as *El Shaddai*):

TORAH: Exodus 6:2—9:35

HAFTARAH (Rosh Chodesh Eleventh Month): Isaiah 66:1-24

(NOTE: Because this week's Sabbath falls on *Rosh Chodesh* (Head of the new Hebrew Month), a special reading from the Prophets replaces the usual one Ezekiel 28:25—29:21).

***Exodus 7:1.** “So the LORD said to Moses: ‘See, I have made you Elohim (Literal Hebrew) to Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet.’” The word “as” before “Elohim” is not in the Hebrew. In a very real way, we *are* God's body through whom He looses His will “on earth as it is in Heaven.”

***Exodus 7:9-10.** “When Pharaoh speaks to you, saying, ‘Show a miracle for yourselves.’ then you shall say to Aaron, ‘Take your rod and cast it before Pharaoh, and let it become a serpent’...and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh and before his servants, and it became a serpent” (NKJV). The Hebrew here translated “serpent” is a different word and may designate a different creature than that used for the snake from which Moses fled (Exodus 4:3 and 7:15). There the word was *nakhash*, the common Hebrew word for snake (such as that which tempted Eve in Eden). Here the word is *tanin*, used in modern Hebrew for “crocodile” or “alligator” (The Nile Crocodile has been feared from ancient times for its propensity, more than any other of the specie, to prey upon humans). In Genesis 1:21 *tanin* is a “great sea creature” *created by God*. But this creature is also often used as a metaphor for spiritual or physical powers in opposition to God. In Ezekiel 29:3 (Part of this week's Haftarah), this word *tanin* is translated “monster” (NKJV), and depicts another Pharaoh (or the spiritual power controlling him), “Behold, I am against you, O Pharaoh king of Egypt, O great monster (*tanin*) who lies in the midst of his rivers, who has said, ‘My River is my own; I have made it for myself.’ But I will put hooks in your jaws...” (The word is also translated “monster” in Jeremiah 51:34 where it pictures Nebuchadnezzar swallowing up sinful Israel “like a *tannin*.”). In Psalm 74:13 it is depicted as a many headed “sea monster” (NASB) whose heads God can break in delivering those who trust in him. And in Isaiah 27:1 the NASB reads, “And He will kill the dragon (*tanin*) who lives in the sea.”

In the Modern Hebrew translation of the New Covenant Scriptures, the “great, fiery red dragon having seven heads” of Revelation 12:3, who stands before the woman clothed with the sun to devour her baby, is call a *tanin*...and in 12:9 both *tanin* (dragon) and *nakhash* (serpent) are equated with “the Devil and Satan.” Lastly, in Psalm 91:13 (NASB, margin) “*tanin*” is the **dragon which those who dwell in the shelter of the Most High and abide under the shadow of the Almighty, will trample underfoot!**

And so, the rod which had become a serpent *nakhash* (Exodus 7:15), through Moses' obedient faith became in his and Aaron's hands “*the rod of God*” (4:20), which could become a different fearful creature (*tanin*) which swallowed up other fearful creatures (7:12), or it could become a scepter of authority which could turn the waters of the Nile, over which the Pharaoh's claimed sovereignty (Ezek 29:3 above), into blood (7:17).

In short, the rod became the symbol of authority through which Moses would *be* God to Pharaoh (7:1), through whom God would manifest Himself as the supreme spiritual Power who would defeat, subdue and swallow up all other opposing spiritual powers.

***Exodus 7:14.** *“So the LORD said to Moses: ‘Pharaoh’s heart is hard; he refuses to let the people go.’* The LORD knew that Pharaoh’s heart was hard (Two words are used for “hard” or “hardened” in these passages, one meaning “heavy” or “settled”, the other “tightened”, “strengthened” or “fortified”. Through the early signs, wonders and plagues, we see Pharaoh’s heart growing hard according to its own nature (7:13, 22), or his actively hardening his own heart (8:15). In 8:29, 32, after the plague of flies, Moses especially warns him against continuing to do this, *“But Pharaoh made his heart heavy and insensitive this time also.”* Finally, in 9:12 it is specifically stated that *“the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh.”* We have here depicted both the choice and responsibility of man—and the foreknowledge and sovereignty of God. After Moses prays that the rain, hail and thunder cease, Pharaoh *“sinned yet more; and he hardened his heart, he and his servants. So the heart of Pharaoh was hard.”*

***Exodus 8:23.** *“And I shall set a ransom between My people [in Goshen] and your people.”* (Robert Alter Translation; see also NASB margin). The word “ransom” is often translated here as “difference”—but everywhere else in the Bible the root means “to ransom, to redeem, to rescue from danger”. It is in the last sentence of Psalm 25—*“Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.”* Israel would learn that God was already redeeming him out of his troubles...and, through the work of his Messiah would eventually redeem not only Israel but all peoples from the bondage of sin.

***Isaiah 66:2b, 5a.** *“But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word...Hear the word of the LORD, you who tremble [Hebrew: haridim] at His word...”* Ultra-Orthodox Jews are often called by the name “*Haridim*”, taken from these verses and meaning, “those who tremble, and are fearful at His word.” Yet, for their great zeal, many live in a world of spiritual darkness, laced with occult practices (The men dress in black to revere old rabbis of a past century). Binding them in that darkness is an anti-Messiah (anti-Christ) spirit, which does all in its power to keep them from coming into a knowledge of the true Word—That which was in the beginning with God, which was God, and which was the Light of the World. **PLEASE PRAY** that true revelation regarding the fear of the Lord would extend to these sons and daughters of Jacob—that the *“true light that gives light to every man”* (John 1:9) would shine into their darkness, revealing the Love offered by the Father in His Son. Pray that their ears will be open to *“Hear the Word of the LORD”—the Living Word which was In the Beginning, One with the Father.*

***Isaiah 66:22-23.** *“‘For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me,’ says the LORD, ‘So shall your descendants and your name remain. And it shall come to pass that from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me,’ says the LORD.”*



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[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week, *Bo* (“Come”—in to Pharaoh) will be: TORAH: Exodus 10:1—13:16; HAFTARAH: Jeremiah 46:13-28]

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