

Prayer Update From Israel (October 13, 2014)



Sukkas outside restaurants in Jerusalem, in which customers may eat their meals.

SUKKOT (“FEAST OF TABERNACLES”) CONTINUES THROUGH WEDNESDAY 15 OCTOBER, FOLLOWED BY THE EIGHTH-DAY SABBATH AND “SIMCHAT TORAH”. THIS WEEKEND BEGINS A NEW CYCLE OF TORAH READINGS.

1. RAIN WEDNESDAY EVENING ON THE EVE OF SUKKOT!

“Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving; Sing praises on the harp to our God, Who covers the heavens with clouds, Who prepares rain for the earth, Who makes grass to grow on the mountains” (Psalm 147:7-8).

“May my teaching drop as the rain, my speech distill as the dew, like gentle rain upon the tender grass, and like showers upon the herb. For I will proclaim the name of YHVH; ascribe greatness to our God! The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he (Deuteronomy 32:2 ESV)

It is usually dry in Israel from early May until mid- or late-October, and during *Sukkot* it is traditional (especially on the last day of the Festival) to pray for soon and abundant rain. (The so-called “former rains” begin in the fall in Israel; the “latter rains” in the spring.)

Last Wednesday evening, as families, some in their sukkas, were settling down to their Erev-Sukkot meals, it began to blow in Jerusalem and down came the rains! Some rain had been forecast for parts of Israel, but the rains covering the entire country surprised the

meteorologists. The next morning there were pictures of rainbows from Haifa in the North to Eilat far to the south. In most places the rains were not heavy—but it is the first time in many years that rains began on the opening of the Feast of Tabernacles. We thank our merciful Lord for this blessing!

PLEASE JOIN US in thanking the LORD for this blessings and in praying for a strong rainy season in Israel during the year which before us.

2. TABERNACLES FLOW FROM THE NATIONS.

We are thrilled with the strong flow of peoples from so many nations visiting Israel during the fall feasts. As with last year, particularly strong have been the large groups from Asia—China, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, Indonesia—who came to pray, praise, intercede and in some cases give generously and sacrificially to the financial needs of the Body of Messiah in our land.

PLEASE PRAY: *that the praises, thanksgiving, worship and intercession from the Nations which are being released through the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem and throughout Israel during these weeks would be protected, fueled by the Holy Spirit, and bring God glory. Pray that blessing and prosperity and revelation and discernment would follow all those whom God has brought to be with us as they finish their visit and return to labor on behalf of His holy purposes in their own nations.*

3. SIMCHAT TORAH!—“THE JOY OF TORAH!”

(Beginning Wednesday night 15 October in Israel—Thursday evening 16th October in other nations)

Torah:

Deuteronomy 33:1—34:12

Genesis 1:1—2:3

Haftarah:

Joshua 1:1—18

Simchat Torah is the joyous day on which the year-long weekly readings through the five Books of Moses are concluded. It begins in Israel on the evening preceding the eighth day of Sukkot, that last day which, like the first, is to be observed as a day of rest, a “Shabbat” (Leviticus: 23:34-36; 39). Outside of Israel *Simchat Torah* is celebrated on the following ninth day (beginning on the evening of the eighth). There is great rejoicing in the synagogues and messianic congregations during this celebration, with song, proclamations, and dancing with the Torah scrolls which have been taken out of their “arks”. ***For this final Torah Reading the poignant last two chapters of Deuteronomy are read. Then the Scroll is rolled back to the beginning—the book of Beresheet... “In the Beginning”—and as Chapter One and the first three verses of Chapter Two of Genesis are read, the cycle begins anew!*** Finally, the closing *Haftarah* carries the story on after the death of Moses through the ***first chapter of the Book of***

Joshua. A new generation of Israelites is poised to enter the Land and their leader is charged by the LORD:

Chazak v'Ematz Me'od!—“Be Strong and very Courageous...that you may observe to do according to all the “torah” which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. This Book of the Torah shall not depart from your mouth but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous and then you will have good success (“act with godly insight”). Have I not commanded you? Chazak v'Ematz!—Be strong and of good courage! Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for YHVH your God is with you wherever you go! (Joshua 1:7-9).

The word torah means a “direction” or “teaching” (Young’s Concordance). Many heavenly “directions and teachings” were released through the Hebrews as the “oracles of God” (Romans 3:2), and their love for and attentiveness to them is reflected in the Psalms: “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly...but his delight is in the torah of YHVH—the LORD” (Psalm 1:1-2); “The torah of YHVH is perfect, converting the soul” (Psalm 13:7); “The mouth of the righteous speaks wisdom, and his tongue talks of justice. The torah of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide” (Psalm 37:30-31). In Psalm 119 alone the LORD’s torah is mentioned at least 25 times!

“THE Torah” usually refers to that “direction and teaching” chronicled by Moses in the first five books of the Bible, sometimes referred to in English as the “Law of Moses.” Although “law” can be a legitimate translation for the word torah, certain perspectives and teachings on “The Law” have resulted in error amongst both Jews and Gentile Christians. **There is error in believing that an attempt to keep all of the directives in The Torah will make a person righteous and atone for his sin.** The Torah itself teaches that God Himself ultimately must provide atonement for His people (Deuteronomy 32:43). Rather than focusing on following rules, His people are to “choose life” in loving and obeying and clinging to Him (Deut. 30:19-20). By faith Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness (Gen. 15:6) by the “Righteousness-God” (Psalm 4:1).

Yet for many evangelical Christians “The Law” or “The Torah” have become negative expressions because of instruction which seems to imply that because of the work of Messiah, the teachings within the Torah do not even pertain to us anymore. This also contains error. Many of the types and ceremonies and rituals and sacrifices necessary for Israel to walk in fellowship with her God were indeed fulfilled and superseded by the work of Yeshua the Messiah. But the directions and teachings of the Law of Moses regarding the nature of God and of Humankind, of sin, of God’s desire to dwell with us, of His promises to the Fathers, remain as relevant today in knowing the Father and His Son as they ever were. ***The Torah is filled with our Lord Yeshua (Jesus).*** It is an essential part of the Scriptures “*which testify of Him*” (John 5:39); “*For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me*” (John 5:46); “*And beginning at Moses...He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself*” (Luke 24:27); “*There are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Torah of Moses...concerning Me...And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures*” (Luke 24:44-45).

Please pray that Jews who this week genuinely rejoice in The Torah will be moved by the Holy Spirit to read more of its teaching themselves (unaided by their commentaries), that they would humble themselves to ask God to interpret as they read and to reveal to them His truth and salvation.

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.

18 October 2014

A NEW CYCLE BEGINS!



In the Beginning God . . .

This weekend the cycle through the Torah begins anew. This first reading is called *B'reshet*—“*In the Beginning*”.

TORAH: Genesis 1:1—6:8

HAFTARAH: Isaiah 42:5—43:10

TORAH

***Genesis 1:1-5.** *“In the beginning Elohim (English: God) created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then Elohim said, “Let there be light; and there was light. And Elohim saw the light, that it was good; and Elohim divided the light from the darkness. Elohim called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.”*

As we open to the first chapter of this God-breathed (II Timothy 3:16) book, *GOD* is simply *there*--creating. The *SPIRIT* of God is there (vs 2). And as God speaks, His living *WORD* is there (Vs 3; John 1:1). *Elohim* is a Hebrew word translated into English *God*. It is a plural word—yet when used of the Hebrew God it is always treated with a singular verb.

***Genesis 1:3.** *“God said: ‘Let there be light!’ And there was light.”* The Scriptures do not say that God “created” light (God Himself *is* light, I John 1:5). Rather, He spoke it forth—“*Be light!*”—and it was released into His creation! John 1:1-9 speaks of Yeshua as being God’s Word, in whom was life “*which is the light for men*”.

There are a number of words used for God’s actions during these early “beginnings” chapters: *creating* (from nothing that is seen, Hebrews 11:3); *making*; *building*; *fashioning* or *shaping* (out of something already created); *working* (Interestingly, for bringing into being the “adam” (man) in His image, both the acts of *creating* and *fashioning* are used (Genesis 1:2, 2:7).

***Genesis 1:5.** *“And there was evening and there was morning, one day.”* Today, in Israel all days for religious observance (such as the Sabbath or feast days) are reckoned from sundown the evening before rather than sunrise.

***Genesis 2:3.** *“And on the seventh day Elohim ended His creative work which He had done, and He ceased on the seventh day from all His creative work which He had done. Then Elohim blessed the seventh day and sanctified it* (Hebrew: “*made it holy*”), *because in it He ceased from all His creative work which Elohim had created and made*”. It is significant that the first place in Scripture in which we see God making something “holy” or “set apart” is here in relation to the seventh day of the week when He *shabbat*—“ceased working”.

***Genesis 1:27.** *“So God created man in His image, in the image of Elohim He created him; masculine and feminine He created them.”* “Man” in Hebrew is *adam*. In Genesis 2:7, we are shown that Elohim formed the *adam* out of *adamah* (earth—which, in turn, is *adomah*—“reddish in color”). The modern-day Hebrew term for “human being” is still *benei-adam*—“son (or child) of adam.” From this passage it is clear that God, although always referred to in the masculine gender, bears, nevertheless, within His nature both the masculine and feminine which is transferred into the nature of those created “in His image”.

By the end of Chapter 3 that image is marred and what had received the breath of life is, because of sin, already dying. In 4:1 the man and woman have begun to reproduce, and realize that their Creator and the One through whom this new life comes has a name, YHVH (*Yehovah*, “The LORD”). Their sons bring offerings to this YHVH (4:3); yet it will be many generations before

Humankind comes to know and use that Name in a personal and intimate sense (Exodus 3:15b; 6:2-3).

In Genesis 4:8 murder is committed, and Abel, a good man whose sacrifice pleased God, becomes the first man to die. It is interesting that Abel's name in the Hebrew is spelled the same as the Hebrew word for "vapor" or "vanity" (This word both begins and permeates the book of *Ecclesiastes* which we have been reading during the feast of Sukkot.). Life is but a vapor which is here and passes away, and the life of Abel the good and that of Cain the wicked are both temporary.

***Genesis 4:26.** *"And as for Seth, to him also a son was born; and he named him Ehnoshe."*

It was perhaps with an awareness of the death of his brother Abel, as well as of the sin-sickness obviously at work in his eldest brother Cain that Seth chose to name his first son *Ehnoshe*. *Ehnoshe* is often translated into English "man" (Psalm 8:4, *"What is man (ehnoshe) that You are mindful of him, and the son of man (ben-adam) that you visit him?"*). But the word more literally means "mortal". Just as English "mortal" has to do with that in man which dies ("mortuary" is related to that word), so *ehnoshe* has within it a reference to the fallen effect of sin in the children of Adam. *Ehnushe*, a word using the same Hebrew letters, appears in Jeremiah 17:9 where it says that the heart is deceitful above all things and *"desperately wicked"* (NJKV), *"desperately sick"* (ESV and NAS), *"beyond cure"* (NIV).

By Genesis 6 the earth is corrupted through sinful man in conjunction with rebellious angelic beings. *"Then YHVH saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually...So YHVH said, 'I will destroy the man (Hebrew: the adam) whom I have created from the face of the earth (Hebrew: the adamah).'* ***But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD"*** (6:5,7a, 8). To *"find grace in the eyes of"* is an expression which is still common in modern Hebrew, meaning *"to bring pleasure to."*

PLEASE PRAY: that today when, "as it was in the days of Noah" (Matthew 24:37), we are faced with a rapidly rising darkness of evil on the earth, there will arise also not one but a multitude of latter-day "Noah's"---who will bring pleasure to their LORD, who will "walk with God", who will *"find grace in His eyes."* The English translation of a popular Hebrew worship song, written some years back by an Israeli teenager read:

Come Spirit, Come Spirit, Come today/The Desire of my heart is to find grace in your eyes/The desire of my soul is to be more like you/Come God, Dwell within me, Make me pure/Focus my eyes on what pleases You that I may be devoted to You

--Boi Ruakh. ©2004 by Keren

Seguin

HAFTARAH

****Isaiah 42:5-7. “Thus says God the LORD, Who created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it, Who gives breath to the people on it, and spirit to those who walk on it: ‘I, YHVH, have called you in righteousness, and will hold your hand; I will keep you and give you as a covenant to the people, as a light to the Gentiles, to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the prison, those who sit in darkness from the prison house.’”***

****Isaiah 43:1-3b. “But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, O Jacob, and He who formed you, O Israel: ‘Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; You are Mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you. For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.’”***

****Isaiah 43:5-7. “Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your descendants from the east, and gather you from the west; I will say to the north, ‘Give them up!’ and to the south, ‘Do not keep them back!’ Bring my sons from afar, and my daughters from the ends of the earth—everyone who is called by My name, whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him.’”***

****Isaiah 43:10. “‘You are my witnesses,’ says the LORD, ‘and my servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe Me, and understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, nor shall there be after Me.’”***



**Martin and Norma Sarvis
Jerusalem**

[The readings for next week (19-25 October) are called *Noach*—“Noah”. TORAH: Genesis 6:9—11:32; HAFTARAH: Isaiah 54:1—55:5; *Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan* (the Eighth Month): Numbers 28:9-15, Isaiah 66:1-24]

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