

PRAYER UPDATE FROM ISRAEL (November 30, 2010)



1. HANUKKAH BEGINS WEDNESDAY EVENING

Hanukkah is the Hebrew word for “dedication”. The eight-day Jewish celebration bearing that name (it is also called the *Festival of Lights*) remembers the dedication of the Temple in Jerusalem after it had been recovered by the Jewish forces of Yehuda Maccabee in 164 BC. The Syrian king Antiochus IV Epiphanes (a fore-runner of the Anti-Christ, foretold in Daniel 11:21), seeking to coerce Jews into abandoning their religion and culture for that of Greece, had issued edicts forbidding circumcision, observance of Jewish Sabbaths and feast-days. He had defiled the Holy Temple by offering a sow on the altar and raising up in the Sanctuary a statue to Zeus. As depicted in the First Book of *Maccabees* (an account of Jewish history found in the Apocrypha), a revolt was launched by the priest Mattathias and later led by his son Yehuda (Judas) Maccabee. It led to the defeat of the Syrian forces, and the defiled Temple was cleansed and re-dedicated. Another account relates how during this cleansing there was only enough sanctified oil left to burn in the menorah for one night—yet a miracle occurred and it continued burning for eight days. The victorious warrior Yehuda ordained “*that the days of the dedication of the altar should be kept in their season from year to year by the space of eight days, from the five and twentieth day of the month of Kislev, with mirth and gladness*” (I Maccabees 4:59). Today, part of the celebration includes the use of a special eight-branched menorah upon which a new oil lamp or candle is lit each evening. Each light is ignited from the flame of a separate “branch” called *shamash*—“servant”.

Remarkably, the Haftarah reading for this Saturday within Hanukkah, besides containing, as might be expected, a menorah (see Torah section below), also includes the following words, “*Behold, I am bringing forth My Servant the BRANCH.*” Although a different word for servant is used here, there is no doubt that it refers to the Servant-Messiah, sent by the Father—the Light Inextinguishable, who illumines all coming into the world (John 1:9).

Hanukkah—the Feast of Dedication—the Festival of Lights—is a season for

*Allowing the Holy Light of the Spirit to shine within ourselves, revealing any idolatry or uncleanness which may have defiled our bodies (which are the Temple of the Holy Spirit) and removing it.

*For surrendering our selves anew to the infilling of the Holy Spirit from an inexhaustible supply.

*For letting our “lights” shine brightly in the darkness—reaching out and joining with those of other believers. A popular Israeli Hebrew Children’s song for Hanukkah is called *BANU HOSHEKH L’GARESH* (“We have come to drive out darkness”):

*We have come to drive out darkness, in our hands light and fire:
Each of us is a small light, but together we are a strong, steady light.
Flee Darkness in the Blackness—Flee before the Light!*

2. ANNUAL HANUKKAH YOUTH CONFERENCE

This coming Sunday December 7th begins the annual two-and-a-half day Katzir (Harvest) Hanukkah Youth Conference. This gathering for worship and prayer, teaching, small-group discussion and group recreation is now completely indigenous. Over 100 Israeli teens will come together from around Israel. The leaders are mostly young Israeli adults who were once involved in these conferences during their teens, have now come through the military and into their higher education or careers—yet have a desire to help and bless those coming behind!

The theme this year is “*Go After Him*”

PLEASE PRAY:

**For the speakers to share exactly what the Spirit is desiring to say to the youth of Israel at this time.*

**For the young adult leaders who lead and speak into the lives of these youth, for love and authority and unity in the Holy Spirit, wisdom, and patience; and that they also be edified as they minister in this important way to those rising up behind them.*

**For lives to be changed so that the teens attending develop an ever deepening relationship with the God and Messiah of Israel.*

**For God’s angels to protect this conference/retreat from interference by the enemy—and for protection as the young people return to their homes.*

**For the Holy Spirit to bring what has been released during the Conference to life in these teens after they return to their schools.*

3. DRIEST NOVEMBER IN 48 YEARS

I will make them and the places all around My hill a blessing; and I will cause showers to come down in their season; there shall be showers of blessing. Then the trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase. They shall be safe in their land; and they shall know that I am YHVH, when I have broken the bands of their yoke and delivered them from the hand of those who enslaved them (Ezekiel 34:26-27).

We requested prayer for rain in last week’s *Update*. We are in the 7th year of near-drought conditions. Sunday the Knesset began discussing an emergency water plan to take the country through the next two years. Today marks the end of the driest November in 48 years...and the Sea of Galilee received the least water since records began being kept in 1927. The lake is

currently 107 centimeters lower than the “red line” which marks danger...and only 80 centimeters above the much more dire “black line”. Monday the Chief Rabbis called yet another day for fasting and repentance for sin and prayers. Our water bills this week had an insert requesting that people use wipes instead of washing their hands with water. Prayers were also said in many of the religious schools. Barring divine intervention no rain is expected for at least a week, perhaps two when a winter front making its way across Europe is expected to arrive. At present it is difficult to find butter in the stores, and the quality of the olive harvest has been affected because of the lack of extractible oil.

PLEASE CONTINUE TO PRAY:

**That Israel will begin to take notice that we are going through a time which can only be altered by reaching out to God.*

**For awakened awareness of and response to the goodness of God which leads to repentance (Romans 2:4), that we can know how to pray and what needs to be changed so that He may answer our prayers.*

**For wisdom and prudence on the part of our leaders as to what measures need to be taken to conserve the water which we have—and for humility and obedience on the part of citizens in implementing what may be difficult measures.*

**That citizens of Israel to come to a place that God may release the Showers of Blessings He desires on His people and land.*

4. AMISH COMMUNITY ASKS FORGIVENESS OF JEWS AT WESTERN WALL.

Saturday night representatives from the Amish communities of the United States and Switzerland arrived at the Western Wall in Jerusalem to ask forgiveness of the Jewish people for members of their group’s silence during the Nazi extermination of Jews during the Holocaust. To do this, the group went against their normal policy of eschewing modern means of transportation—flying to the Holy Land. They met with the Rabbi of the Western Wall and Holy sites, presenting a parchment requesting forgiveness on behalf of the entire Amish community. They stressed that they were here neither to receive any sort of gesture from the Jewish people nor to proselytize, but only to voice contrition and their support for Israel which they feel they haven’t done in the past. They gave a commitment to loudly voice their support for Jewish people in the future—especially in the wake of the hatred expressed so loudly by such voices as that of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinijad.

The Bible teaches that in latter days Jerusalem and Israel are going to become a stone of stumbling and a dividing line in the earth. The line will cut through nations, regions, cities, ideologies and even within different streams and divisions of the Christian Church. Some will be revealed as sheep and some goats.

PLEASE PRAY:

**That where there is hidden racism and anti-Semitism within the Body of Messiah, it will be exposed by the Holy Spirit and a path of cleansing and restoration take place.*

**For the Holy Spirit to release new direction for members of the Amish community worldwide—that following this move He grant them more of His heart for Zion and the people He is bringing back there. That obedience in this move will open up the way for new revelation in other areas of their relation to their Savior.*

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 *Miketz* (“At the end”):

TORAH: Genesis 41:1—44:17

HAFTARAH (Hanukkah): Zechariah 2:14—4:7

***Genesis 41:1; 15-16.** *“Then it came to pass, at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh had a dream...And Pharaoh said to Joseph, ‘I have had a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it. But I have heard it said of you that you can understand a dream, to interpret it.’ So Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, ‘It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer of shalom.’”*

PLEASE PRAY: *That the LORD release dreams into our secular leaders—which can only be interpreted by those whom He has prepared. Pray that the Lord raise up young men and women who will be filled with His Spirit, and who will be able supernaturally (in this rationalistic age) to give our Prime Minister and other leaders “an answer of Shalom.”*

***Zechariah 3:2.** *“And the LORD said to Satan, ‘The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?’”*

Revelation 12:11 points to a time when the Accuser will be overcome “*by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.*” We infer from this Zechariah passage that part of that “word of testimony” may include a linking of the name of the LORD with *his choosing of Jerusalem*. An acknowledgment and confession of the LORD's covenant link with Jerusalem will release a power to silence the Accuser in the last days!



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[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week 5-11 December *Way'yiggash* (“came near”) will be TORAH: Genesis 44:18—47:27; HAFTARAH: Ezekiel 37:15-28]