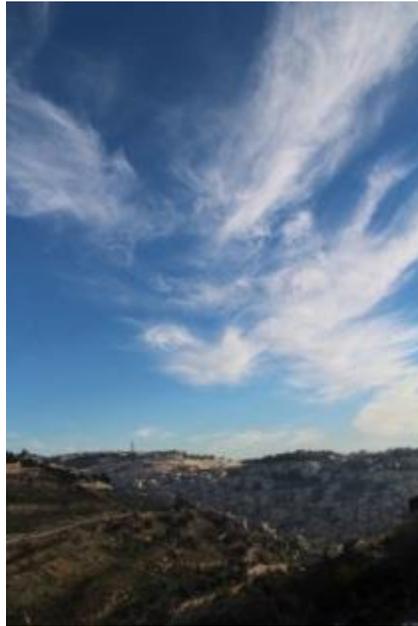


Prayer Update From Israel (December 14, 2015)



Cloud activity last week in the heavens over the Mount of Olives

1. ISRAEL'S NEW HEAD OF MOSSAD: *"WITHOUT HEAVENLY AID, ISRAEL WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED."*

"By the God of your father who will help you, and by the Almighty who will bless you with blessings of heaven above...." (Genesis 49:25; from the blessing of Jacob over Joseph near the end of his life.)

"There is no one like the God of Yeshurun ("Upright One"; i.e. Israel) Who rides the heavens to help you...." (Deuteronomy 33:26; from the blessing of Moses over Israel near the end of his life.)

Last Monday Prime Minister Netanyahu's national security adviser Yossi Cohen was named as the next head of the Mossad, Israel's national intelligence agency. The word *mossad* means "institute;" capitalized, it is short for "Institute for Intelligence and Special Operations", a primary entity (along with *Aman* and *Shin Bet*) in the Israeli Intelligence Community. *Wikipedia* lists Mossad's responsibilities as *"intelligence collection, covert operations, and counterterrorism, as well as bringing Jews to Israel from countries where official Aliyah agencies are forbidden, and protecting Jewish communities."* But of course, operations of such an organization can only publically be described in the most general of terms. (Until recent years, the very identity of the Head of Mossad was kept secret from the public.) Cohen, 54, will assume the position when the present leader's term expires at the end of January. Since joining Mossad some 32 years ago, he has served in a variety of positions, including head of its branch in Europe. Between 2011 and 2013, he was deputy head of the organization. His office is answerable directly to the Prime Minister. In appointing Cohen, Mr. Netanyahu spoke of

Mossad: “An operational agency, an intelligence agency, also ‘an agency that frequently paves the way to diplomatic relations, especially with countries with which we do not have official ties...They operate with exceptional daring and great imagination, at times at personal risk. They do this in order to ensure the security of Israel in the face of terrorist threats, the Iranian threat and additional threats... Yossi...has a wealth of experience and achievements, as well as proven abilities in the various aspects of Mossad activity. He has leadership skills and a professional understanding, which are both necessary for one who is to lead the organization.’” 1)



Yossi Cohen (Photo “Flash 90”)

Yossi Cohen lives with his wife and four children in Modi’in (the town, incidentally, from which sprang the Maccabee rebellion, celebrated this past week of Hanukkah). Although he does not wear the outward clothing which would identify him as ‘religious’, Cohen is known to be observant and to regularly attend his local synagogue. In fact, following the news of his appointment, he was asked to speak there during the Shabbat service this past weekend. In his address to a filled house, he emphasized how without Heavenly aid, the state of Israel would not have been established, adding, *“It was true then, and today too, we need help from Heaven.”* He quoted also Proverbs 11:14, a verse which has been taken as a slogan for Mossad, *“Where there is no wise direction, a people fails; but in the multitude of counselors there is safety.”* Commenting later on Cohen’s talk, one congregant spoke of how *“everyone listened intently to his Biblical exegesis, he is a very impressive man. All the time he used hints to connect the weekly Torah portion with his position at the Mossad. It was very unique.”* 2)

Only God knows the heart of Yossi Cohen, whether at present it truly seeks to be directed towards Him. But to publically acknowledge the need for assistance from “On High” is today a relatively rare gesture by a secular state official upon being appointed to a high position in the land. (His quote about “heavenly aid” being foundational in the establishment of Israel also received a sub-headline in the Hebrew newspaper *Yidiot Acharonot*.) Yet God has promised not to extinguish the very least smoke of fire in the flax (Isaiah 42:3); and there are frequent accounts in the Hebrew Scriptures of His responding graciously with deliverance to leaders who publically acknowledged their and their nation’s need of Him. Within the area of Israel’s national security (such as that within which Cohen will be operating), with oversight of

intelligence missions often involving secrecy and great danger, we also have records of brave men and women who entrusted themselves to the God of Heaven. For instance, the two spies, Joshua and Caleb, sent by Moses to scout out Canaan (Numbers 14:7-9); the two men forty years later sent by Joshua into Jericho to gather intelligence before the battle; Rahab, a woman of faith and a Gentile, who hid them (Joshua 2; Hebrews 11:31); the spies sent out by David, 400 years later still, when he was being pursued in the desert by Saul (I Samuel 26:4).

We must remember that we are referring here to leadership of a critical component of an “*army of Israel*.” David, facing Goliath, spoke of *YHVH of Armies, God of the Armies of Israel*. Israel has been and continues to be gathered back into her ancient homeland. She was reborn in battle, and has been required to maintain a strong military stance since that rebirth in order to survive. Most of this army still does not know their true Commander (Joshua 5:13-15)—they are not yet a ‘godly army’. But we believe that YHVH continues nevertheless to be God of *this* Army of Israel (in addition to heavenly armies which war on her behalf). He is God of ALL the armies of His ancient people.

As we continue to mention often in these Updates, the title “God of the Armies of Israel” (I Samuel 17:45) is in Hebrew *Elohei Ma’arkhot Yisrael*. A more literal translation is “The Arraying-God of Israel.” A form of *ma’arkhot* was also used by David in Psalm 23, where the LORD “*prepares a table* for him in the presence of his enemies”—in other words, He “sets’ the table—putting everything in its place and into proper order at just the right time. But in a military setting, the word refers to God’s *arraying* of Israel’s armies—His positioning of each of its warriors in the place He has prepared for him or her, into the positions they themselves are most able at that moment to fill adroitly and with valor. We trust this to be the case with Yosi Cohen, in his new position as head of the national intelligence agency for Israel.

PLEASE PRAY:

- * For Yosi Cohen, that he will fulfill his new critical post with integrity, wisdom and courage.**
- * That he will be moved by the Spirit of God to realize Who it is who has “arrayed” him into this new position.**
- * That even as he testified in the Synagogue that help comes from Heaven, he will seek the face of the God of his fathers for guidance, a “very present Help in time of trouble”. That like Joshua, he will come face to face with the One who is the true *Captain of the Army of YHVH* (Joshua 5:13-15).**
- * That as he heads a security organization which is required to operate so much in secret—he will, like Daniel, become aware that “*there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets*”—who “*gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. He reveals deep and secret things; He knows what lies in darkness and light dwells with Him*” (Daniel 2:28, 21b-22).**
- * For physical and spiritual protection for Yosi, his wife and four children.**

1) “Yossi Cohen named next Mossad chief”: *Arutz Sheva*; 12/7/2015 11:29 PM.

2) “New Mossad chief: Israel still needs God’s help”: *Arutz Sheva*; 12/12/2015 7:35 PM.

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 13-19 December are called *VaYiggash*—“And He [Judah] Drew Near”:

TORAH: Genesis 44:18—47:27

HAFTARAH: Ezekiel 37:15-28

***Genesis 44:18; 46:28.** “*Then he [Judah] drew near to him [Joseph]...*” There is no question that the story of Joseph and his brothers provides a prophetic picture of Yeshua/Jesus and His “own” (i.e. the Hebrew people) who rejected Him—but to whom He will one day be revealed as “risen from the dead” to provide salvation. In a special way He continues to love them with an everlasting love and to “draw” them with loving kindness (Jeremiah 31:3). In His grace, many are already “drawing near” to God, confessing their sin and inadequacy as did the brothers. At the close of last week’s Portion Judah confessed: “**What shall we say to my Lord? What shall we speak? How can we make ourselves righteous? God has brought out the iniquity of your servants!**”. As they do so, Yeshua, like Joseph, miraculously reveals Himself to them! (Zechariah 2:9, 11) And this picture of His kindness, His salvation for Israel is itself a portrait of the same love and righteousness He offers on behalf of all humankind!

PLEASE PRAY: for more and more in Israel to be led in God’s kindness to repentance and to respond to His call to “draw near.”

***Genesis 44:20, 30-34.** “*We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, who is young; his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother’s children, and his father loves him.’... ‘Now, therefore, when I come to your servant my father, and the lad is not with us, since his life is bound up in the lad’s life, it will happen, when he sees that the lad is not with*

us, that he will die. So your servants will bring down the gray hair of your servant our father with sorrow to the grave.’”

Twenty-two years earlier, the jealousy and hatred in their hearts towards Joseph had calloused the hearts of the brothers towards their father’s feelings to the extent that they greatly dishonored Jacob when they abused the son he loved. “It is the Lord’s mercies which lead us to repentance.” We see now how a genuine respectful, familial tenderness has at last been awakened towards the feelings of their Father. Malachi 4:5-6 tells of a day when God’s prophetic word will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, before the coming of the “great and dreadful day of the LORD.”

***Genesis 46:28.** *“Then he (Jacob) sent Judah before him to Joseph, to point out before him the way to Goshen. And they came to the land of Goshen.”* Beginning in Chapter 43 and more strongly emphasized here, the mantle of leadership shifts from Reuben to Judah. From here on, a special precedence will be given to this tribe—**“Judah goes first”!** From Jacob’s blessing regarding a scepter of royalty (Gen. 49:8); to leadership of the armies marching towards Canaan (Numbers 10:14); to the securing of the land in the time of the Judges (Judges 1:2), to the Kingship of David; to the birth of the Messiah in the City of David; to Zechariah’s prophecy of the Last Days when *“The LORD will take possession of Judah as His inheritance in the Holy Land, and will again choose Jerusalem”* but *“will save the tents of Judah first, so that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem shall not become greater than that of Judah”* (Zechariah 2:12; 12:7)—God has chosen that this tribe shall lead (See also I Chronicles 5:2).

There is much of significance which may be drawn from this...but perhaps the most immediate point would be related to the name itself, **Yehudah** (Judah), given by Leah at his birth (Genesis 29:35). The word means *“Thankful praise expressed by the raising of the hands”*.

PLEASE PRAY: for a fresh awakening of thanksgiving and praise amongst the Body in Israel, with an awareness that this must come first (II Chron. 20:21-22). It is such thankful praise which will lead Israel into victories and into the true place of her inheritance in Messiah. Pray that the Lord will indeed *“take possession of praise”* in the Holy Land (Zechariah 2:12), that it will be released to His glory in Spirit and in Truth.

***Ezekiel 37:21-23.** *“Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again. They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will purify them. Then they shall be My people, and I will be their God.”*

PLEASE PRAY: that the Spirit who ‘convicts of sin and righteousness and judgment’ would be poured out on Israel in increasing measure, bringing her to a place where God can reveal the

Purification which has been prepared for her—so that Israel may indeed dwell in his land of covenant forever (vs. 25).

***Ezekiel 37:21-22.** *“I will...bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again”* (Emphases ours).

It is plain that God still sees the Land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob’s seed forever as being “their own land.” The “mountains of Israel” refers to that same area currently labeled the “West Bank” and slated by much of the world to be split off, forming “two nations side by side” each with its own leader. From these two verses, it is clear that such a “two–state” solution made up of two nations and with two different leaders is not, nor will ever be God’s plan. Only He can bring divided Israel back and make them *one nation* in this same section of His land in which the promises in Shechem, Bethel and Hebron were made. Hence, the huge warfare already raging and which will continue until Israel comes into relation with her God, the final battle is won, and God’s Kingdom is established there (Ezekiel 38-39).

PLEASE PRAY: That God’s kingdom come in the returning Children of Israel and in the Mountains of Israel—Judea, Jerusalem and Samaria. Pray for a renewed sense of stewardship of Jews in Israel regarding all which God says is “their own land”—and an awareness of Who must be trusted to bring it to pass if it is never to be divided into two kingdoms again.

***Ezekiel 37:24-25.** *“David My servant shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd...My servant David shall be their prince forever.”* Evangelical Christianity often sees this “David” as Yeshua/Jesus, the spiritual and physical descendant of the David anointed by Samuel. Yeshua will certainly reign (Psalm 2) from His throne in Jerusalem as King of Kings. As verse 28 here states, *“the nations also will know that I, YHVH, make Israel holy, when my holy place is in their midst forevermore.”* However, in Hebrew tradition (and today among many Messianic believers in the land), it is assumed that this passage indeed refers to a resurrected David, the “shepherd king” son of Jesse (It is of interest that the “Prince” who begins to be mentioned in Ezekiel 45:7 and who ministers in the midst of the mysterious Temple described there is designated with the same Hebrew word *nasi* as the word for “prince” here. David’s often stated desire had been that he might “dwell in the house of the YHVH forever.”).

PLEASE PRAY: That God’s government comes into place in this land. Both in the near and in the distant future, may *His Kingdom Come!*



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Jerusalem

[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week 20-26 December 2015: *VaYechi*—“And He [Jacob] Lived” will be: TORAH: Genesis 47:28—50:26; HAFTARAH: I Kings 2:1-12]

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