

Prayer Update From Israel (February 20, 2011)



Mount Zion clothed in green!

“You shed abroad a plentiful rain, O God; You confirmed Your inheritance when it was parched” (Psalm 68:9).

We continue to give thanks for the abundant rains. The Sea of Galilee has risen over 1.4 meters already this season; it went up 19 cm (a little over half a foot) this weekend alone. It needs 3.86 meters to reach its optimum level—but if the rains continue, and with the spring thaw of the record snows presently on the mountains north of the lake, it is possible that that might be reached. Let us continue to pray to that end!

1. CYPRUS AND ISRAEL—A TIME OF REALIGNING

“When we had put to sea from there, we sailed under the shelter of Cyprus, because the winds were contrary” (Acts 27:4).

This past Thursday history was made when Benjamin Netanyahu became the first Israeli Prime Minister since the founding of modern Israel to visit the nearby (30-minute flight) island of Cyprus. He traveled with 20 high-level government officials and conferred with Cypriot President Demetris Christofias and others in the recognized government.

This visit reflects the huge shifts recently taking place in this region. Five years ago Cyprus would have been considered among the countries in the Mediterranean least friendly towards Israel. Nor were relations with Greece, with which she is closely aligned, much better. At that time Israel had strong ties with Turkey, which has occupied northern Cyprus since 1974. Relations between Greece and Turkey continue, as in both ancient and modern times, to be, when not openly hostile, tenuous at best. Now much has changed:

*A shifting of alliances. Turkey, under its religious leader Recep Erdogan, has estranged itself from Israel. One observation which is being made by many analysts is that having lost Turkey as a staunch ally, Israel is counterbalancing the situation by forming closer relations with Greece and Cyprus, as well as Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia.

*Greek relations with Israel have warmed. In the wake of the Turkish-led flotilla raid on Israel’s embargo of Gaza in 2010, the Greek Prime Minister made an official visit to Israel in

May, followed by a visit by Netanyahu to Greece in August of that year and joint air force exercises over Greece later that fall. The following year Greece effectively stopped a second “flotilla” from happening.

*Israel’s relations with Cyprus began to thaw. In the horrific forest fire on Mount Carmel in December 2010 the Cypriot Air Force sent a fire-extinguishing plane and helicopter to assist in putting it out. Cyprus also played a key role in thwarting a protest flotilla which wished to set sail for Gaza from its ports. Later in the summer, when arms confiscated from an Iranian vessel blew up and knocked out one of the country’s key power stations causing an enormous electrical shortage, Israel sent ten generators to the island to assist.

*Israel began discovering natural gas fields off its coast. Already seven wells have tested positive, and there may be many more in the basin. When this is harnessed, it could be used to generate enormous amounts of electricity, both for Israel’s use, and for export.

*Greece and Cyprus are proposing Israel partner with them in an initiative to lay an undersea cable connecting Israel, and Cyprus to Greece, through which electricity would be exported to Europe.

*Cyprus has also begun exploring for gas off of her coast—but has been strongly warned to stop by Turkey, who claims she has no rights to exploit the country’s natural resources, while excluding the Turkish-occupied region. In fact, Turkey scheduled a live-fire naval maneuver in the vicinity of the area Cyprus wishes to explore to coincide with Netanyahu’s visit—but in the event cancelled it.



This map (modified from Google Earth) shows the extent of the gas/oil-rich Levant Basin, with Israel and Lebanon bordering east, the island of Cyprus bordering north, and Turkey to the north and northeast.

So, what of the Netanyahu visit? Officially, the two leaders focused on ways for their countries to cooperate related to energy, signing an agreement to launch joint natural gas and oil exploration in their adjoining territorial waters. This will include investigations as to whether they could better export gas or electricity through Cyprus to Europe, or through Israel to Asia. There had been much advance speculation that Netanyahu would request Cyprus to allow Israel to station fighter jets at a military facility on the island—presumably to guard the Israeli drilling

fields (and perhaps Cypriot fields as well?). However, according to the leaders, this topic was not brought up in their talks. Although in the press conference President Christofias had several harsh things to say about Turkey, Netanyahu never mentioned that country once, perhaps thinking it prudent at this time to allow his visit to itself say all that was necessary.

PLEASE PRAY:

***That God’s grace and protection will be over His redemptive purposes for the eastern Mediterranean Sea. That He would govern the release of the resources beneath the waves there.**

***That the alliance between Cyprus and Israel would grow and be strengthened in a true and honorable way. That the two countries would be mutually blessed in what they do together. That like David and Jonathan, they would be wise, discerning and responsible in whatever lengths to which they may need to go to prove their trust...and if need be, to protect each other.**

***That the Lord would be a wall of fire around Cyprus.**

***For believers on Cyprus to be knit together in understanding and praying into the issues related to their land, as well as its relation to Israel. We know of one thriving ministry there which for years has trained students in discipleship, prophetic worship, intercession, and their relation to their Jewish roots and to Israel.**

***For God’s redemptive purposes over the whole Island, both the Greek and the Turkish Cypriots. For salvation to be released to all of the Island, as it was in the time of the Book of Acts.**

***For Turkey. President Erdogan is not well, and according to a Cypriot news story is on his way to receive medical treatment in the US. Change could happen quickly. In the meanwhile, we would pray that Turkey will not act on its threats to come into open military confrontation with Cyprus—but were that to take place, that Israel will know how to respond. Pray that the growing number of prayer houses in Turkey (a number of them assisted in their birthing by emissaries from Israel) will multiply in that country—that they be equipped, encouraged and guided powerfully by the Holy Spirit in releasing arrows of praise, worship and intercession which will pierce the darkness, throw powers of darkness into confusion, and bring Turkey into a place of proper alignment with heaven and its neighbors.**

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 *T’ruma*—an Offering or Contribution (“*Speak unto the children of Israel to raise a contribution for Me*”).

TORAH: Exodus 25:1—27:19

HAFTARAH: I Kings 5:12—6:13

MISHKAN—DWELLING PLACE

The rest of the book of Exodus (except for the incident regarding the golden calf) will be related to the setting up of the “Tabernacle”. The Hebrew for this word is *mishkan*—which means “a dwelling place.” Its root *shakhan* is used in the modern Hebrew word for “neighbor”—someone who dwells nearby. God longs to *shokhen* with, to dwell—to neighbor closely with His people. The word is used in Exodus 25:8 when He instructs that a “holy place” (sanctuary) be constructed so that He may dwell within Israel. This would be the tent-covered Tabernacle used in the wilderness and in the days of the Judges. At the end of this week’s Haftarah (I Kings 6:13) Solomon, some 500 years later, has completed a Temple on Mount Moriah—and the same words are again repeated, “*And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake My people Israel.*” Around 440 years later still, a pre-incarnate Yeshua released these words two more times through the prophet Zechariah, “*Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion! For behold, I am coming and I will dwell in your midst. Many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and they shall become My people. And I will dwell in your midst. Then you will know that the LORD of Hosts has sent Me to you.*” (Zechariah 2:10-11).

Yet, “*the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands*” (Acts 7:48), and today, through the work of the Messiah Yeshua, His Body on earth is “*being built together for a dwelling place* (Hebrew translation: *mishkan*) *of God in the Spirit*” (Ephesian 2:22). Finally, John tells us of a day when a Voice from heaven will proclaim, “*Behold, the tabernacle* (Hebrew translation: *mishkan*) *of God is with the children of Adam, and He will dwell* (*shokhen*) *with them and they shall be His people. Elohim Himself will be with them and be their God*” (Revelation 21:3-4).

NOTES

***Exodus 25:2.** “*Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering. From everyone who gives it willingly with his heart you shall take My offering.*”

***Exodus 25:10.** “*And they shall make an ark of acacia wood...*” The word “ark” is *aron*, a word used today for a cabinet, closet or wardrobe (Noah’s “ark” and that of the baby Moses is a different word (*teva*), meaning ‘box’). This ark would later be called the “*Ark of the Testimony, --of the Covenant*”, “*--of God*”, and “*the Ark of YHVH* (the LORD)”.

***Exodus 25:13-15.** “*You shall cast four rings of gold for it [the Ark of the Covenant], and put them in its four corners...and you shall make poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold. You shall put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark, that the ark may be carried by them. The poles shall be in the rings of the ark; they shall not be taken from it.*” It is remarkable the lengths this passage goes to stress the importance of the poles and that they *stay* in the rings at all times! Yet by the time of David, this would have faded in significance in his mind to that of a minor, unimportant “detail”—even though he read the Torah continually and loved it. Tragedy would occur when he allowed the Ark to be carried a different way. It is crucial to employ the *whole* counsel of God; there are no details of His instructions which are more important than others. “*Thy Word O LORD is Truth!*”

We would also stress here that ALL of the articles of the Tabernacle were essential in the completion of the perfection of the whole—whether the beautiful golden menorah, the cherubim, the beautifully embroidered inner curtains, or the more homely boards for the sides, the skins over the top, the instruments of bronze such as the “*pans to receive the ashes, the shovels and its basins and its forks and its firepans*” (27:3). So with those making up the Body of Messiah on earth today...some may be in positionings which appear more honorable than others, but before God, each part being in the place for which it have been specially fashioned by the Master Artisan in His preparing the Whole--that is the important thing.

***Exodus 25:17.** “*You shall make a mercy seat (Hebrew: kaporet) of pure gold.*” *Kaporet* means both “atonement” and “covering”. It was above this that the Presence of the LORD would dwell between the Cherubim, Hence the (non-Biblical) word *shekinah*, related to *shakhan* above, referring to the manifest dwelling-presence of the LORD. Upon this the blood would be sprinkled on the Day of Atonement.

***Exodus 25:22.** “*You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the Testimony that I will give you. And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are on the ark of the Testimony, about everything which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel.*” “*Meet with you*” here means “at an appointed fixed time and place.” In God’s mercies, we now “*have boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Yeshua, by a new and living way which he consecrated for us*”—so as to meet with and be spoken with by our Father (Hebrews 10:19-20).

***Exodus 25:30.** “*And you shall set the showbread on the table before Me always.*” *Showbread* is literally “*Bread of the Face*”. Leviticus 24:5-9 clarifies that it would be 12 loaves made from wheat flour, corresponding to the 12 tribes of Israel. Each Sabbath they were placed before God on the golden table, across from the menorah whose light shone upon it. Psalm 44:3 says that Israel’s victories did not come by her own prowess, but “*It was Your right hand, Your arm and the Light of Your Face, for You loved them!*”

***Exodus 25:40.** “*And see to it that you make them according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain.*” All of these things—the Ark; the rings of gold; the poles of acacia wood; the Mercy Seat; the Cherubim; the Table of Showbread; the golden Menorah—point to the work of Yeshua, our heavenly High Priest and mediator of a New Covenant, “*For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people...For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more*” (Jeremiah 31:31; Hebrews 8:3-13).



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[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week 26 February-3 March is called *Tetsaveh—Command/Charge* (“*And you shall command the children of Israel...*”) and will include, TORAH: Exodus 27:20—30:10; HAFTARAH: Ezekiel 43:10-27.]

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