

Prayer Update From Israel (February 6, 2013)



Fiery cloud over Mount Zion

“Behold, I am going to send an angel before you to guard you along the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. Be on your guard before him and obey his voice, to not be rebellious toward him, for he will not pardon your transgression, since My name is in him.” (Exodus 23:20—within this week’s Torah Portion)

1. “WATCHFUL AND PERSEVERING”—THE DROUGHT HAS LIFTED!

Over the past two weeks the almond trees around Jerusalem have once again opened their white blossoms while other trees still are sleeping. The roots for “almond” and for “being watchfully alert” or “persevering” are the same in the Hebrew. Each year this bright and lovely “wakefulness” serves as a reminder for us of God’s diligence in “*watching over His word to perform it*” (Jeremiah 1:11-12). One aspect of that diligence is the rains we are continuing to receive. Last Monday, after seven years of serious water shortage, Israel’s Water Authority lifted its “severe drought” advisory and declared “the water crisis is over.” This winter’s wonderful rains have contributed to this. So has Israel’s decision several years ago to finally seriously invest in desalination facilities, which produce drinking water from the sea. Three major desalination plants now supply almost 50% of the nation’s drinking water, and two more should be functioning by the end of 2014. The Water Authority commended Israeli citizens for their part in preserving water during this season, yet cautioned that they “not become complacent lest the nation find itself in a drought situation again.” If the rains continue, that combined with the melting snows from Mount Hermon might actually restore the Sea of Galilee to its maximum height by the end of the rainy season.

PLEASE PRAY:

***Thanking God with us for His faithfulness in blessing this land and its people with rains—and for granting us the technology, timing and motivation to successfully salvage drinking water from the sea.**

***Humility amongst Israelis to realize that these gifts come from God—yielding to Him our thanks and trust, who watches over His word to preserve it.**

***Alertness and watchfulness not to be wasteful with the blessings which God has given us.**

***That the latter rains will continue this year through May (Zechariah 10:1) and that the Sea of Galilee will become full. That Israel will be equipped with water necessary to face any crisis during the coming year.**

2. RUMORS OF WARS AND RELIGIOUS ALLIANCES

Mention of reports, surfacing in the Middle East a little over two weeks ago, regarding a mysterious explosion at a nuclear plant in Iran have quietly vanished from news services around the world. We are aware of respectable sources which consider that *something* of significance took place at the location; but whatever it was and to what extent initial reports were true is unknown. In the meantime, aerial attacks took place in Syria later that week upon a supply convoy thought to be bearing advanced anti-aircraft missiles in the direction of Hezbollah forces in Lebanon. Attacks also were reported upon a Syrian facility near Damascus, thought by the west to be involved in the production of poison gas agents. Although Israel has not clearly admitted responsibility, her defense minister did take occasion this week to emphasize that when Israel warned that any discerned movement towards these weapons falling into other hands were “red lines” which she would not allow, she meant what she said. After the attacks, Israel received strong threats of retaliation from Iran, Syria and even Turkey, but as of now there have been no reprisal actions launched against her.

Meanwhile, this past Tuesday Iranian President Ahmadinejad became the first Iranian leader to be welcomed into Egypt since 1979. Although the two countries do not have diplomatic relations, Mr. Ahmadinejad was given a “red carpet” welcome by Egyptian President Morsi, to whom he used the expression “brothers” and proceeded to offer an Iranian aid package to assist with Egypt’s ailing economy. Iran, which sees itself as a Shi’ite Muslim republic and Egypt, whose Muslim population is primarily Sunni, are the two most populous Middle Eastern states and have until now maintained frosty relations with each other.

PLEASE PRAY:

***That amid the shiftings taking place among her hostile neighbors, Israel will be granted clear “intelligence” reports indicating when she is in danger and what she should do.**

***That a government be brought into place with the ability to hear these reports, and the integrity and courage to respond appropriately and responsibly to them.**

***That the evil WMD’s currently held by President Assad’s forces will not be allowed to be transferred to Hezbollah or other forces who would desire to use them against Israel. That they will eventually be destroyed.**

***That if any should be launched, the winds will cause them to be ineffective.**

***That any national alliances which the evil one would seek to bring about for the purpose of attacking God's covenant land and people would be frustrated (Psalm 33:10-11; 83:5-18).**

***That attempts to unify religious systems which are opposed to the One true God will come to nothing (Luke 11:17-18).**

3. NEGOTIATIONS TO FORM ISRAELI GOVERNMENT OFFICIALLY COMMENCE

Last Friday preliminary protocols came to an end as Israel's President Peres officially charged Benyamin Netanyahu with forming a new government. From that date he has 28 days to do so, a time which may be extended by two-week intervals with the President's approval. In the meanwhile, the 120 Knesset members (48 of whom are new) were sworn into office.

PLEASE CONTINUE TO PRAY:

***That Mr. Netanyahu will be given grace to humbly seek divine assistance in putting together a coalition. That he would operate out of integrity and uprightness in this (Psalm 25:12, 19-22), while, in the meantime, maintaining alertness and wisdom in leading the country.**

***That a coalition of integrity would come into place which may be used by God in accomplishing His best purposes for Israel during the coming months and years of this administration.**

***For those to be positioned in the government who will uphold righteousness and truth. For the testimony of Messiah Yeshua to arise within Israel's governmental structure.**

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 3-9 February are called *Mishpatim*— "Judgments".

TORAH: Exodus 21:1-24:18 (Plus Exodus 30:11-16; See below)

HAFTARAH: II Kings 11:17—12:17

NOTE: The normal Haftarah (Which we recommend reading, because of its relation to the Exodus portion) is Jeremiah 34:8-22; 33:25-26. However, because this year the day for traditionally honoring the giving of a “Shekel Tax” for the Temple falls on this weekend, an additional Torah portion (above) and a different Haftarah are read in synagogues: Ashkenazy Jews read II Kings 12:1-17 and Sephardic Jews read II Kings 11:17-12:17.

Mishpatim—“Judgments”



Last week’s Portion began with the appointments of judges in Israel; the first three chapters of this week’s readings provide these judges with guidelines for the working out of righteous judgments (*mishpatim*) in Israel’s governance. They include laws and ordinances, with instructions for situations related to various moral issues and offenses. These might be seen as subheadings to the Ten Commandments of Chapter 20 (Instructions for the Priesthood related to its intercession between the people and heaven will come later in Exodus and in the whole of Leviticus.). Chapter 23 also contains sections regarding God’s rest (Sabbaths), both for man, his animals, and for the land they will be living in. There are instructions regarding the three pilgrim feasts, which will be observed once the land is conquered. And there are revelations and instructions pertaining to that conquest itself, including the extent of the land’s future boundaries. In a remarkable passage in Chapter 24, YHVH calls Moses, Aaron and his two sons, and 70 elders of the people to a special personal meeting with Himself. At the last, His Glory rests on Mount Sinai and Moses goes up into the cloud to be with God for forty days and forty nights. To the eyes of the Israelites, the glory of the LORD is “as a consuming fire on the mountain top.”

***Exodus 22:21; 23:9.** *“You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him....since you yourselves know the feelings of a stranger, for you also were strangers in the land of Egypt.”* The word “stranger” is Hebrew *ger*, a “sojourner, temporary dweller, new-comer with no inherited rights” (Brown-Driver-Briggs 1616). In our present day, Christians from the nations whom God sends for seasons to “sojourn” alongside the Children of the inheritance are their strongest and most faithful friends. Yet the enemy seeks to position his agents in such places as the *Ministry of the Interior* and Airport Security which often demean and dishonor this friendship, going to lengths to keep

Gentile believers from entering Israel, and those who have spent time in the land from returning. Of course, Israel, like every other country, must have laws and policies regarding her borders and limitations regarding residency for non-citizens; these should be respected as other laws. Yet in recent years, the harassment of Believers seeking to stay for longer periods than an initial ‘three months’ has risen dramatically. **PLEASE PRAY: that Israel’s new government will implement and enforce righteous laws regarding sojourners in Israel. Pray for protection and a ‘place’ for all those believers whom the Lord would send to dwell in the Land—that they will be allowed to stay the full length of time which He ordains for them. Pray for patience and courage on behalf of these visitors...but also a respect for the laws of the land.**

***Exodus 22:28.** *“You shall not revile God, nor curse a ruler of your people.”* We find it instructive that the Hebrew words for “revile” and “curse” are the same two words used regarding the seed of Abraham in Genesis 12:3: “I will bless those who bless you, and those who revile you, I will curse.” “Cursing” is a solemn prerogative of the Most High. **PLEASE PRAY: for grace amongst believers in Israel to bless our leaders with intercession on their behalf—that, while not being blind to their faults, we will not curse them by reviling them with our words, either by mouth or on the internet. It is God who raises up authorities...it is to Him that we are to call if they misbehave.**

***Exodus 23:20.** *“Behold, I am going to send an angel before you to guard you along the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. Be on your guard before him and obey his voice, to not be rebellious toward him, for he will not pardon your transgression, since My name is in him.”* Although the Hebrew word for “angel” can also mean “messenger” and some commentators equate this angel with Moses himself, it is virtually certain that a supernatural being is meant here. It is this being who will “bring them in” to the land (something which Moses will, alas, not ultimately be allowed to take part in). In this passage, God also mentions sending His “terror” ahead of Israel, along with “Hornets” (vss. 27, 28). The battle would be won “little by little” until Israel would “become fruitful and take possession of the Land” (vs. 30); and the LORD would ‘fix’ her boundaries (vs. 31). **PLEASE PRAY: that Israel become again aware of the supernatural element which is required in her warfare; for believers to receive revelation in how best to “be on their guard” for the voice of angels (Vs. 23:20 above and Hebrews 1:14) who are ministering on their behalf. Pray for patience regarding the battle, in which at times victory must be accomplished “little by little” (Vs. 30); and for an awareness that “fruitfulness” must precede taking full “possession of the Land” (Vs. 30). Pray that Israel’s borders would be “fixed in God’s timing according to His Word (Vs. 31).**

***Exodus 23:25-26.** *“So you shall serve the LORD your God, and He will bless your bread and your water. And I will take sickness away from the midst of you. No one shall suffer miscarriage or be barren in your land; I will fulfill the number of your days.”* **PLEASE PRAY: for believers to grasp these promises in faith in our own day.**

***Exodus 24:9-11.** *“Then Moses went up with Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and they saw the God of Israel; and under His feet there appeared to be a pavement of sapphire, as clear as the sky itself, yet He did not stretch out His hand against the nobles of the sons of Israel; and they saw God, and they ate and drank.”* Twice in this passage we are told that these leaders of Israel “saw God”. Since “no one has seen God at any time”, but “He who has seen the Son has seen the Father”—we believe that this can only have been an encounter with the pre-incarnate Yeshua. There are two different Hebrew words used here for ‘saw’. The first (root: *ra’ah*) most generally means simply “to see”. The second (root: *ha’zah*) has more to do with “gazing upon”...in fact, it is often used in both Biblical and Modern Hebrew in a prophetic sense. It is this word which is used in Psalm 27:4, where the poet’s greatest longing is to dwell in the LORD’s house so as to “gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in His temple.” **PLEASE PRAY: for leaders of present-day Israel to be granted to “see” the God of their father Israel/Jacob, and to have (and to take) opportunity to “gaze” at the beauty of His risen Son. Pray for an opening of the eyes of leaders in the Body of Messiah in Israel to “see” prophetically. In ancient Israel, these included worship leaders such as Heman (I Chron. 25:5), Asaph (II Chron. 29:30) and Jeduthan (II Chron. 35:15) who were referred to as “seers” and whose descendants ‘prophesied’ on their instruments (I Chron. 25:1).**

***Exodus 24:17.** *“The sight of the glory of the LORD was like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel.”*

PLEASE PRAY: Hebrews 12:28-29 into our lives as believers here in Israel—even as we would pray the same for you: “Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire.”



*Martin & Norma Sarvis
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[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week 10-16 February are called *T'ruma*—“Donation”: TORAH: Exodus 25:1—27:19; HAFTARAH: I Kings 5:12—6:13]

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