

Prayer Update From Israel (March 3, 2013)



Pictures taken by Itzik Ben Ari

“A voice is calling, ‘Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God” (Isaiah 40:3).

*“For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land!”
(Song of Songs 2:11-12)*

The normally arid Negev in southern Israel is shining even more than normal for this time of year from the abundant winter rains. We believe that a change is happening in Israel, spiritually as well as physically. PLEASE PRAY: that for many this spring the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings!

1. PRIME MINISTER TO ASK FOR EXTENSION IN FORMING GOVERNMENT

“So Moses made haste and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped. Then he said, ‘If now I have found grace in Your sight, O Adonai, let my Lord, I pray, go among us, even though we are a stiff-necked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us as Your inheritance” (Exodus 34:8-9; from this Week’s Torah Portion).

The 28-day period allotted for Prime Minister Netanyahu to form a new government ends this coming Saturday. As of now the Prime Minister has only added one six-seat party to the 31-seat party he himself represents, far short of the 61 required for forming a government. If not completed by the weekend, he is allowed to request of the President a 14-day extension—one which he will almost certainly be granted. If by the end of that time, he still has not been able to form a coalition, Israel may have to start over with a new election. Polls released last week showed a strong possibility that were this to take place, T.V. personality Yair Lapid’s *Yesh Atid* (“There is a Future”) party would win. It is thought by some that these polls, presenting the very real prospect of the

inexperienced, center-left Lapid receiving the premiership, may in fact work in Netanyahu's favor in getting some of the parties which have been holding out to side with him in the next two weeks.

Meanwhile, the news this week brings into relief the mounting necessity for Israel's having a strong government in place as soon as possible. A new report leaked from a UN nuclear watchdog revealed that Iran has installed and activated nearly 200 advanced centrifuges. On Thursday, Prime Minister Netanyahu responded to this by saying that it proves Iran is nearing the "red line" at which it will be impossible to even slow down its press towards obtaining a nuclear weapon. Then this morning *The Telegraph* in London under the headline "Iran's 'Plan B' for nuclear bomb" reported satellite images from earlier this month indicating that Iran has begun operating a heavy water plant in Arak capable of producing plutonium—a plant heavily protected by anti-aircraft fortifications on the western side (facing Israel). The Israeli Prime Minister said that the first subject to be discussed with President Obama in March will be the need to prevent Iran obtaining the bomb. At the same time, a report from Washington indicated that if an Israeli government hasn't been formed by the date set for the President's visit, that visit will be canceled.

The past two weeks also saw a sharp rise in unrest of Palestinians in Judea and Samaria, in solidarity with a number of 'hunger strikers' in Israeli prisons. Late in the week another Palestinian Arab prisoner died—Israel claimed due to heart failure, the Palestinians claimed due to torture. Tens of thousands attended the funeral. Riots have occurred many places, including the Temple Mount—and yesterday afternoon a rocket was fired into Israel from Gaza—the first since the ceasefire to the conflict last November. There have been calls for another *intifada*...but at this point there doesn't appear to be a deep support for this amongst the Palestinian people. Yet it remains that something new seems to be roiling beneath the surface. Perhaps the single greatest factor keeping that from breaking into another uprising is the continued hatred and distrust between the Hamas rulers in Gaza and the subdued Fatah minority there and majority in Judea and Samaria.

And the situation in Syria continues to spiral in new directions—any of which could call Israel to both defensive and offensive in short order to our north.

Truly, we are in great need of strong leadership at many levels in Israel right now.

Solomon voiced a prayer which we pray on behalf of the leader God has chosen to lead Israel during this season: "Give to Your servant a "hearing heart" to govern (or "judge") Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to govern this great people of Yours?" (II Kings 3:9).

PLEASE PRAY:

*That the Lord will grant Benyamin Netanyahu the humility of his forebears Moses and Solomon...that he will ask a "hearing heart" to govern and make judgments to the full extent of the destiny for which God has raised him up.

*That he would be granted supernatural insight (Daniel 11:33, 35) in the choices he must make during the coming 2 ½ weeks. That he will call upon God in howsoever he knows Him, and be granted grace to know Him in a deeper way.

*That a strong Israeli government will be set up—one which leans towards righteousness, one with leaders who have “hearing hearts”. That God will put strong believers into relationship with those in leadership positions in the land.

*That Israel will be protected from an outbreak of warfare or other forms of extreme violence either from without or within until after a government is put into place.

*That the sense of “dilemma” hanging over the heads of Israelis, will quicken their hearts to seek the God of their fathers and His righteous Way.

2. BIBLE STUDY CONTINUING TO GAIN POPULARITY IN THE GOVERNMENT

Israel Today (“New Knesset Bible study group off to strong start”; 22 February, 2013) this week reported how the Knesset is following the lead of the Prime Minister Netanyahu and has established a weekly study of the Scriptures. The inaugural meeting led by two Rabbis and a lady Torah scholar took place last Tuesday and was attended by more than 30 Knesset members. One of the rabbis reportedly commented to *The Times of Israel* how, “*Seeing MKs and staff members from ultra-Orthodox through secular studying Torah together showed the beauty of the environment we are creating in this new Knesset.*” Concluded the article by *Israel Today*— “*There is a growing sense in Israel that the Bible needs to form the basis of the state’s culture and policies, but that the ultra-Orthodox must not have a monopoly on the biblical interpretation of what it means to be Jewish.*” Interestingly, it has been the large new secular *Yesh Atid* party which has recently been seen as “the most outspoken party about getting more Israelis to study the Bible.”

Of course, there will be those who may take a cynical view of such initiatives—questioning who is doing the teaching; what is being taught; what are the motives behind it? etc. But we see these studies at the Prime Minister’s residence and in the Knesset halls as something to be blessed and held up to our God, ***Who “a bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth!”*** (Isaiah 42:3).

PLEASE PRAY:

*** That the Holy Spirit who inspired these sacred writings would brood over those who teach and hear, granting them insights of truth accompanied by the fear of the Lord.**

*** That even as Yeshua Himself was brought into the teaching arenas of His day, there will be followers of Him today who will gain presence and influence at governmental Bible studies.**

*** We are aware of believers who have had positions of influence in the Knesset—who have even had members come (secretly) into their offices for prayer. Pray that God will “bring forth justice for truth” in the halls justice and government in Israel!**

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.

TORAH: Exodus 30:11—34:35 (+ Numbers 19:1-22)

HAFTARAH: Ezekiel 36:16-38

NOTE: As with last week, this will also be one of four special Shabbats before Passover having additional Torah and replacement *Haftarah* readings. This one is called *Parah* (Cow) and recalls the ritual involving the ashes of a red heifer for purification from defilement by death. It contains an additional Torah reading (see above); and the usual *Haftarah* (I Kings 18:1-39) is replaced by the reading from Ezekiel.

This week's readings encompass far more than we can but touch on here. The Torah Portion centers on the episode with the Golden Calf. At issue in all of the readings is the Glory of God and man's relation to it.

***Exodus 31:2-5.** *“See, I have called by name Betzalel...and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom in intelligence, in knowledge, and in all craftsmanship, to design artistic works...and I, indeed I, have appointed with him Aholiav...and in the heart of all gifted artisans [Heb: wise-hearts] I have put wisdom to make all I have commanded.”*

The name *Betzalel* means, “In the shadow of God.” *Aholiav* means, “Father is my tent.” The safe place for all creative beings is under the shadow of the Almighty (Psalm 91:1)—within the tent of our Father (Psalm 27:5). It is He who desires to fill artists (there are many artistic skills mentioned here) with His Spirit to “*make all that He commands.*” Tragically, at the very time these instructions were being given to Moses on the mountain, Aaron (most certainly not moving under “the shadow of God”), was being coerced by the desires of those around him to use his creative gifts in fashioning an idol (Ex. 32:4). Rather than being used by the Holy Spirit to aid the people in worshipping the true God, the creative fashioning of his hands would itself be worshipped.

PLEASE PRAY: for godly “Betzalels” and “Aholiavs” to be nurtured and brought forth in Israel today, that they will move in a humble awareness that their creative

gifts, wisdom, intelligence, knowledge and craftsmanship are from God, to fulfill a work for His glory—His is their high destiny. Pray that they seek to be filled by His spirit—and resist the spirit of the world which seeks to divert the creativity of man (who was made in the Image of a creative God) away from honoring his Maker. Pray that they realize that He knows them and (as with Betzalel) calls them by name!

***Exodus 32:11-13.** *“Then Moses pleaded with the LORD his God [Hebrew: ‘yearned after the face of YHVH his God’] and said, ‘LORD, why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people...Turn from Your fierce wrath and relent from this harm to Your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants to whom You swore by Your own self, and said to them, “I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of I give to your seed, and they shall inherit it forever.”’”* In Exodus 32:32 Moses continues to stand in the gap, pleading that they be forgiven for their sin.

PLEASE PRAY: for spiritual leaders to have the zeal, unction, love and grace to seek the face of God on behalf of errant Israel; to prevail in intercession to turn away His just wrath that His eternal will for her will be fulfilled on earth as it is in heaven.

***Exodus 32:19.** *“So it was, as soon as he came near the camp, that he saw the calf and the dancing. So Moses’ anger became hot, and he cast the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain.”*

PLEASE PRAY: for the *souls* (Psalm 25:1, 20) of Israeli spiritual leaders—that they not be controlled by their emotions—that they allow the Holy Spirit to work His self-control. There is a place for godly zeal, but the *“anger of man does not work the righteousness of God”* (James 1:20). It would be an eruption of this same anger some time later which would in the end bar Moses from entering the Promised Land.

***Exodus 33:7-11.** *“Moses took his tent and pitched it outside the camp, far from the camp, and called it the ‘tent of meeting’. And it came to pass that everyone who sought the LORD went out to the tent of meeting which was outside the camp...And it came to pass, when Moses entered the tabernacle, that the pillar of cloud descended and stood at the door of the tent, and talked with Moses...So the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle.”*

In Exodus 25:22, the LORD had given instructions regarding the disposition of the *Mishkan* (Dwelling Place/Tabernacle) so that He might meet at appointed times with a representative of His people. But here, Moses prepares a place so that he *or anyone else* might choose to make his own appointed meetings with God—and God honored those times with His presence. Although His face would not be seen (vs 20), He nevertheless

met face to face with those who chose to draw near. Alas, besides Moses, only Joshua appears to have taken advantage of this wonderful opportunity.

PLEASE PRAY: For Israeli believers, in all the rush and hurry, to go beyond ‘head knowledge’ of the Law and the Prophets and the Gospel—and avail themselves of the privilege of setting aside a ‘place’ for private, intimate times Face to Face with God!

***Exodus 33:15.** *“Then he said to Him, ‘If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here...”* Here the word “presence” is literally “Face”. Psalm 44:3 says, *“It was not by our sword that we took the land, nor did our arm bring us the victory; it was your right hand, your arm, and the Light of Your Face, for You loved us!”*

***Exodus 33:13, 18.** *“Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight. And consider that this nation is Your people....Please, show me Your glory.”*

PLEASE PRAY: for leaders in Israel (both believers and those still secular), to like Moses be moved to call on the LORD for guidance to be shown His way. Pray that we find grace in His sight, that our leadership will be fueled and heartened by longings after his Glory and glimpses of His Beauty (Psalm 27:4).

***Exodus 33:21-22.** *“And the LORD said, ‘Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by.”* Centuries later, the prophet Elijah fleeing from the wrath of Jezebel would come to this same mountain, and the Hebrew of I Kings 19:9 says He went into *the* cave to spend the night—and there the Word of the LORD came to him. Jewish teachers have traditionally identified this cave with that same “cleft” in which Moses had been placed by God.



*Martin & Norma Sarvis
Jerusalem*

[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week (11-17 March) is a “double-reading”: *VaYakhel*—“And he assembled”: TORAH: Exodus 35:1-38:20; and *P’kudei*—“Accountings of”: TORAH: 38:21-40:38. HAFTARAH: Ezekiel 45:16-46:18. Note: As with last week, this is one of four special Shabbats before Passover having additional Torah and replacement Haftarah readings. This one is called *HaChodesh*—“The Month”—commemorating *Chodesh haChodeshim*, the Beginning of Months in the Hebrew religious calendar, which this year begins at sundown on

the 11th of March. It contains an additional Torah reading (see above); and the usual Haftaret (I Kings 7:13-26, 40-50 and 7:51-8:21) are replaced by the reading from Ezekiel.)]

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