

Prayer Update From Israel (March 10, 2014)



1. CONFRONTATION WITH AMALEK AT THE RED SEA

Saturday EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton arrived in Tehran for a two-day visit to Iran, the first visit by an EU policy chief since 2008. It comes amid what is being seen by many as a thaw in Iran's strained relations with the West following last year's election of "moderate" Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and an interim deal struck in November regarding Iran's nuclear program, set to go into effect in January. That any perceived "thaw" has little to do with Iran's intentions related to Israel (which its leaders have in recent years repeatedly predicted will soon cease to exist) might be suggested rather blatantly by what transpired this past Saturday, when, as Baroness Ashton was arriving in Tehran, a captured Iranian vessel, loaded with deadly missiles and other weapons originally destined for the Gaza Strip for use against Israeli civilians, was being escorted under guard by Israeli naval vessels into Israel's southern port of Eilat.

Several months ago, Israeli intelligence identified and began tracking certain activity in Syria. A large number of Syrian-made M-302 rockets, with ranges of up to 160 kilometers, were loaded onto planes at Damascus International Airport and flown to Tehran. There they were placed into crates amongst other cargo (the crates bearing arms being marked with a white stripe), and flown to the southern Iranian port city of Bandar Abbas where they were loaded aboard an Iranian vessel, the *Klos C*. Sailing under a Panamanian flag, the *Klos C* sailed northwesterly up the Persian Gulf to the Iraqi port of Umm Qasr where more cargo was loaded on, further obscuring any Iranian connection. Five days later, the ship sailed out of the Persian Gulf, through the Arabian Sea round the coasts of Oman and Yemen and into the Red Sea where it headed for Port Sudan. From there, the weapons were to be transported overland through Egypt and the Sinai Peninsula into Gaza and the hands of terrorist forces in the Strip for use

against Israeli civilians, as far away as Tel Aviv and Jerusalem (“IDF Intercepts Iranian Shipment of Rockets to Terrorist Organizations in Gaza” (Youtube): idfnadesk, 5 Mar 2014). **Last Wednesday morning, Israeli warships raided the vessel not far from its destination in Sudan.** The elite naval unit *Sheyetet* boarded the *Klos C*, took control of the ship and conducted a cursory search. Deep within the hull beneath bags marked “concrete” (plainly labeled “Iran”) they uncovered crates bearing missiles. By Sunday evening, the ship had been conducted to Eilat, unloaded and its militant cargo inventoried. Among the cargo were **40 M-302 rockets** (range—90 to 160 kilometers, capable of reaching Tel Aviv and Jerusalem); **181 22-millimeter mortar rounds**, and some **400,000 rounds of 7.62-millimeter bullets**.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu brought up the seizure in his weekly Cabinet meeting in Jerusalem Sunday morning, “I call this to the attention of Catherine Ashton, who is now visiting Tehran. I would like to ask her if she asked her Iranian hosts about this shipment of weapons for terrorist organizations, and if not, why not... Nobody has the right to ignore the true and murderous actions of the regime in Tehran. I think that it would be proper for the international community to give its opinion regarding Iran’s true policy, not its propaganda.”

We find it of solemn interest that this plot to facilitate the murder of masses of Israelis should be uncovered and thwarted at the very beginning of a week in which the Jewish world will be reading concerning the spirit of Amalek (see below) in preparation for the celebration of Purim—a time in ancient Persia (modern-day Iran) when God provided deliverance from another plot to destroy His covenant people. LET US GIVE THANKS to the LORD who watches over Israel and never slumbers (Psalm 121); who “proclaims victories for Jacob”; Who has uncovered the plots of the enemy and brought salvation to Israel by His right hand, His arm, and the light of His face, because He loves us! (Psalm 44:3-4).

PURIM



200-year old *Megilat-Esther* (Scroll of Esther) on Parchment, handed down from Norma Sarvis’ ancestors in Belarus.

This coming Sunday (beginning sundown Saturday evening) is *Purim*—the day Jews celebrate their remarkable deliverance in Persia in 483 B.C. from a plot to exterminate

them. It is a joyous occasion: the Scroll (book) of Esther will be read—there are *Purim* plays and costumes, and special pastries and desserts and wine. In most of the Jewish world, *Purim* is celebrated on the 14th of *Adar* (16 March this year). In Jerusalem, Jaffa and other ‘walled cities’, as in ancient Susa (Hebrew: *Shushan*; See Esther 9:18-19), it will be celebrated on the following day, Monday the 17th.

Although these are days for rejoicing and feasting (Esther 9:18-19)—for the observant, they are preceded by days of soberness of spirit and fasting. Esther 9:31 tells of Mordechai and Queen Esther, after the great deliverance, prescribing annual times for fasting and lamentation, in remembrance of those which the Queen had called for her Jewish subjects when their entire race was in danger of annihilation and she was preparing herself to seek the favor of the King. The “Esther Fast” for this year will be from dawn to sundown Thursday March 13th.

Purim is a season when we are made especially aware of the Spirit of Amalek, with which our Lord continues to war, from generation to generation (Ex. 17:15-16). The *Amalekites* were a real people, who throughout the Hebrew Scriptures came to epitomize and symbolize a *covenant-hating spirit*, especially that of anti-Semitism. They were Israel’s first enemies after her deliverance from Egypt (Ex. 17:8). They preyed on her, picking off the weak straggling in the rear (see Deut. 25:17-19, this week’s additional Torah portion). One of the names for God is *Elohim-Chaim*, the “Life-God”. His covenants are covenants of Life; those with Israel are on behalf of all humankind. He therefore grants “no quarter” to those who threaten His Covenant purposes; their remembrance is to be “*blotted out from under heaven.*” When King Saul failed to do this (I Sam. 15—this week’s *Haftarah*), his kingdom was torn away from him (indeed, it would be an Amalekite who in the end claimed to have killed him, II Sam. 1:6-10). Centuries later, it would be *Haman*, a descendant of *Agag* (the Amalekite king whom Saul had spared) who, as recorded in the Book of Esther, would contrive to ignite the first Holocaust. With the hatred Satan has for Israel and her redemptive call, it is indeed a miraculous banner of divine grace flying over her (Exodus 17:15) which has sustained her and brought her, still an entity and with her ancient language restored, back to her native Land.

As mentioned above, on Thursday March 13th observant Jews around the world will observe a one-day fast. We would encourage you to take this season seriously. Read through the Book of Esther; perhaps the Lord may lead you to join with us in the fast. **As we approach this time of Purim, as we see the Spirit of Amalek again stirring in the world, especially in Iran (modern Persia), where it is striving furiously to devise weapons capable of bringing its dire predictions regarding Israel to fulfillment...**

PLEASE PRAY (Prayer points by our friend Rick Ridings in Jerusalem):

- 1. That the Mordecais and Esthers of our time will hear the call of the Holy Spirit concerning the urgency of the hour, and will not be distracted or lulled into slumber by a false sense of security.**
- 2. For continued success of the covert war against Iran obtaining a nuclear weapon. Let us believe for much confusion and division upon the demonic powers bent on destroying Israel (2 Chron. 20:1-30).**

3. For a clear understanding to come to the decision-makers in Jerusalem and Washington, DC to do the right thing at the right time. (Esther 7:3-6)
 4. Let us proclaim a reversal of every Satanic decree to destroy Israel, and that “Haman” will be hung upon his own gallows. (Esther 7:9-10; Ps. 33:10-12)
 5. For Iran (Persia), let us pray for the Lord to bring shame upon His enemies in such a way that they will begin to seek the Name of the Lord, to know Who is the True and Living God (see Psalm 83, especially verse 16).
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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.

{NOTE}

This is one of four special Shabbats before Passover having additional Torah and replacement *Haftarah* readings. Because this Shabbat precedes Purim, it is called *Shabbat-Zachor*—“Remember! (what Amalek did to you).” It contains an additional Torah reading from Deuteronomy 25; and the usual *Haftarah* (Ezekiel 43:10-27) is replaced by the reading from 1 Samuel about Saul’s charge to destroy the Amalekites and his failure to kill Agag (an ancestor of Haman).

This week’s Torah Portion is called *Tsav*—“Command”:

TORAH: Leviticus 6:8—8:36

Moses is told to command Aaron and his sons concerning the offerings they will shortly begin making before God. Careful instruction is made concerning each of these—with emphasis on the holiness of their activities. Then Aaron and his sons are consecrated, clothed in their holy garments and anointed...and atonement is made for them before they begin their duties on behalf of the people.

Shabbat Zachor (“Remember!”): Deuteronomy 25:17-19

“REMEMBER WHAT AMALEK DID TO YOU...on the way as you came out of Egypt, how he attacked you on the way when you were faint and weary, and cut off your tail, those who were lagging behind you, and he did not fear God. Therefore when the LORD your God has given you rest from all your enemies around you, in the land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance to possess, you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven; you shall not forget.”

HAFTARAH: I Samuel 15:2--34

****(2) “Thus says YHVH of Armies, ‘I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he ambushed him on the way when he came up from Egypt.’”***

****(22-23) “Has YHVH as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of YHVH? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as witchcraft-sin, and stubbornness as iniquity and idolatry!”***

****(29) “And also the Glory of Israel will not lie or have regret, for he is not a man, that he should have regret” (ESV).***

****(32-33) “Then said Samuel, ‘Bring you hither to me Agag the king of the Amalekites.’ And Agag came unto him delicately. And Agag said, ‘Surely the bitterness of death is past.’ And Samuel said, ‘As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women.’” And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal” (KJV).***



***Martin & Norma Sarvis
Jerusalem***

**[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week 16-22 March 2014 are called *Shemini*—
“Eighth Day”: TORAH: Leviticus 9:1—11:47; Shabbat *Parah*: Numbers 19:1-22;
HAFTARAH: Ezekiel 36:16-38.]**

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