

## **PRAYER UPDATE FROM ISRAEL** (March 14, 2011)

### **ATTACK IN ITAMAR**

**“O, that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!” (Jeremiah 9:1).**

**“For I heard a cry as of a woman in labor, the anguish as of one giving birth to her first child, the cry of the daughter of Zion gasping for breath, stretching out her hands, saying, ‘Ah, woe is me, for I faint before murderers’” (Jeremiah 4:31).**

**“For there will be a day when watchmen on the hills of Ephraim call out, ‘Arise, and let us go up to Zion, to the LORD our God” (Jeremiah 31:6).**

**Itamar is a small Orthodox Jewish community located with three other similar towns astride a ridge of hills along the ancient border between the Biblical territories of Ephraim and Manasseh. Shechem (modern Nablus) is below in the valley, and close by are the wooded heights of Mount Gerazim and the rocky slopes of Mount Ebal ...the “mountains of blessings and cursings” to which Joshua brought the Children of Israel after their coming at last into Canaan. The community was established in 1984 and named after the fourth son of Aaron, Itamar the priest, who tradition says is buried in the area. Its economy subsists on the growth of organic crops and sheep and goats.**

This past Friday evening after the beginning of the Sabbath, a terrorist infiltrated the sleeping community, broke into the home of a young rabbi and his wife Udi and Ruth Vogel, and with a knife slaughtered the couple, their sons Yoav (11) and Elad (4) and their three-month old baby daughter Hadas. Two sons sleeping in another room survived; a 12-year old daughter returning home late discovered the carnage. As of now, the murderer or murderers have not been apprehended. The horrific massacre has shocked the nation, awakening a deep feeling of mourning. Tens of thousands attended the funeral for the family in Jerusalem Sunday afternoon.

Tragically, because much of the world sees this and other communities located in land taken by Israel from Jordan in 1967 as settlements occupying land stolen from Palestinian Arabs, there is often something of an “asterisk” accompanying the way in which such news is received—as though the Jews shouldn’t have been there in the first place, and brought it upon themselves. (In many Muslim regions, this same “asterisk” accompanies news of similar atrocities taking place within Israel’s internationally recognized borders.) The Netanyahu government has responded to the attacks by releasing permission for the building of 400 new homes in Judaea and Samaria (although within the large preexisting “blocks” which are not considered negotiable by Israel in any future agreement), a move quickly condemned by the UN and US.

Udi Fogel, a 36 year-old rabbi taught at a yeshiva in Itamar and when called to military service had served as an IDF tank unit officer. He and his wife Ruth were among those Jews uprooted from the community of Gush Katif in Gaza in August of 2005. Although the actions of some settlers have been used to characterize all as being racist and vengeful, a member of the yeshiva where Fogel taught yesterday said that a revenge or “price tag” attack would not be

forthcoming from their community...that although there was shock and pain, anger could not be part of their reaction.

### **At the funeral:**

**Former Chief Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau:** “There are situations, there are days, there are hours where you are at loss for words. You sit feel and sense the pain, feel the anger and mostly, feel the powerlessness...When you imagined that this circle of terror closed maybe 66 years ago and when the blood of infants runs like water and 1.5 million children were trampled by human beasts...it has been 66 years, we’ve declared statehood, gained our independence, established the enviable IDF (Israeli Defense Force). And still, the circle of terror and the river of blood flow and we stand helpless...What can you say when you see a three month old baby stabbed to death? What do you say?...We will not bend, we will not give up, we returned to the land of our fathers and it is our home, and the children shall return within their borders and nothing will prevent our faith in the righteousness of our path.”

**Chief Rabbi yona Metzger:** “Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you came out of Egypt.’ Amalek is here—people who are capable of tearing and butchering a whole family when they came home from prayer services.” He added that it is God who is the avenger—“We don’t have the option of avenging their blood.” And, “Itamar needs to become a major city in Israel as a response to this murder.”

The reason for the murder of the Vogel family was hatred for their being Jews whose God made a covenant with them forever which included this land. Next Sunday is Purim, a time when Jews celebrate deliverance from a “holocaust” prepared in far-away Persia by Haman, an Amalakite. God has declared Himself to be continually at war with that covenant-hating Amalak spirit (Exodus 17:14-15), until it is totally annihilated; but the war is still going on. It was this spirit which spawned the Holocaust in the last century, and it is behind anti-Semitism today. It especially hates the word Zion (referring to the presence of Jews in the land as a “Zionist entity”) because the Lord of Hosts who sent forth a Saviour for the whole earth through Isaac has declared Himself to be “exceedingly jealous...with great wrath for Zion”, and that He shall set His KING there (Zechariah 8:2; Psalm 2:6; Revelation 14:1).

The tiny child who was slain in Itamar Friday night, like Esther in the Purim story, bore the name Hadas—Myrtle. It is a plant mentioned in Isaiah 55:11-13, which will come up out of the ground, at the Word of the LORD, replacing the brier. It is also mentioned in Isaiah 41:17-20, as Israel realizes her thirst and seeks water, God will hear and not forsake; He will open rivers in desolate heights and fountains in the midst of the valleys. And He will “plant in the wilderness the cedar and the acacia tree, and the Hadas—the myrtle...That they may see and know, and consider and understand together, that the hand fo the LORD has done this, and the Holy One of Israel has created it.”

**PLEASE PRAY:**

\*For the surviving three children of the Vogel family to be protected and nurtured...for angels to “minister on behalf of those who will inherit Salvation.” That they will be healed of the violation and trauma...and guided into the destinies for which they have been spared.

\*For supernatural comfort, guidance and direction for the community in Itamar. That they will be protected from spirits assigned to inflame responses anger, vengeance, hatred and despair.

\*For the ‘veil’ to be taken away and for a supernatural revelation of Yeshua among the teachers and yeshiva students in Itamar and the surrounding communities...whose Blood cleanses, brings life and protection from darkness.

\*That the Righteousness of Messiah will exalt the community, after which it can and will become rooted in the Land.

\*For revelation amongst the Arab peoples living in what they call Palestine...of the God who loves them, can set them free, and has a Way of life for them and their descendants.

\*For Prime Minister Netanyahu that he will seek and receive Divine guidance in responding to this attack, and in dealing with the thorny issues surrounding Israel’s positionings in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem.

\*That watchmen and watchwomen will arise and be positioned on the Mountains of Ephraim (Jeremiah 31:6), calling and admonishing their fellows in the way of the LORD. Numbers 4:28b relates that certain “watches” in the Tabernacle were under the authority of Itamar (Ithamar).



***Rainbow this week over the Sea of Galilee***

We serve a God of Hope (Romans 15:13)! With the attack in Itamar, the ongoing conflicts taking place in Libya and other middle-Eastern countries, the appalling catastrophe in Japan along with other shakings about the world...we felt to include the picture above, taken earlier this week by our friends Gene and Maylois Little while Israel was receiving strong and badly-needed rains. “Behold the Eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him, on those who hope

yearningly for His Lovingkindness—to deliver their soul from death and to keep them alive in famine. Our soul waits in hope for the LORD, He is our help and our shield. For our heart shall rejoice in Him, because we have trusted in His holy name. Let Your Lovingkindness, O LORD, be upon us, even as we hope yearningly for you!” (Psalm 33:18-22)

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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.

This week (March 29-April 4) the readings are called Tsav (English: “Command!”):

**TORAH: Leviticus 6:8—8:36**

**HAFTARAH : I Samuel 15:2—34 (Shabbat Zachor)**

### **SCROLL (BOOK) OF ESTHER**

**TORAH:** The name Leviticus comes from the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures and means “relating to the Levites”. The Hebrew name VaYikra is drawn from the first word in the book and refers to the LORD “calling” to Moses from the Tent of Meeting to give him instructions. He not only desires to dwell among us—He longs to speak and commune with us. Some 50 times in this book it is written that God spoke to Moses. The book’s emphasis is holiness and regards primarily the services of worship at the Tabernacle, the way that the priestly intercessors or ‘go-betweens’ could accomplish their work on behalf of the people.

In this week’s Torah Portion Tsav (“Command”), 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 began their duties on behalf of the people.

**HAFTARAH:** This coming Sabbath (March 19<sup>th</sup>) immediately precedes the Hebrew celebration of Purim, which commemorates a time when the Jewish people were threatened with annihilation by Haman, a descendant of Agag, an Amalekite. Therefore, the usual Haftarah passage (Jeremiah 7:21—8:3; 9:23-24) is replaced by a special one from I Samuel in which Saul is “sent on a mission”—“Go, and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until

they are consumed”’—yet fails to do so, keeping for himself the best of the spoil and sparing Agag the king. The Saturday before Purim is called “Shabbat Zachor” (Sabbath of Remembrance) because of the admonition in Exodus 17:14 to “write as a remembrance” that the Lord would utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. “Amalek” in Scripture signifies the covenant-hating spirit behind anti-Semitism.

Saturday evening through Sunday is the celebration of Purim. Jerusalem and other “walled cities” celebrate it the following day (Esther 9:18-19).



Martin & Norma Sarvis  
**Jerusalem**

[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week (20-26 March) are called Shemini , and include TORAH: Leviticus 9:1—11:47; HAFTARAH: II Samuel 6:1—7:17]