

Prayer Update From Israel (March 18, 2013)



Rainbow over the Sea of Galilee

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you,” says the LORD, “thoughts of shalom and not of evil, to give to you a destiny and a hope” (Jeremiah 29:11).

1. 33rd KNESSET FORMED GOVERNMENT, RELIGION

This afternoon Israel’s 33rd government commenced as 22 ministers were sworn into office at the Knesset. Forming the coalition has been a long, arduous process—right down to the line, one day before the end of the two-week extension. Astonishing things have happened; Israel now has perhaps the strongest, most balanced coalition ever—certainly in well over a decade. Many changes will become manifest in coming days, but probably the most pronounced at present is that the religious hold which the ultra-Orthodox have for many years wielded to coerce governments into unfair and disproportionate concessions has been broken. In its place have sprung up two totally new parties, the secular *Yesh Atid* (There is a Future) and the religious Zionist *HaBayit HaYehudi* (The Jewish Home). These have joined hands across a fairly wide range of ideological differences to form a strong unity of influence with an aim to bring about much needed reform in the governmental, economical and religious institutional arenas of the nation. For the first time the Jews living in the contested territories (Judea and Samaria) have a substantial, recognized voice and defender in a position of influence in the government. In coming together with Mr. Netanyahu’s *Likud-Yisrael Beiteinu* party, and the small *Hatnua* party, a spectrum of balance and strength has come into place which we have not seen. **Minister of Defense.** At a time when Israel is facing stormy challenges to her security from a number of countries as well as within, the new Defense Minister will be **Moshe Ya’alon**. The 62 year old Ya’alon has a 37 year military career behind him, culminating in his tenure as Chief of Staff from 2002-2005. **Ministry of Interior.** This folio has been given to Gideon Sa’ar, who distinguished himself as Education Minister in the last government. This ministry has historically been demanded by the ultra-Orthodox party *Shas* which essentially placed themselves as gatekeepers enforcing their extremely narrow view of who should be allowed into the country or eligible for citizenship. Mr. Sa’ar is known to have shown courtesy and a friendly spirit to believers in Israel—something anathema to *Shas*.

We believe this to be a government of grace. It certainly did not come into being through the wisdom or political expertise of Mr. Netanyahu. The Prime Minister had an unfortunate coolness if not hostility towards Naphtali Bennett, stemming from a serious falling out some

years ago when the two worked together. In fact, Netanyahu has repeatedly slighted Bennett and expressed disdain for the “Jewish Home” party he was trying to form. Yet the party caught fire, and Bennett became a force who could no longer be ignored, even though Netanyahu tried to do so at the beginning of coalition talks. Through all of this Bennett had persisted in addressing and speaking about the Prime Minister in terms of humility and respect. Last Wednesday, with only three days to go, the talks were at a standstill. Mr. Lapid was demanding the ministry of Education for his party, Netanyahu was refusing to budge, in fact, threatening to re-embrace the religious parties (a move which would have almost certainly brought down his new government and his chances of remaining Prime Minister). At that time it was Mr. Bennett who, referring to both of the leaders as “brothers”, stepped in to bring about a compromise. In fact, as one columnist put it, *“Bennett could justifiably be considered the architect of the new government, conceiving the final compromise that led to a breakthrough Wednesday night”* (“Somebody get Bennett a felafel!”, *The Jerusalem Post*, March 15, 2013). ***“God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble”*** (James 4:6).

Something “Religious” is being shaken. In an amazing circumstance, the same evening that the breakthrough occurred for the establishment of a new Israeli government—an establishment characterized by the fall of a strong ‘religious’ structure, news was racing round the world of a shaking of other religious traditions and structures, as Jorge Bergoglio of Argentina was elected to lead the world’s 1.2 billion Roman Catholics. Something has shifted! Here was a leader who began by humbly requesting that his people pray for him. Here was one who smiled in public; who refused to stand on a platform above the other cardinals, but met with them on their own level; who on his first day as Pope Francis I shunned the special sedan but rode a bus; who went personally back to his hotel to pick up his luggage and pay the bill. Stories are surfacing of his acts of humility and grace during his tenure as archbishop in Buenos Aires...his love for the poor; there are pictures of him washing the feet of others. He also has a reputation of reaching out to Jews in respect and friendship; he is known to have attended *Rosh Hashana* services at a synagogue in the capital. Now he is calling the Church to humility—and to the Gospel. In the day after his election, he admonished, *“We can walk all we want, we can build many things, but if we don’t proclaim Jesus Christ, something is wrong. We would become a compassionate NGO and not a Church which is the bride of Christ.”* Israel is taking notice of this Pope, who in a letter to Rome’s chief rabbi on the first day of office, expressed a keen desire to resume collaboration with Jews. Israel’s President Shimon Peres has invited him to visit Israel.

We are not suggesting that the election of a new Pope “of a different spirit” somehow cancels out error and pockets of religious darkness in the Church of Rome; nor do we wish to give the impression that because a religious stronghold has cracked in Israel—that this somehow means that there is not still great darkness blinding Zionist settlers in the Territories. **The word “Zion” bears the same root as the word for a “marking”, a “pointing out”, a “sign post”—and when the Holy Spirit releases a strong physical change in Israel, it is usually a sign pointing towards a strong spiritual change which is being released in the world at large. We see the shift in the religious sector of government here in Israel as indicative of a shaking of legalistic religious systems throughout the world, and a window being opened for the freeing Truth of the Gospel.**

PLEASE PRAY:

***God’s blessing upon the government which has been formed in Jerusalem.**

***That a bond of unity of purpose and resolve for righteous government would be strengthened between the leaders, spread through the new coalition and throughout the government.**

***That the light of Truth would shine into the Jews living in Judea and Samaria awakening faith in the God of Heaven and His Son Yeshua. Pray for a harvest among Zionist Orthodox Jews.**

***For light, revelation and a harvest to be released amongst ultra-Orthodox Jews in Israel.**

2. PRESIDENT OBAMA'S VISIT

Wednesday President Obama pays his first visit to Israel since he became President. He will be here for three days. There has been much speculation regarding the President's visit, with many different "takes" on what he hopes to accomplish. There are many enemies of both America and Israel in this part of the world. Much of the city of Jerusalem will come to a stand-still because of the enormous security measures which are thought necessary to be put into place for the coming of the President.

PLEASE PRAY:

*** That holy angels be released to protect this visit from any hidden plots of the enemy.**

*** That God will grant our Prime Minister and other leaders grace, courage, and honesty in their meetings with the President.**

*** That the Holy Fear of the Lord will attend the entourage. That the President will be granted revelation of truth and realities regarding Israel and Judea and Samaria hidden from him in the past.**

*** That the friendship between these two countries would be strengthened in truth and commitment and the blessing of the Lord. That alliances be holy and in the will of the God of Israel.**

3. RAIN IN THE TIME OF THE LATTER RAIN

"Ask YHVH for rain in the time of the latter rain. The LORD will make flashing clouds; He will give them showers of rain, Grass in the field for everyone" (Zechariah 10:1).

"Thus says YHVH who made you and formed you from the womb, who will help you: 'Fear not, O Jacob My servant; and you, Yeshurun, whom I have chosen. For I will pour water on him who is thirsty, and floods on the dry ground; I will pour My Spirit on your seed, and my blessing on your offspring. They will spring up among the grass like willows by the watercourses.' One will say, 'I am YHVH's'—another will call himself by the name of Ya'akov; Still another will write with his hand, 'YHVH's,' and name himself by the name of Israel" (Isaiah 44:1-6: From last week's Haftarah).

In Israel, the "Former Rains" usually come between October and the middle of March. The so-called "Latter Rains" come from around Passover until early or middle May...then there normally is no rain until October. Israel was tremendously blessed with former-rains this year. There is still water flowing into the Sea of Galilee from melting snow on Mount Hermon. The long drought has been declared over, and all are breathing easy again. Then the rains stopped—for many weeks there has been scarcely any at all. Saturday night, after a week of unseasonably dry, hot, dusty weather, the rains have returned for a day. We are very grateful for the blessed outpouring we've received this year. *Yet Zechariah 10:1 (see above) is ringing in our spirits. We sense that, even though it will be considered a 'good year' if it doesn't rain again, it is God's desire to release more before the end of the Spring. We are reminded of II Kings 13:15-19 where at the command of the prophet King Joash struck the ground three times with the arrows of God's deliverance—but was chided because he only did so three times. We*

desire all the rain which our Lord, who “cares” for this land “which drinks water from the rain of heaven”, whose “eyes are on it from the beginning of the year to the very end” (Deuteronomy 11:12)—we desire that He send all the rain he knows Israel will need this year, all that it is within His good pleasure to give.

PLEASE PRAY:

- * **To the LORD** “for rain over Israel in the time of the latter-rain.”
- * *That with this physical rain He pour out His Spirit on Israel’s seed—that new Israelis “spring up among the grass” of the different streams of Judaism in Israel—Jews who know find their identity as descendants of Jacob/Israel in their LORD YHVH—through His son Yeshua (“Yehovah is Salvation”).*

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 reading this week is called *Tsav*—“Command!”:

TORAH: Leviticus 6:8—8:36

HAFTARAH (Shabbat haGadol): Malachi 3:4—4:6

NOTE: On the Shabbat preceding the beginning of Passover (*Shabbat haGadol*—“The Great Shabbat”) the regular Haftarah (In this case Jeremiah 7:21—8:3, 9:23-24) is replaced by the above reading from Malachi.

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 begin their duties on behalf of the people.

SHABBAT HAGADOL

The Sabbath preceding Passover is called *Shabbat HaGadol*—the “Great Sabbath”. It takes its name from the “**Great and dreadful day of the LORD**” (*Yom Yehovah haGadol v’haNorah*), found in Malachi 4:5 of the special *Haftarah* which is read on this occasion. It is an important time for soberly “taking account” of the Day which is coming “burning like an oven”...but also for taking heart from God’s promise that “to you who fear My name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings!”

***Malachi 3:16-18.** “Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD listened and heard; so a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the

LORD and who meditate on His name. ‘They shall be Mine,’ says the LORD of Armies, ‘On the day that I make them my jewels. And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him.’ Then you shall again discern between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him.” This passage shows that believers who spend time with other believers in conversation characterized by the Fear of the Lord, and who also spend time meditating on the attributes signified by His name—these will be ones who are granted discernment so as to be spared the deception which will prevail more and more until the Lord’s return (Matt. 24:4, 11, 24; Daniel 8:25).

***MALACHI 4:1. “For behold, the Day is coming, burning like an oven...”**

As darkness gathers (John 9:4; Daniel 12:1-3) we must as believers hold to each other, listening, “not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together...as we see the Day approaching (Hebrews 10:24-25). As the world refuses to wait on God’s command, drawing instead the fire of His wrath, another voice will be calling—“**He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the congregations . . .**” (Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22; 13:9). He will “send Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful Day of the LORD” (Malachi 4:5). “Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy...For the testimony of Yeshua (Jesus) is the spirit of prophecy” (I Cor. 14:1; Rev. 19:10);



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[Passover begins Monday evening of next week (25 March), when God’s deliverance of the Children of Israel from bondage in Egypt will be recounted. The regular readings in the cycle through the Torah will continue with the week of 15-21 April.]

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