

Prayer Update From Israel (March 19, 2012)



***Mount Zion and the Mount of Olives
Jerusalem***

“PRAY FOR THE PEACE OF JERUSALEM”---WHAT IS IT REALLY INSTRUCTING US TO DO?

[We were recently in a home near Beersheba where a little group of believers from round the country had gathered to share what they sensed the Lord speaking prophetically to the Body in Israel right now. Something which a sister shared regarding the relationship of Jeremiah 15:5 to Psalm 122:6 served as a springboard for our drawing together the thoughts which follow.]

A look in the back of *Young’s Analytical Concordance* will reveal that in the Old Testament the Hebrew verb *sha’al* is 87 times translated “ask” and 22 times “enquire”. Yet out of over 155 usages only *once* did the translators of the King James Bible choose to translate *sha’al* “pray”. That is in Psalm 122:6, “*Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: May they prosper who love you.*”

Now, we are in total agreement that it is important to pray for the peace of Jerusalem, nor would we suggest that a simple prayer like, “Lord, please release your peace over Jerusalem” is of no effect. However, it is important to realize that what is being instructed in Psalm 122:6 actually goes much deeper than that. Rather than simply telling us “to pray”, this verse instructs us to “**Ask**” or “**Inquire after**” the shalom of Jerusalem. Then we will be *able* to pray intelligently, and with precision God’s priority for His city right now!

This inquiry is made many times a day by most Hebrew-speaking Israelis of each other. When we greet each other on the street we ask, “*Ma sh’lomkha?*” (to a male), or “*Ma sh’lomeakh?*” (to a female). An English equivalent might be, “How are you?”—in Hebrew it literally means, “*How is your shalom?*” The word *shalom* or “peace” is itself derived from the root *shalem*, which means “wholeness”. So in Israel when we enquire of each other’s welfare, we are really asking after the “wholeness” of the other person.

In Jeremiah 15:5, Jerusalem is no longer whole. Having left her God of Life, she has chosen another way—now death, the sword, famine, and captivity yawn before her. And there is no one left to care...no one to ask, “*Ma sh’lomeakh?*”—“*How are you?*” to Jerusalem. Or “*Ma sh’loma?*”—“*How is she?*” to God on her behalf: “**Indeed, who will have pity on you, O**

Jerusalem, or who will mourn for you, or who will turn aside to ask after your shalom?” “Ask after Shalom”—these are the same words which God, in Psalm 122.6, instructs all of us (the command is in the plural) to do.

So how do we do it? We might begin by asking God what is on His heart regarding Jerusalem which He would have *us* to pray about today (He may have someone else focusing on something different!). Perhaps He will answer us directly with a Word into our spirit. Or He may quicken a particular aspect of a news report or other source we might investigate. We must be careful not to place too narrow boundaries on how He will answer us. For example, yes, He is certainly concerned about the possibility of nations attempting to “divide” the city. But that is by no means the only issue having to do with her wholeness, nor may it be related at all to the priority He has for you or your group to address today. In recent year the Holy Spirit has begun releasing revelation to the Body related to what are being called the “Seven Mountains”—media, education, government, economy/business, celebration of arts, religion and family. These are crucial areas within societies within which it is imperative that controlling powers of darkness be displaced by those moving in the living light of Yeshua/Jesus. In asking after the wholeness, the peace, of Jerusalem, might there not be times when it would be good to hold up to the Father of Lights each of these “mountains”? Into which of these areas might His Spirit desire today to bring wholeness by showing us how best to pray “*Your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven?*”

We see this happening! Recently we noticed an online English language edition of a prominent Israeli newspaper carried, in its front-page editorial column (a spot almost always reserved for several far-left secular humanist writers), a brilliant article in favor of a new anti-prostitution law currently making its way through legislation. The writer, whose picture ran alongside the article, is a respected lawyer in Jerusalem and a Messianic Jewish believer whose influence had actually had a hand in bringing this proposal into legislation. We see this as one instance of the focused, specific prayers of God’s people enabling servants He has positioned in the governmental and media arenas of our city to release influence for good.

Psalm 122 goes on in verse eight to strongly imply how our blessings of Jerusalem with Shalom will also release benefits “*for the sake of our brethren and companions*”. As a Spirit of grace and supplication begins to be poured out upon the house of David “*and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem*” (Zechariah 12:10), “*all Israel shall be saved*”—and that salvation will usher in “*life from the dead*” for the whole world (Romans 11:26, 15). **To that end, may we the Body of Messiah throughout this world be found willing and eager**

“...to turn aside to ask after her shalom!”

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.

I. The reading this week is called *VaYikra*—“And He called (to Moses)”:

II. Because March 24th this year is the Head of the first month (Nisan) of the Biblical year (Exodus 12:1-2), there is a special set of additional readings called *Parashat-haChodesh*:

I. *VaYikra*

TORAH: Leviticus 1:1-6:7

HAFTARAH: Isaiah 43:21—44:23

This week’s reading brings us into the Book of Leviticus. This name comes from the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures and means “relating to the Levites”. However, 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. *This week’s portion pertains to five specific types of offerings (divided generally by chapters): 1. Burnt Offerings; 2. Grain Offerings; 3. Peace Offerings; 4. Sin Offerings; 5-6:7 Guilt Offerings.*

The Haftarah for the week is filled with powerful passages to assist in our intercession for Israel. Isaiah 43:21; 44:22 is central: *“The people whom I formed for Myself will declare My praise...I have wiped out your transgressions like a thick cloud and your sins like a heavy mist. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you.”* **We also find Isaiah 43:24b-25; 44:3,6,8b, 21b, and 23 to be key. PLEASE PRAY:** *that Israel come into realization that the reason for which she was formed, her very destiny and high call is to be “for Himself to declare His praise.” That all of our laws can not of themselves save—that God Himself has borne our sin and redeemed us.*

II. *Parashat-haChodesh*.

TORAH: Exodus 12:1-20

HAFTARAH: Ezekiel 45:18—46:15

“This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you.” (Exodus 12:2).

This Saturday is *Rosh Chodesh* (Head of the Month) for the Hebrew month *Nisan*. *Nisan* is the Babylonian name adopted by the Jews during the Captivity; *Aviv*, which may also mean “springtime”, was the name used earlier in Canaan (see Deuteronomy 16:1). *Rosh Chodesh* is always a time for remembering and giving thanks for God’s faithfulness through the previous month, and for entrusting the times of the new month into His hands. But the 1st of *Nisan/Aviv* (Saturday March 24th this year) is also *Rosh Chodeshim*—the Head of Months for the coming year! From here we stand with our Lord, looking ahead to our “crossing over” into this new season, this new cycle of months. From here we commit our spirits and our times, those of our loved ones, our people, our lands, Jerusalem, into His hands; trusting in His redemptive presence, the Light of His Face; resting in the promise of

goodness which He has laid up on behalf of those who revere and place their trust in Him (Psalm 31:5, 15-16, 19).

[NOTE: The Feast of Trumpets in the Fall at the beginning of the seventh month is also called *Rosh Hashana*—the Head of the Year. This is because Jewish tradition teaches that this was the month when God created the world; it is from this date each year that the ‘number’ of the year (this year 5772) is reckoned. However, the actual Biblical beginning of the counting of months begins this weekend].



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[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week (25-31 March) are called *Tsav*—“Command!”, and will include: TORAH: Leviticus 6:8—8:36; HAFTARAH (Shabbat haGadol) : Malachi 3:4—4:6]