

# ISRAEL PRAYER UPDATE

*Glory of Zion International Ministries*



*Aviv!*  
*Springtime in the Land of Milk and Honey.*

## 1. **ROSH HODASHIM**—ISRAEL’S “BEGINNING OF MONTHS.”

“Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, ‘This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you. Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: ‘On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household...Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it...Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt’ (Exodus 12:1-3, 6-7, 13).

**A. This Tuesday, March 28, is Rosh Hodashim—the “Head” or “Beginning” of months in the Hebrew religious calendar.** There are no records of this particular day ever having been celebrated as a “holiday” in Israel. (After the Captivity, *Rosh HaShana*, the head of the agricultural new year came to be celebrated on the day of the Feast of Trumpets in the fall.) There was certainly no command to “celebrate” it in a special way. ***Yet being aware of its significance and keeping it holy—set apart—was critical.*** From this day the dates for *all* of the “set times”, the “festivals of the LORD” throughout each year were to be calculated. As seen above, it was on this day that, in preparation for the first of these festivals, each Israelite

household began counting towards the tenth day, when a lamb would be set it aside until the evening of the 14<sup>th</sup> day, when it would be slaughtered to provide blood for the Passover. It was also on this *Beginning of Months* a year later (as read at the end of last week's Torah Portion, Exodus 40:17-38), that the *Mishkan*—“Dwelling Place”/“Tabernacle” was completed and raised, and the Presence of the glory of the LORD came down into the midst of His people!

PLEASE PRAY: AS ISRAEL THIS WEEK ENTERS HER “BEGINNING OF MONTHS” and Jews begin preparation for Passover, that there will be a grace over them drawing them into an awareness of the *times and seasons* of their God. As we enter the season of Passover, pray that the veil obstructing them from the true significance of the Passover Lamb would be drawn back...that they will see clearly and with understanding the “blood which is a sign” for them, and turn to *Seh haElohim hanoseh hatat haOlam*—The Lamb of God who carries away the sin of the world!

## B. *ROSH HODESH.*

***From this “head of months” each following month was known to the Hebrews by its number*** (First Month, Second Month, etc.). Occasionally their Canaanite names were used: *Aviv* 1<sup>st</sup> (Exodus 13:4, 23:15, A name now used for “Springtime” in Israel); *Ziv* 2<sup>nd</sup> (I Kings 6:1, 37); *Ethanim* 7<sup>th</sup> (I Kings 8:2); *Bul* 8<sup>th</sup> (I Kings 6:38). After the Captivity, the returning Jews adopted the Babylonian names used on Jewish calendars today, beginning with *Nisan* (Nehemiah 2:1; Esther 3:7)

***The beginning of each Month—the time of the “New Moon”—“Rosh Hodesh” is obviously an important day in the timings of the Lord.*** Numbers 28:11-15 carefully lists instructions for special offerings beyond the normal daily ones, which were to be presented on that day. The first of each month seems also to have been a day of special gathering for the Hebrew people—a “day of gladness” heralded by sounding of the silver trumpets (Numbers 10:10)! Psalm 81:3a calls for sounding the *shofar* on *Rosh Hodesh*— in the context of “*singing aloud to God our strength, making a joyful shout to the God of Jacob, raising a song and striking the drum, the harp and the lute!*” ***This was not to be observed in a spirit of mere religious legalism as it obviously had come to be in Isaiah 1:14 where God was no longer pleased with the celebration.*** Yet, a careful reading of Ezekiel 45:17-18; 46:1,3 (from last week's Haftarah) makes clear that, whatever may be the ultimate nature, time period and significance of the Temple described there, *Rosh haHodashim* and *Rosh Hodesh* remain important to God, and for His people in honoring Him. There, it is *a time for making offerings, for cleansing the Sanctuary, a time in which the people of the land shall worship at the entrance to this gateway before the LORD on the Sabbaths and the New Moons (Rosh Hodesh).*

We find the beginning of each Hebrew Month to be an ideal time:

\*For offering up thanksgiving to the Lord for His mercies over the previous month.

\*For entrusting the new month to His care; for praying and proclaiming over it what He directs.

\*For asking His Spirit to search us and purify anew our inner “Temple” in preparation for His free dwelling and operating in and through us during the coming month.

\*To enter into the “Gateway” of the New Month with Thanksgiving, Praises and Worship. For bringing to Him a “firstfruits” offering as we enter in!

## **2. A CALL THROUGHOUT THE WORLD FOR ISRAEL TO KNOW, RECOGNIZE AND LOVE HER REDEEMER.**

**This weekend, millions of Jews attending synagogue will find themselves listening to over five chapters from the Book of Leviticus (see Torah Portion below)—over 110 verses describing minute details related to their duties regarding burnt offerings, grain offerings, peace offerings, sin offerings and guilt and trespass offerings.** Hearing and following all of these careful instructions was, of course, extraordinarily important for those to whom they were initially directed. And today, for those studying these things, the Holy Spirit may give revelation into the depths of what each offering signifies. Such depths are not, however, likely to be afforded many of those hearing the passages read quickly through in Synagogue next Saturday morning. **Yet this week, the Haftarah** (that portion from the Prophets which will be read last) **we find to be profound—filled with truths regarding Israel, her relationship to God, His relationship to her—the problem of inherited sin. So much accessible and pertinent in a special way to all who will hear—if they are still hearing!**

For that reason, we feel an urgency this week—to bring that which is last first! To focus for our prayers for Israel on this particular passage of Scripture—and on the “soil” into which the seeds of this Scripture will be scattered! Please read prayerfully this passage, focusing on the verses we have highlighted below. Pray that the Holy Spirit will carry the truths here into the soil of Jewish hearts as they are proclaimed. That individuals will find their spirits awakened, and return to them in private, and receive understanding which brings Life!

### **Isaiah 43:21—44:23**

Israel had come to neglect the instructions given by God for her worship; become utterly careless regarding their relationship to Him. Now, Jerusalem has been destroyed—this passage is addressed to Jews who have been deported to Babylon. The LORD in mercy and love, while pointing out where they are going astray, speaks to them of who they are, what is their purpose, what is their condition, what is the way back into their call. All of this, we believe, is for His people today!

**Isaiah 43:21. “*This people I have formed for Myself; They shall declare my praise.*”**

Israel was fashioned into a people set apart, formed in a special way for God Himself—that they might declare His Praise throughout the world—that in them *all* the families of the children of Adam might find blessing (Genesis 12:2-3). The second phrase is in the future tense. Even though fallen and in exile—the LORD declares that *‘They shall declare My praise!’*

***“I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; they shall never hold their peace day or***

*night. You who make mention of YHVH, do not keep silent, and give Him no rest till He establishes and till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.*  
(Isaiah 62:6-7)

**Isaiah 43:25.** *“I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins.”*

Israel had stopped obeying the LORD in offering the sacrifices He had prescribed (vss. 23-24)—sacrifices which pictured what He Himself must do on behalf of her sin. In rejecting obedience to Him, Israel has rejecting her own cleansing from sin. For forgiveness, she *must* understand and believe that she is in need of it—and that it came entirely from *Him!*

**Isaiah 43:27.** *“Your first father sinned...”*

The sin which has brought a curse on Jacob springs from the nature going all the way back, beyond father Abraham to our “first father” ...Adam. As we shall see in verse 6 of the next chapter, it is only God Himself who is able to redeem Israel, and all the world, from this curse. Ultimately, only a divine “second Adam” can take back what was given away by the first Adam—and carry away the sin of the world.

**Isaiah 44:1-3.** *“Yet hear me now, O Jacob My servant, and Israel whom I have chosen. Thus says the LORD 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 and the LORD’s; another will call himself by the name of Jacob; another will write with his hand, ‘the LORD’s,’ and name himself by the name of Israel.”*

This passage is a strong encouragement for us in praying God’s heart, His especial will for Israel. The words “seed” and “offspring” make clear that He is here calling down the centuries to the physical descendants of Jacob. It is an encouraging, loving word, warding away fear. The LORD calls him *Yeshurun*. *Yeshurun* comes from the word *yashar*—“upright, honest, straight and true.” Psalm 33:4 uses this word to characterize God’s faithful Word—and the first verse of that psalm says that His children who are *yesharim* find praising Him to be a lovely thing. As we saw in Isaiah 43:21 above, that is indeed Israel’s destiny! In these verses we see God’s promise to pour out His Spirit on Israel, at which time they will spring up into their destiny. Zechariah 12:10 speaks specifically about this “pouring out” as beginning “on the House of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem”.

### **REDEEMER**

**Isaiah 44:6-7.** *“Thus says YHVH, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, YHVH of Armies: ‘I am First and I am Last; Besides Me there is no God.’”*

In this verse we have six names for Israel's Lord—YHVH (Yehovah, the LORD); **King** of Israel; Redeemer of Israel; YHVH of Armies; FIRST and LAST; Elohim (God).

As in Zechariah 2:10-11, there appear here to be *two persons* present within the “oneness” which is YHVH. In Revelation 22:13 of the New Covenant, Yeshua the anointed One who is one with the Father declares, *‘I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.’*”

**Isaiah 44:8.** *“Do not fear, nor be afraid; Have I not told you from that time, and declared it? You are My witnesses. Is there a God besides Me? Indeed there is no other Rock; I know not one.”*

**Isaiah 44:21-22.** *“Remember these, O Jacob, and Israel, for you are My servant; I have formed you, you are My servant; O Israel, you will not be forgotten by Me! I have blotted out, like a thick cloud, your transgressions, and like a cloud, your sins. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you.”*

**Isaiah 44:23.** *“Sing, O heavens, for the LORD has done it! Shout, you lower parts of the earth; Break forth into singing, you mountains, O forest, and every tree in it! For YHVH has redeemed Jacob, and glorified Himself in Israel.”*

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*“But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel.”*

(Luke 24:21)

*“But of Him you are in Messiah Yeshua, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—that, as it is written, ‘He who glories, let him glory in the LORD.’”*

(I Corinthians 1:30-31)

*“Messiah has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us...”*

(Galatians 3:13)

*“Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Messiah, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.”*

(I Peter 1:18-21)

**PLEASE PRAY**

That God's own Spirit will be poured out on the dry, thirsty ground of Jacob's descendants (Isaiah 44:3). 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*" (44:21)—to bear witness to the virtues of her God, the 'Rock' (44:8). That we will realize that all of our efforts, or even our holy laws cannot of themselves save us—it is God *Himself* who has borne our sin, who blots out our transgressions for His own sake (43:25), who redeems us (44:6, 22-23). Pray for the "remembering" and the "returning" of Israel to her God (44:21-22) ... a God who as First and Last, and sees Israel in her completion—*Yeshurun* – "Upright One" in whom He *shall* be glorified! (44:2, 23)

### **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. The Haftarah, unless otherwise noted, will be that read in Ashkenazy synagogues around the world. The references for all texts are those found in English translations of the Scriptures.*

The readings for this week 26 March—1 April 2017 are called *VaYikra*— "And He Called".

**TORAH: Leviticus 1:1—6:7**

**HAFTARAH: Isaiah 43:21—4:23**

*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):*

**These sacrifices were for the common people as a whole. They deal with *voluntary* private sacrifices, for expression of gratitude, prayer, spiritual communion or desire for expiation, on the part of the individual. The *mishkan* (dwelling place of God's presence), had been prepared by the sacrifice of all the people, men women, young and old—and these sacrifices are on their behalf, not just on behalf of the priests.**

### **1. Burnt Offerings (Leviticus 1:3-17):**

From cattle herd (3), sheep (10), birds, turtledoves or young pigeons (14). A “Burnt Offering” carried the idea of “submission of the worshipper to the will of God in its most perfect form, as the entire animal was placed upon the Altar to be burnt. The Hebrew word *ohlah* signifies “that which ascends”, symbolizing the ascent or rising of the soul in worship. “By making the offering ascend to heaven, the one who offers it expresses his desire and intention to ascend himself to Heaven; i.e. to devote himself entirely to God and place his life in God’s service.” (*The Pentateuch and Haftorahs*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed: The Soncino Press, 1960. Here and in all subsequent quotations).

### **2. Grain Offerings (Leviticus 2:1-16):**

Offerings of Flour, Wheat or Barley prepared with oil and frankincense. “When anyone (‘a soul’) offers a grain offering...” The very poor who could not afford an animal, could offer a “meal offering.” The Hebrew is *mincha*—here referring to a sacrifice not involving slaughter of an animal. The Meal and oil “are not natural products, but are obtained as the result of toil. The meal-offering typified the consecration of man’s work to the service of God” (Ibid.). **(2:13) “Every offering of your grain offering you shall season with salt; you shall not allow the salt of the covenant of your God to be lacking in your grain offering. With all your offerings you shall offer salt.”** (Salt acts as a preservative, preventing deterioration and putrefaction (leaven and honey can produce it). Salt typifies “that which is abiding.” *On Friday evenings in Jewish households, salt is sprinkled on the bread as thanks is offered up for God’s provision.*

### **3. Peace Offerings (Leviticus 3:1-17):**

*Zevach shelamim*—sacrifices ‘made in fulfillment of a vow (zevach), or in gratitude for benefits received or expected. It would thus be an occasion when man seeks and obtains peace with his Creator. In the peace-offering there was inherent a feeling of joyousness, either in celebrating a happy occasion in the people’s life, or some important event in connection with a family or individual”. Taken from the cattle herd (1), the flock (6) (a lamb (7) or goat (12).

### **4. Sin Offerings (Leviticus 4:1-35):**

Sin (*het*): For humankind, made in God’s image “to miss the mark” of set by His righteousness. All are under sin, even when as here, he or she did it in ignorance: **the Anointed Priests (3); the congregation as a whole (13), civil rulers of the people (22), individuals from among the common people (27)**. Blood was required to make atonement for sin and to provide forgiveness.

### **5. Guilt and Trespass Offerings (Leviticus 5:1—6:7)**

Special cases for sin offerings—coming into contact with impurity (5:2-3); omitting to fulfil a vow (5:4): “trespass”—unintentionally appropriating for one’s own use a ‘holy thing’ from the Sanctuary. Lastly, Chapter 6 deals with sins or trespass against God and against one’s neighbor

and the offering required for restitution, atonement and forgiveness. In all of these it is the Priest (the *cohen*) who “*shall make atonement...before the LORD* (6:7).

**Haftarah**  
**Isaiah 43:21—44:23**  
(See Above)



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[The readings for next week, 2-8 April 2017 are called *Tsav*—  
“Command”: TORAH: Leviticus 6:8—8:36; HAFTARAH: Malachi 3:4—4:6 (*Shabbat HaGadol*)

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