

Prayer Update From Israel (March 7, 2016)



*Hebrew graves on the Mount of Olives in Zion
where Messiah has promised to come and dwell.
(Zechariah 8:3; 14:40)*

*Our Eyes shall behold Your return with mercy to Zion.
Blessed are you, LORD, that brings back His Shekinah to Zion.
(Prayer from the Siddur: See under *Shekinah* in Torah Portion below)*

1. GOD OF THE ARMIES OF ISRAEL.

On the first of March, Kehila News Israel released the “first published survey online of Messianic Jews serving in the Israeli army or IDF (Israeli Defense Forces).” The survey was made in cooperation with local Israeli Messianic ministries which organize conferences and Bible studies for soldiers on their weekends off. Here are some results of the survey:

***96% of those asked, said that their fellow soldiers are aware of their faith in Yeshua as Messiah.**

***78% stated that their commanders or officers knew of their faith.**

***Regarding reactions of fellow soldiers and officers to knowledge of their faith, 78% were “positive”, 22% “indifferent”, and 14% “negative.**

***Unlike those of a generation ago, few believing soldiers feel that they face significant discrimination or persecution for their faith.**

***Some 30% of those questioned responded that they have a fellow believer in their unit. A little over a decade ago it was almost unheard of for two believing soldiers to be serving together.**

Accompanying the article is a chart showing that 43% of Messianic soldiers are in non-combat service, 57% combat. Their stations are spread out across Israel, 9% along the Gaza Border, 18% in Judea & Samaria, 3% in Jerusalem, 15% on the Lebanon Border, 55% “Other”.

Some random comments appearing on the printed survey:

“Most of them [fellow soldiers] have never heard about Messianic Jews and want to hear more about Yeshua...”

“Unfortunately, most of the soldiers in my unit [with whom] I talk about my faith don’t really care...”

“My officer was surprised and asked a lot of questions...”

[All above statistics and observations drawn from “Messianic Soldiers in the Israeli Army: Bolder than Ever about Their Faith”: *Kehila News Israel*, Mar 1, 2016 © 2016-Kehila Ministries International. To read the entire article, Google: *Messianic Soldiers in the Israeli Army: Bolder than ever about Their Faith.*]

Armies of Israel

We are grateful for this encouraging study on the phenomenon of Believers in the modern Israeli military. As we have pointed out in previous Updates, when David was facing Goliath (I Samuel 17:45), he mentioned two words for “armies”. *“I come to you in the name of YHVH of hosts...”* “Hosts” is *tzevaoth*—the word still used in Israel for “armies”. *“God of the armies of Israel”*—Here the word is *ma’ar’khot*, a word meaning “array”—that which has been “put in order”. God is the One who arrays the armies of Israel. *These include **angelic armies***, led by *Mi’kha’El* (Michael)—the *“great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people”* (Daniel 12:1; 10:13, Rev. 12:7). It was this army which David heard marching in the tops of the balsam trees when his physical army went out to battle the Philistines in II Samuel 5:24. ***There are spiritual armies all over the world, called by the Commander of the Host to war on behalf of Israel.*** Believers in Messiah Yeshua soon find themselves set in array in a *spiritual* war, battling unseen forces—*“principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this age, spiritual armies of wickedness in the heavenlies* (Ephesians 6:12-16). Whatever their country, they may on occasion find themselves called to join forces on behalf of Israel—to enter into warfare-intercession on behalf of Jerusalem, ***“until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a torch that burns”*** (Isaiah 62:1).

But there is another “army of Israel” which falls under the leadership of the Captain of the Hosts—the military which has been appointed of God (Romans 13:1) over His returned people of Israel to their ancient land. All Jewish young people are required to join this army at

18. Most of the men will be required to serve in the reserves for years afterwards. ***Please pray for the Israeli Defense Force.*** We believe that the God of the Armies of Israel is determined to bring *this physical* army “into array” under His command. Satan hates this army—he will do everything to keep the light of its Commander from breaking through into the understanding of the tens of thousands continually flowing through its ranks. Presently, the IDF is filled with young men and women who do not know or care about their Commander. Although He will sovereignly work on behalf of His people through the agency of this army, its heart is far from him. Certainly, every decision and every operation carried out by its leaders is not presently righteous. ***But God has released into its ranks a young remnant who, like the holy warriors of old, fervently love their heavenly King, are networking with other Believers to seek His desire, learning to hear Him, to flow in harmony with the leading of God, with each other, and with the angel armies under His command.***

DAVID the Soldier and the necessity of Divine Insight

David is a special example for these soldiers. When, after defeating Goliath, he is inducted into Saul’s army (**I Samuel 18**), he has already learned through his hours and days and years of being a shepherd to listen to God, to trust him, to worship him, to have his mind informed by Him. ***“So David went out [to battle] wherever Saul sent him, and behaved wisely”*** (I Samuel 18:5 NKJ). The Hebrew word translated “behaved wisely” here is sometimes translated “prospered” (NAS, ESV), or “did it so successfully” (NIV). But there is something deeper here. The root of this word *sekhel* is essentially related to man’s *reasoning powers*. When mentioned in relation to God’s servants in the Bible, it may *result* in prosperity or success. But its deeper sense is ***a reasoning ability informed by God; an ability to reason clearly, enlightened by the Holy Spirit.*** Or, in another form, ***one who receives insight—especially Heavenly insight.*** It is not enough to have knowledge—one must have true *insight* into what to do with that knowledge in a special situation. Nor is it acquired wisdom, which usually is a different word.

As a soldier, David’s relationship with God made it possible for his mind to be informed with this insight—to *reason clearly, enlightened by God’s Spirit*. This resulted in success and favor with all around him. We see it exercised repeatedly in I Samuel 18:

“So David went out wherever Saul sent him, and behaved wisely [with sekhel]. And Saul placed him over the men of war, and it was good in the eyes of all the people, and also in the eyes of Saul’s servants” (18:5b).

“And David behaved wisely (through sekhel—insight) in all his ways, and YHVH was with Him” (18:14).

“When Saul saw that he was acting very wisely (with much sekhel), he was afraid of him. But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them.” (18:16).

“And so it was, whenever they went out, that David behaved himself more wisely (sekhel) than all the servants of Saul, so that his name became highly esteemed” (30).

It is essential that we pray for believing soldiers of Israel, that they live and move with their minds opened to and informed by the insight of God. This was pointed out twice by the LORD as He released Joshua to lead His army into the promised land:

“Be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the instruction [torah] which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success [NAS/ESV margin: “act wisely”/Hebrew root: sekhel] wherever you go. This book of instruction shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success [“act with insight/sekhel]. Joshua 1:7-9.

Lastly, the prophet Daniel was told by an angel how essential this would be for God’s army in the latter days:

By smooth words he will turn to godlessness those who act wickedly toward the covenant, but the people who know their God will display strength and take action. Those who have insight [root: sekhel] among the people will give understanding to the many...Some of those who have insight [root: sekhel] will fall, in order to refine, purge and make them pure until the end time; because it is still to come at the appointed time.” (Daniel 11:32-35 NAS).

And in the last chapter of Daniel, when there is a time of great distress in Israel:

“Those who have insight [root: sekhel] will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever...Many will be purged, purified and refined, but the wicked will act wickedly; and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight [root: sekhel] will understand” (Daniel 12:3, 10).

PLEASE PRAY:

*** For believing men and women in the IDF (Israeli Defense Force), that they will come into the military already nurtured and strong in their faith—filled with the Holy Spirit and with an intimate relationship with their Lord.**

*** For soldiers who have presented their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God...allowing Him to renew their minds.**

*** For those who “have insight” to shine brightly, giving understanding to many. To gain favor and rise through the ranks as leaders respected and loved by their troops.**

*** For courage to live lives of purity, marked by integrity, ready to share with those who ask, of the Hope which is in them.**

*** For blessing and multiplication of godly ministries which grant places for soldiers to come together, relax, be strengthened and edified when they are on leave.**

***For strong networking between believers in the IDF. With the presence of cellphones, Facebook, etc., this generation more than any before are now able to call, pray for, encourage and strengthen each other when off duty.**

*** That the Spirit of God fall on the Israel Defense Force—that Israeli soldiers come to know who is their Commander in Chief—that He is the one who arrays the armies of Israel—placing each soldier exactly where He has need of him or her!**

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 6-12 March 2016 are called *P’kudei*—“Accountings Of—”

TORAH: Exodus 38:21—40:38

HAFTARAH: I Kings 7:51—8:21

***THIS TORAH PORTION** carefully describes the concluding stages of constructing the Tabernacle, even down to itemizing the amount of precious metals used. It is noteworthy that neither in this account of finishing the work, nor in last week’s account of beginning it, are the *Urim and Thumim* (Exodus 28:29-30) mentioned. This suggests that they were not “fashioned” by the creative skills of men, but given by God to be placed in the Breastplate of Judgment. The Portion then ends with the completion of the work of the Tabernacle (39:32), its erection (40:17), and the coming of the *manifest Presence of the LORD to fill it with His Glory*—that He might dwell among His people in their travel to Canaan. **SIMILARLY, THE HAFTARAH** ends with the Ark of the Covenant being brought up from the City of David to the new Temple built by Solomon, with its being placed in the Temple’s inner court, and with the *cloud of God’s glory filling the House of the LORD* (I Kings 8:11).

***I Kings 8:8.** This takes care to point out that in Solomon’s Temple, the poles used to transport the Ark of the Covenant were so prominent that they extended out of the Inner Sanctuary of the Temple so as to be visible in the Holy Place. The LORD’s instructions in the Torah for carrying the Ark had evidently been viewed as ‘lesser details’ by David when he sought to bring it up to Jerusalem from Kiryat Yearim (II Samuel 6:3), resulting in the death of one of his men when the

ox pulling the cart stumbled. **PLEASE PRAY** that we be attentive to the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27)—realizing that details are just as critically important as what seem to be the ‘big pictures.’

Shekinah

Both of the readings this week have to do with completing preparations of a place—and then the *coming* of God’s Presence to dwell among His people. Although it does not appear in Scripture, a Hebrew word sometimes used for the manifestation of the glory of His Presence on Earth is *Sh’khinah*, or in English: “**Shekinah**.” It is related to the word *shakhan* which we discussed several weeks ago, when we read in Exodus 25:8 of God’s desire to *shokhen*—to *dwell closely* with, to *neighbor* with His people. And of His delight that they should so also desire for *Him* to be among them, that they would willingly sacrifice to prepare a *mishkan* (tabernacle)—a place for Him to dwell. In this week’s Parashah, the Glorious Presence—the *Shekinah* of God—*comes* into the place prepared for it. There would be a tragic time, many years later, when that Presence would depart from its *mishkan* (Ezekiel 11:23). It has been a longing within the Jewish soul ever since that it return. The *Siddur*, an ancient Hebrew prayer book still used in Synagogues today, contains the following prayer:

Our Eyes shall behold Your return with mercy to Zion. Blessed are you, LORD, that brings back His Shekinah to Zion.

In parts of the Body of Messiah today, one may hear of a longing for the coming of the *Shekinah*—the manifest presence of the Glory of God. This can be of course a blessed longing (Moses cried, “*Show me your glory!*”). In welcoming *Shekinah*—we are not merely calling for some “glorious” experience or manifestation—we are instead responding in our hearts to *His* desire to *shokhen*—to dwell among us!

“I will dwell among the children of Israel and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, who brought them up out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them. I am YHVH their God” (Exodus 29:45).

“And I will dwell in your midst. Then you will know that the LORD of Hosts has sent Me to you.” (Zechariah 2:11).

“Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him, that glory may dwell in our land” (Psalm 85:9).

“‘For I,’ says the LORD, ‘will be a wall of fire all around her [i.e. Jerusalem], and I will be the glory in her midst’” (Zechariah 2:5).

PLEASE PRAY: for an awakened longing in Israel for the Presence of the LORD to return to His Land. Pray for grace among us as Believers in preparing the way for His Glory. And pray for revelation among Israelis that preceding Messiah’s physical return to the Land, it is possible for His glorious Spirit to take up residence within the individual

hearts of all of His people (Ephesians 2:22)—to commune with them and encourage them, and to lead, even as did the cloud and the fire of His Presence in the wilderness.



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[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week 13-19 March 2016 are called : *VaYikra--* “And He Called”: TORAH: Leviticus 1:1—6:7 + “*Shabbat Zakhor*”: Deuteronomy 25:17-19; HAFTARAH: I Samuel 15:2-34]

NOTE: In a note to last week’s Parashah we wrote that the usual *Haftarah* for *VaYa’k’hel* was Jeremiah 34:8-22; 33:25-26. It should have read I Kings 7:13-26; 40-50.

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