

## **Prayer Update From Israel (April 13, 2015)**



### **GREEN IN THE DESERT**

*Judean Desert just east of Jericho, photographed two weeks ago, at a time when this terrain would normally be barren and brown.*

#### **1. LATTER RAIN...AND HAIL TO SWEEP AWAY DECEPTION.**

*“Ask the LORD 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).*

*“I will make justice the measuring line and righteousness the level; Then hail will sweep away the refuge of lies and the waters will overflow the secret place ([Isaiah 28:17](#)).*

*The weather in Israel has been unusual of late.* It is over a month since the beginning of the season for “latter rains” (the “former rains” begin in October). We received good precipitation during the late fall and again early this year. Parts of the deserts became green, remaining so much later than usual. Many places were filled with flowers. In recent years, it has not been uncommon for there to be little or no rain in April, so when earlier this past week there was a heat wave, we thought perhaps the rains were over. Then overnight, the temperatures took a dive, rain began in the north and snow began falling on Mount Hermon. Soon, more than 20 centimeters had accumulated there, and there was flooding in many places about the country. Saturday, news services were reporting temperatures lower for this time of year than they’ve been in over 25 years. Yesterday (Sunday), found storms moving across the country, accompanied by hail. “Rare Hail Storm Hits Tel Aviv” read one headline in *The Jerusalem Post*. At one point in early afternoon, the ground and streets in Jerusalem were covered with

hail. When it hails in Israel, it usually comes as the vanguard of a storm system. But this was different; it was coming intermittently and violently.

We are grateful for the moisture. After such a dry 2013-14 season, God has truly been blessing Israel. Yet the unusual hail—coupled with the Scripture from Isaiah quoted above—make us wonder if God may be trying to tell us something. ***One week from this Wednesday is the deadline for Mr. Netanyahu to form his coalition.*** It still appears far from certain whether he will have done so by then—at least with the right-wing parties he has been working to bring into it. We have no doubts that Netanyahu is the leader of God’s choosing for this season. But what are God’s priorities during that season as regards the government with which he must lead? There could be serious drawbacks were he to dump those with whom he is presently negotiating, and reach for a unity-government with Labor, presently planted in the opposition. But there might be equally serious drawbacks to being bound-up with the two ultra-Orthodox parties. Most of the apprehension in Israel is over the rapidly increasing dangers posed by Iran. Any confrontation with that power would require the widest and most unified governmental front possible.

#### **PLEASE PRAY:**

**\*That God will bring into formation a strong, unified government capable of addressing the challenges facing Israel in months to come.**

**\*That this will be a government characterized by justice and righteousness. Pray that any hidden refuge of falsehood satan may be using to bring into place a weakened and inept government, will be exposed—the secrets brought out into the open. *“I will make justice the measuring line and righteousness the level; Then hail will sweep away the refuge of lies and the waters will overflow the secret place (Isaiah 28:17).***

**\*Integrity and protection (both mental and physical) over Benjamin Netanyahu. That he will not be deceived, but be granted divine grace in the judgments he must make during the coming week. Pray a grace and protection over his family, and God’s favor over him as he moves into his new term as Israel’s leader.**

#### **2. YOM HA'SHO'AH—“HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY”.**

*Yom ha'Sho'ah*—Holocaust Remembrance Day will be commemorated in Israel this coming Thursday (April 16<sup>th</sup>). Ceremonies began at sundown on Wednesday. At 10:00 the following morning a siren will sound throughout the country. Traffic will come to a halt; in city streets and out on the highways Jews will emerge from their cars to stand silently. It lasts for two minutes, calling to remembrance the horror which less than 80 years ago arose, seeking, not for the first time, the extermination of the Jewish race.

The Hebrew word for “Holocaust” is *Sho'ah* (Capitalized, when transliterated). It means catastrophe, calamity, cataclysm, desolation. The word appears several times in the Scriptures; in Ps 35:8 and 63:9 it is the destruction which the Psalmist’s enemies wish to bring upon his soul, but into which, as he trusts in the LORD, they themselves will fall.

**Earlier this year saw commemoration of the 70<sup>th</sup> year since the liberation of Auschwitz, Poland. Yesterday, 12 April, saw the same in Germany of the camp at Buchenwald.** The birth of Israel as a “Jewish State” provided a haven for the survivors of the *Sho’ah*— a home and bastion for their descendants, hopefully against such an evil rising ever again. Indeed, the slogan “*Never again!*” has been passed from generation to generation since then. Much has been done with the establishment of museums, with books and films and programs in the belief that “education” and “being informed” is the best defense against its recurrence. Yet, we feel compelled to point out that those nations most at the heart of the ideology which spawned the Holocaust in the 1930’s, had for over 400 years been considered the center of Western civilized education, culture, and for much of that time, we might add, the Christian religion. One thing we should have learned from this is that secular Education will never, in and of itself, stem a rising tide of evil.

***Might there be another Sho’ah?*** Certainly the evil one would like for there to be. He realizes, with the establishment and growth of this nation, *perhaps especially now that there is an awakened and growing Messianic remnant in the Land*, that God’s not-yet fulfilled holy purposes for His ancient people are still on course. He knows his time is short. ***And so we see again a rising anti-Semitism.*** This past week at a soccer match in Utrecht, Holland, where the visiting team was from Amsterdam, a city known for its historical Jewish presence, a group of hometown fans loudly chanted, ***“Hamas, Hamas, Jews to the gas. My father was in the commandos, my mother was in the SS, together they burned Jews, because Jews burn the best!”*** The chant, caught on video and circulated among Dutch media, quickly brought forth apologies and promises to locate the offending fans. But, as was pointed out in a *Washington Post* article, it was not an isolated incident—only the latest in a string of similar anti-Semitic episodes that are marring the game across continental Europe and Britain (“Nazi chants at Dutch soccer game...”: *The Washington Post*, 10 Apr 2015). “Where there is smoke, there is fire”—and where the seeds for such vile expressions of hatred exist, it might take only a slight shift in the national environment for them to spring up into actions. Amongst intellectuals in “western” countries, anti-Semitism is, in recent years, more likely to find focus for its expression on the existence of the nation of Israel itself, cloaking itself behind a repeated assurance that it is not “anti-Jew”—only “anti-Zionist”. And of course, throughout the world, Islam nourishes itself on a hatred of Jews, drawing from its primary source, the Koran itself.

***It is sobering to find this same word sho’ah in Ezekiel 38:9*** (here translated, ‘storm’), “*You will ascend [an alliance led by Gog, the Prince of Rosh], coming like a storm, covering the land [of Israel] like a cloud, you and all your troops and many peoples with you*” (NKJV). In that ultimate battle, the LORD will intervene in wrath against the aggressors. Yet, before that time, we see armies arraying against the Land, with national and religious leaders denying the Holocaust, and calling for Israel’s annihilation. Nor are Jews guaranteed safety by staying away from the Promised Land—their world outside of Israel is rapidly darkening. The Hope of the children of Israel is the God of their fathers—in the Land of their Fathers. ***“...had I not believed that I would see the goodness of YHVH in the land of the living! Hope in YHVH; Be Strong! He will release courage into your heart. Hope in YHVH—the LORD!”*** (Psalm 27:13-14).

This week, as Israel pauses to ponder a great darkness which singled out her most recent ancestors for destruction, at the same time casting an uneasy eye towards a quickly clouding future:

**PLEASE PRAY:**

**\*For revelation that the Word of the LORD in Jeremiah 29:11 is still alive and ringing, specifically and first of all for His people Israel— *“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.”***

**\*For a massive awakening of desire in Israel to put her trust in the LORD rather than in her allies, her leaders, or her perceived military strength (Psalm 118:8-9; 33:16-17).**

**\*For the estimated 189,000 elderly Holocaust survivors living in Israel today (approximately 40 die each month, about 14,200 each year). Because of what they have experienced and seen, these dear people are often bound by the Accuser in a hardened, cynical world of darkness. Pray that the true Light which pierces the deepest darkness (John 1:5,9) will shine into their hearts—drawing them in Love to a life in which they have long since ceased to believe. Pray for revelation and blessing to come to them *after* Holocaust Memorial Day, the only day of the year in which many of them feel they are remembered at all.**

**\*For a breaking in Israel of any ‘identity’ related to the extent of our persecution in the past. Pray that, while learning what we can from the past, we will begin to focus more on the future and what God’s Word tells us about it.**

**\*Psalm 25:22: *“Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.”***

***\*For spiritual discernment among the Body of Messiah in Israel and among the nations, an increased ability and alertness to ‘test the winds’: To sound a warning of the coming evil ones, to hear and release the report of the good!***

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**THIS WEEK’S TORAH PORTION:**

***From ancient times there has been a weekly portion (Parasha) 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, and follow the texts read in Ashkenazy Jewish synagogues..*

The Parasha for this week 12-18 April contains a “double reading”:

I. *Thazria*—“Quicken with Seed/Conceive”:

TORAH: Leviticus 12:1--13:59

II. *Metzora*—“Skin Disease, Leprosy”

TORAH: Leviticus 14:1—15:33

HAFTARAH: II Kings 7:3-20

(Note: Because this Sabbath immediately precedes a *Rosh Chodesh* (Beginning of the Hebrew month), some synagogues will for the Haftarah substitute or add I Samuel 20:18-42.)

*After last week’s focus on the importance of Israel’s being ‘set apart’, of her distinguishing between the holy and unholy, the unclean and clean (Lev. 10:10)—this week’s portion continues in instruction of how this was to be worked out in everyday life.* There needed to be purification and atonement made for a mother when bringing forth children; there must be measures of isolation and testing taken for outbreaks of surface diseases or blights (both on physical bodies and on dwellings), and for contaminating discharges from the body. And there was the way prescribed for restoration once healing had occurred.

*When Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus) came to be born in a stable, his mother Miriam (Mary) submitted to these same instructions for purification* (Luke 2:22), and when it was time for the sacrifice, she and Joseph could only afford the humble offering mentioned here (Lev 12:8; Luke 2:24). Yeshua’s coming was to “undo the works of the devil” manifest in all of these diseases, to bring atonement, redemption healing and cleansing. It is very significant that among his healing miracles, special mention is made of those involving lepers and a woman with an ‘issue of blood’. **PLEASE PRAY: as those in synagogues this coming weekend hear these words which so graphically picture the presence and result of sin in our midst and man’s need for healing and being pronounced clean, that the Holy Spirit will convict of sin and righteousness and judgment, and draw Jews to seek cleansing through the One who washes white as snow!**



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**[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week 19-25 April are again a “double reading”: I. *Acharei Mot*—“After the Death”: TORAH: Leviticus 16:1—18:30; II. *Kedoshim*—“Holy Ones”: TORAH: Leviticus 19:1—20:27; HAFTARAH: Amos 9:7-15].**

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