

Prayer Update From Israel (April 16, 2013)



1. ISRAEL'S 65th AND LAYING FOUNDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

This past Thursday, April 11th, was the first day of the second Hebrew month, *Iyar*. This month is mentioned specifically (using the Canaanite name *Ziv*) in I Kings 6:1, 37. It was during this month that Solomon “began to build the house of the LORD” and “the foundation was laid.” And it was on the fifth of *Iyar* in 1948 that the “foundation” for the modern state of Israel was laid when David Ben Gurion read the Declaration of Independence, proclaiming that the new nation be called by the name Israel. That day will be celebrated this Tuesday, April 16th. It is preceded by a 24 hour period of memorial for the 25, 578 who have fallen in Israel’s wars and at the hands of terrorism. Sirens sounded for a minute throughout the nation on Sunday evening and will do so again Monday morning.

As *Yom haZikharon*, the Day of Remembrance, draws to an end, Jews will turn out to celebrate modern Israel’s 65th ***BIRTHDAY***. There will be revelry in the streets, food, fireworks, and a holiday on Tuesday. This week it was announced that Israel’s population has just hit 8 million—reportedly around 137,000 more than at this time last year. At the time of the establishment of the state 65 years ago, the population stood at only 806,000 souls. According to this week’s report, around 6 million of the population is Jewish, while the nation’s Arab population numbers around 1.6 million. The study shows that a remaining 318,000 (4%) are “*non-Arab Christians, individuals with other religions and those with no religious affiliation*” (“Israel population hits 8 million on eve of Independence Day”: The Jerusalem Post (JPOST.com), April 14, 2013, 16:17). This last statement is misleading, because ironically, a large majority of those classified as “Jewish” actually themselves have “no religious affiliation”—i.e. they are agnostic or atheist in their belief.

Yet, we praise the LORD... that this year has continued to see the growth and influence of the Messianic Jewish (i.e. Jewish believers in Yeshua as the Messiah, Son of God and Savior of the

world) community and the Arab Christian community in the Land! By delightful coincidence (?), on this 65th birthday of Israel the first words *Psalms* 65 ring truer than they have been in 2000 years—“*Praise is awaiting You, O God, in Zion.*”

PLEASE PRAY:

***Thanksgiving that God has brought His ancient people back into their land of heritage—according to His Word, and established and prospered them in that Land for 65 years.**

***Grace from the God of all Comfort upon those who have been bereaved. Pray for revelation that He is also a God of Hope who loves them and has a Future and a Hope.**

***Protection for Israeli Jews during this day of celebration.**

***Many Arabs in Israel and the contested territories commemorate the day of Israel’s becoming a nation on the Gregorian date of 15 May, calling it *Nakba*—“Catastrophe”. Please pray for Muslim Arabs to come to Salvation in *Yasuah* (Jesus)—and for God to grant them His council, wisdom and peace regarding His purposes for both Jews and Arabs place in His Land. Pray for racism to be broken down in Israel.**

***That all “foundations” which need to be laid during this month, both in the new government, in relations with our allies, and in the Body of Messiah in Israel be accomplished. “For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Yeshua the Messiah!” (I Corinthians 3:11)**

***That the Body of Messiah be maturing and be being prepared as ministers of the Spirit in the Land. Daniel 12:1-3 tells of a coming “*time of trouble*” for Israel “*such as never has been since there was a nation [1948?] till that time.*” We are not to draw back in fear as that time approaches—but it is important that the Body of Messiah be being made ready now—for it will be a time when “*those who know their God shall be strong and do what is necessary, and those with insight will instruct many*” (Daniel 11:32-33); a time when “*those with insight*” and “*those who turn many to righteousness*” will shine like stars in the darkness (12:3).**

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.

This week (April 14--20) also contains a “double reading”:

I. *Acharei Mot*—“After the Death”

TORAH: Leviticus 16:1—18:30

***HAFTARAH: Ezekiel 22:1-19**

***Leviticus 16:21-22.** “Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send it away into the wilderness... The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness.”

This portion begins with instructions for the most holy day of the year—Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. A goat was sacrificed and its blood applied to the Mercy Seat as atonement for the people—while a second bore their sins away into the desert. The name of this ‘scapegoat’ in Hebrew (*azazel*) is used today as a curse. Please Pray for revelation that Yeshua (“The LORD is Salvation”) was the “Lamb of God” who became a ‘curse’ for us, made atonement in His blood and bore away the sin of the world.

***Leviticus 18:3.** “According to the doings of the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, you shall not do; and according to the doings of the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you, you shall not do; nor shall you walk in their ordinances.” Leviticus 20:22. “You shall therefore keep all My statutes and all my judgments, and perform them, that the land where I am bringing you to dwell may not spew you out.”

Between these two verses are enumerated a wide array of evil practices related to idolatry, sexual perversions and occult activity. Israel was warned that these practices had resulted in the previous inhabitants being spat out of the land. Eventually (See the Haftarah portion from Ezekiel) they would bring about the expulsion of Israel herself. Please pray for conviction of sin and for repentance leading to revival in Israel. Many of the same abominations mentioned in this passage are prevalent in our Land today. If we are to become rooted in the land and remain, they must be put aside. God’s law has not changed.

***(On weeks requiring a ‘double reading’, usually only the *haftarah* of the second reading is used.)**

II. *Kedoshim*—“Holy Ones”

TORAH: 19:1—20:27

HAFTARAH: Amos 9:7-15 (Ashkenazy Synagogues)

Ezekiel 20:2-20 (Sephardic Synagogues)

***Leviticus 19:1-2.** “YHWH spoke to Moshe, saying: ‘Speak to the entire community of the Children of Israel, and say to them: “Holy are you to be, for holy am I, YHWH your God!”’”

(Everett Fox Trans.).

As Everett Fox points out in the commentary to his translation, “*As the key chapter of this part of Leviticus, Chap. 19 is wide-ranging and rhetorically powerful. It extends holiness to virtually all areas of life—family, calendar, cult, business, civil and criminal law, social relations, and sexuality. Most (but not all) of the laws deal with what we would term ethics, that is, relations between people...As such, they have become an exemplar and a cornerstone, at least in idealized form, in Western thinking about these issues.*” For Chapter 20, “*We move now into laws dealing with some of the more serious offenses against God in the biblical view: idolatry (Including worship of the “Molekh” and consulting spirits), insulting parents, adultery, and sexual crimes. These are distinguished from the previous chapter by the inclusion of punishments; their seriousness is indicated by their capital nature.*” (Fox, Everett: The Five Books of Moses...©1995, Shoken Books, New York).

***Leviticus 19:3** (Fox Translation). “*Each-man—his mother and his father you are to hold-in-awe, and my Sabbaths you are to keep: I am YHWH your God!*” The first specific directive in this chapter (regarding the initial call to holiness) combines the reverent respect for one’s parents with that of the first thing ever recorded as being “holy”—the Sabbath (“*Then Elohim blessed the seventh day and sanctified it [i.e. made it holy, VaYekadesh], because in it He rested from all His work which Elohim had created and made.*”—Genesis 2:3). The phrases “*I am YHWH!*” or “*I am YHWH your God!*” are used at least 15 times in this chapter. YHWH (The exact pronunciation is today uncertain, some scholars think *Yehovah*, others *Yahweh*) is different than all the other gods served in the lands Israel would be entering. As He is different, so the life-styles of His followers would be different! He was YHWH. The very power of that NAME released with His directives would provide sufficient grace and authority for those who would be willing to obey.

***Leviticus 19:17-18.** “*You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him. You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of Your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am YHVH.*” Yeshua would equate this command to love one’s neighbor as one’s self with the First Commandment, to Love YHVH our God with all our hearts, souls and minds (Matthew 22:39). In the New Covenant, John would teach further that “*He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes*” (I John 2:9-11).



***Leviticus 19:32.** *“You shall rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man, and fear your God: I am the LORD.”* The first part of this verse “Mifnei seva takum!” (“Before the aged, arise!”) is today posted on little signs (see above) inside public buses in Jerusalem! PLEASE PRAY for the aged in Israel—that they will draw near to their God. Pray for the younger, that there will be a renewal of respect and honor for age in the Land—with the realization that this is linked to the “Fear of God” and honoring the Name of the LORD.

***Leviticus 20:7-8.** *“Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am YHVH your God. And you shall keep My statutes, and perform them: I am YHVH who sanctifies you.”* The words “consecrate”, “holy” and “sanctifies” in this passage all have within them the root of the Hebrew word *kadosh*. Here we have man’s responsibility in “setting himself apart”—by guarding and walking in God’s directives—but we also see that becoming ultimately Holy will require a work of the LORD Himself!

***Amos 9:11.** *“In that day I will raise up the fallen sukka [hut, booth, tent, tabernacle] of David, and wall up its breaches; I will also raise up its ruins and rebuild it as in the days of old.”* Zechariah 12:10 makes clear that a day of grace for conviction and repentance is coming to the “House of David”. Ezekiel 34:23-30 and 37:22-28 prophecy that in latter days a united kingdom of Israel under David will be restored. He built his first palace on Mount Zion, just south and below Mount Moria where his son would build the First Temple. Since David was first and last a worshipper “in Spirit and in Truth”, many see the establishment of places of continual worship around the world and in Israel (modeled on that which took place round the tent David set up over the Ark of the Covenant in the City of David) as an “earnest of”—a sort of “prelude to” the ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy. Please pray that God’s “Kingdom Come!” over this ancient location, just south of and below the Temple Mount, where David built his first palace and erected the tent for the Ark. The area is home to both a Muslim Arab and an Orthodox Jewish population. Pray for His righteousness and justice, His wisdom, courage, compassion and timing over Jerusalem Mayor Nir Birkat and Prime Minister Netanyahu, who face decisions of great import regarding this area. Pray for the Arabs and Orthodox Jews who are hostile neighbors on this tiny strip of land...that a Light would shine in their darkness—a revelation of the Son of David who is also the Son of God, Who came once as a Man into this world, and who will one day return.

***Ezekiel 20:12.** “Moreover I also gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between them and Me, that they might know that I am YHVH who makes them holy.” As mentioned in the Leviticus 20:8 passage above, it is the God Who made the Sabbath holy (Genesis 2:3) who makes His people holy. In the New Covenant, Ephesians 5:25-27 tells us that “Messiah loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify (i.e. make her holy) and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ...that she should be holy and without blemish.” Please pray for a move of the HOLY Spirit in Israel awakening a longing for holiness—with a love for the One who makes us holy!



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[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week (21-27 April) are called *Emor*—“Speak” (to the priests): TORAH: Leviticus 21:1—24:23; HAFTARAH: Ezekiel 44:15-31]

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