

Prayer Update From Israel (April 23, 2012)



Photo: REUTERS

Fire in the Desert

This is not the Biblical “Pillar of Fire by Night”...but a sabotaged gas pipeline crossing the Sinai bringing natural gas to Israel and Jordan from Egypt. The pipeline has been attacked more than 14 times since the fall of Egyptian leader Hosni Mubarak last year. On Sunday Egypt cancelled a 20-year gas deal with Israel. (See Prayer Point 2 below.)

1. THE MONTH OF IYAR, ISRAEL’S 64th AND FOUNDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Today Monday, April 23 is 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 Thursday, April 26th. It is preceded by a 24 hour period of memorial for the thousands who have fallen in Israel’s wars and at the hands of terrorism. Sirens will sound for a minute throughout the nation on Tuesday evening and again Wednesday morning. As *Yom haZikharon*, the Day of Remembrance, draws to an end, Jews will turn out to celebrate modern Israel’s **64th BIRTHDAY**. There will be revelry in the streets, food, fireworks, and a holiday on Thursday.

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 64 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 this day on 15 May, calling it a day of 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).**

2. ENERGY FROM EGYPT COMING TO AN END

“Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help...but who do not look to the Holy One of Israel, nor seek the LORD” (Isaiah 31:1).

On Sunday Egypt announced that it is terminating a long-term gas agreement with Israel. Within the 1979 Egypt-Israel peace treaty is a clause stipulating that commercial oil sales from Egypt to Israel would be part of normal economic relations between the two countries. In June 2005 this was revised to include natural gas, with a deal being signed which would bring billions of cubic meters of Egyptian gas to Israel over the next 20 years. After construction of the 460-million dollar pipeline four years later, Israel began importing the gas, eventually using it to generate between 20 and 40 percent of the country’s electricity.

From the beginning there has been much resentment in Egypt regarding this arrangement with Israel; with the deposition of Mubarak in January of last year, came immediate calls that it be terminated. Since that time the pipeline has been sabotaged at least 14 times, repeatedly bringing the transfer of gas to a halt. Electricity prices in Israel have gone up 20% since the attacks began. The last attack took place on April 9th and Israel has received no gas since then. Now she is being told that the entire deal is off. Although official sources in Cairo are reportedly claiming that the decision is a commercial issue not rooted in political disagreements, Israel’s Finance Minister Yuval Steinitz said he viewed with *“deep concern the unilateral Egyptian announcement...both because of its diplomatic and economic aspects. This is a dangerous precedent that diminishes the peace treaty.”* Israel’s opposition leader Shaul Mofaz, a former Chief of Staff and Minister of Defense commented that this places ties between Egypt and Israel at their lowest point since the treaty was signed. With the Muslim Brotherhood and radical Islamist parties winning the majority of seats in Egypt’s new parliament, there is speculation that following the presidential elections a month from now, a significant shift away from the 33-year-old peace treaty might not be long in coming. One immediate result of Sunday’s decision is speculation that there could be major black-outs across the country’s electrical grid before the end of the summer.

PLEASE PRAY:

***For integrity in Israel’s officials as how best to respond to this latest potential crisis with our southern neighbor. That the present treaty between these two countries would not come to an end outside of the timing of the LORD.**

***That Israel will not sacrifice her integrity in order to continue receiving fuel from Egypt. That she will come to see that the source of her supply for all her needs is the Holy One of Israel.**

***That God would prosper the development of the huge petroleum fields which have been discovered off of Israel’s north-eastern coastlines. That there will be supernatural wisdom, integrity and protection in expediting the retrieval and processing of these reserves.**

***That the bond between believers in Israel and Egypt would be preserved and strengthened. That even as elements of enmity arise between our countries, we would “strive to guard the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” and strengthen each other in our prayers. That we would continue to pray God’s Kingdom come, preparing the way for Isaiah 19:23-25 to come to fruition.**

3. LATTER RAINS

Zechariah 10:1 says, “*Ask the LORD for rain in the time of the latter rain.*” The time of the “latter rain” in Israel is from March through April, sometimes reaching a little into May. There is then no rain at all until October. There has been virtually no rain in Israel for the past month. We have rejoiced and thanked God for the abundant rains received earlier this year. It was and is a wonderful gift and we remain thankful. However, we sense an urgency...that that isn’t all that He has to give; in fact, that He knows we haven’t yet received that which it will be *very necessary* that we have acquired by the end of the season. II Kings 13:15-19 comes to mind, where Elisha instructed the king strike the ground with arrows. The king struck three times; but the man of God rebuked him that he hadn’t done so five or six times. In not persisting, he gained respite for the short-term—but forfeited a complete victory over his enemies. At present the “forecast” shows no chance of rain going into May—but then, the forecasts early last fall predicted dryness through the winter, which proved false. James reminds us that Elijah was a man with a nature no different from that of us 21st Century people. He prayed earnestly “*and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit*” (James 5:15-18). **PLEASE PRAY: that God will send latter rains in abundance upon Israel...into and throughout the month of May!**

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’s portion again 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.**

II. *Kedoshim*—“Be Holy”:

TORAH: Leviticus 19:1—20:27

HAFTARAH: Amos 9:7-15 (In Ashkenazy synagogues)

Ezekiel 20:2-20 (In 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*, some *Yaweh*) 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”* (1 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 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 Israel—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 the root of the Hebrew word *kadosh* within them. 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 prophesy that afterwards a united kingdom of Israel under David will be restored. 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. As we wrote a year ago, there continues to be a growing storm over the ancient physical site of that tent and of David’s palace—the “City of David”, located just southward below the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. This land was taken by Israel from Jordan in the ’67 war. There are directions the city wants to go with this area, but they would involve removal of a number of Arab dwellings built there without permits since that time (Past administrations allowed this building, casting a ‘blind eye’). It is a complex problem on both sides. For now, we would say that we continue to see an intense spiritual as well as physical conflict mounting over the City of David, intended by the enemy, we strongly suspect, to thwart the fulfillment of the prophecy written above. **Please pray that God’s “Kingdom Come!” over this ancient location. Pray for His righteousness and justice, His wisdom, courage, compassion and timing over Jerusalem Mayor Nir Birkat and Prime Minister Netanyahu, who faces decisions of great import regarding the site of the ancient House of David in Jerusalem. 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 came into the world and who will 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 (29 April—5 May) are called *Emor*—“Speak” (to the priests): TORAH: Leviticus 21:1—24:23; HAFTARAH: Ezekiel 44:15-31]

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