

Prayer Update From Israel (April 24, 2012)



1. FOR NATIONAL LEADERS: A WORD FROM SAINT PAUL AT ST. PAUL'S IN LONDON

The funeral of Margaret Thatcher in London last Wednesday (most of the order of which she prepared before her death) was from beginning to end an incredibly powerful affirmation and testimony to the faithfulness and goodness of God, of salvation in His Son, of comfort in loss and the hope of resurrection. (The order of service, including texts for the hymns, prayers and Scripture readings, may be viewed at

<https://www.stpauls.co.uk/documents/news%20stories/btoos.pdf>.) For many, the most arresting moment of the ceremony came when Amanda Thatcher, 19-year old granddaughter to the deceased, rose and, with remarkable grace and poise, delivered the First Reading from the Epistles. Amanda, who lives in Texas with her mother, is an evangelical Christian, who has been involved in outreach ministry in China, and who was reportedly very close to Lady Thatcher during her last years. Her text, Ephesians 6:10-18, was probably not one with which most of the dignitaries and world leaders present would be familiar, nor, in fact, was it one usually to be encountered at a state funeral: ***“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore, take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day...”***

Yet, as these words came forth from Amanda in soft, measured, bell-like tones they developed an enormous power of meaning which arrested the attention of those present, holding them in a kind of wonder. The next day there would be much made of the “breathless British media reaction” to

her reading, about “the Texan who stole the show”; speculations about possible political ambitions of the young lady “suddenly thrust into the international spotlight.” Yet what seems plain to us is that here was an obedient young woman, going under assignment of her Lord to release, in the anointing and timing of His Spirit, a critical and strategic message from God to certain of the national and public figures gathered on the occasion of Mrs. Thatcher’s passing.

Israel’s Benjamin Netanyahu and his wife Sara were among those leaders. For the past week Israeli papers had dropped mention here and there that the Israeli Prime Minister was “determined” to attend the funeral. Whatever may have been his perceived motive, we believe it to have been by divine appointment that he was present. How may it have affected his thoughts when, in the midst of a very formal head-of-state funeral, this ‘militant’ message from his ancient countryman *Shaul* (Paul) broke sharply into his consciousness? He moves about in a world where the ‘spiritual’ is, if considered at all, usually associated with personal feelings; where any thoughts of the *supernatural* are totally segregated from the intense “realities” of international conflict and political affairs.

The stress surrounding those realities, the anxieties, the perplexities, the mental exhaustion all gather as a cruel weight and pressure upon the shoulders and mind of the person holding the high office in Jerusalem. And here out of the blue comes an explanation he had probably never heard before—***“You’re not wrestling against flesh and blood—but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high place!”*** Netanyahu respects the *Tanach* (Jewish Scriptures); he claims to study it regularly, and even hosts Bible studies in his home. He has moved and spoken over the years with Christian organizations, and has been exposed to elements of Christianity. His good friend Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper (also present at the funeral), is a committed Christian. Yet one wonders if he had ever been exposed to this New Testament, so familiar to Evangelical Christians, before. How might it come across for the first time to one in his position in the world?

One thing is for certain, he heard it Wednesday, and under a powerful spiritual anointing. It presented illumination regarding some of the violent pressures and conflicts he continually finds himself “up against” in his positioning in Israel—***“Spiritual powers in high places!”*** But here also were words of *hope and instruction* for standing against those powers—***“Armor from God”***— ***“Truth”, “Righteousness” “Faith” “A Sword” “The Word of God”***; all words he’s no-doubt familiar with from his Bible studies, Yet not just holy words, but real spiritual weapons of good for standing against the ever-present spiritual realities of evil warring over the most contested land and city in the world.

Although this passage (Ephesians 6:10-18) is more often used by Christians in a personal way, the strategic reading of it this past week at Margaret Thatcher’s funeral awakens within us an awareness of how powerfully it may be used as a vehicle for our intercession over our civil and national leaders. “Principalities, powers and world rulers of darkness” focus on their physical counterparts overseeing the governance of cities, states and nations. We live in an age in which the mere mention by elected officials of “spiritual” realities, as having bearing on the evils afflicting societies (for instance, the bombings last week in Boston) would be considered taboo. But this does not lessen the reality of these powers—nor of the holy power for good

available to those whose trust is in God. It is essential that men and women with a deep and sound awareness of these spiritual realities—and insight concerning the weapons of their warfare, permeate the “high places” of our governments to encourage and influence our leaders, and “*having done all, to Stand!*”

PLEASE PRAY:

***That those world leaders and men and women of governmental influence who were present at Margaret Thatcher’s funeral last week will recall and ponder the Word given there regarding the spiritual realities of the war over their countries.**

***That the Sword of the Spirit, the *rhema* Word of God released on that occasion would reach into the “eternity” which God has placed within their hearts (Ecclesiastes 3:11). *That those with “ears to hear” will receive the truth that they battle not against flesh and blood, but against spiritual realities—which require spiritual armor and weapons; that they will call on God to equip them for their work.**

***For Prime Minister Netanyahu and his wife Sara, that they will be drawn to examine the passage which was printed in their program at the funeral. Pray for the Spirit of God to grant them revelation that this really does describe what they face—and that they will be drawn to call on the Lord for his help.**

***For Amanda Thatcher, that she will be protected with a “rear guard” against any spiritual backlash for her part in Wednesday’s service. Pray that she will press on to the ‘high calling’ of her Lord and the destiny he has for her, and not be distracted by the media attention which attended her participation in the funeral of her Grandmother.**

***Ephesians 6:10-18 over the leaders in civil and national government and in the Body of Messiah, both in Israel and in your own country!**



“But the land which you cross over to possess is a land of hills and valleys, which drinks water from the rain of heaven, a land for which the LORD your God cares; the eyes of the LORD your God are always on it, from the beginning of the year to the very end of the year” (Deuteronomy 11:11-12)

PLEASE JOIN US IN THANKING GOD FOR LATTER RAINS IN ISRAEL THIS PAST WEEK!! Last year we received scarcely a drop of rain from the beginning of March until October. But this past week saw rains all over the country and (rare for this time of year) several inches of snow falling on Mount Hermon! Thank you for praying for these Latter Rains (Zechariah 10:1)! God is answering. We believe them to be a special protection for the months to come and we are so grateful. ***Hodu La’Adonai ki tov, ki le’olam chasdo!***—“Give thanks to the LORD for He is good, and His lovingkindness endures forever!”

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 is called *Emor*—"Say!" (to the priests):

TORAH: Leviticus 21:1—24:23

HAFTARAH: Ezekiel 44:15-31

This week's portion focuses first upon the importance of priests in being clean in their service to the LORD and in the picture they present before the people. In their work on behalf of life and wholeness, they are not to defile themselves with that which is dead or deformed or impure. Chapter 23 presents in detail the Holy Convocations, the LORD's "appointed times" for His people Israel. These begin with the weekly *Shabbat* (Sabbath)—then in the Spring: *Pesach* (Passover), the Week of *Matzot* (Unleavened Bread), the presenting of First Fruits, 49 days later *Shavuot* (the Feast of Weeks/Pentecost); and in the Autumn: *Yom Teruah* (the Day of Sounding the Shofar), *Yom Kippur* (the Day of Atonement) and *Succot* (The Feast of Tabernacles). Meditation on the contents of this chapter we find to be especially enlightening regarding the LORD's redemptive purposes over Israel, which through these also present a picture of His working in time on behalf of all humankind.



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[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week 28 April—4 May will be another "double reading": *Behar*—"On the Mount" (Sinai): TORAH: Leviticus 25:1—26:2; HAFTARAH: Jeremiah 32:6-27; and *Bechukkothai*—"In my Statutes": TORAH: Leviticus 26:3—27:34; HAFTARAH: Jeremiah 16:19—17:14.]

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