

Prayer Update From Israel (April 29, 2012)



34th day
Counting the Omer
(Leviticus 23:15-16; from last week's *Parasha*)

1. THE GOD WHO ARRAYS ISRAEL:

“But I come to you in the name of YHVH Tzevaot (‘Yehovah of Armies’), Elohei Ma’archot Yisrael (the ‘Arraying God of Israel’), whom you have defied.” (I Samuel 17:45)

“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual armies of wickedness in the heavenlies. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand” (Ephesians 6:10).

Last Tuesday, speaking at a security conference in Tel Aviv, Maj. Gen. (res.) Amos Yadlin, a former head of IDF Military Intelligence, said that Iran has essentially crossed the “red line” set by Israel [and mentioned by Prime Minister in a speech at the UN last September] regarding its rush to acquire a nuclear weapon. Yadlin speculated that by this summer “Iran will be a month or two away from deciding about a bomb.” (“Iran already past nuclear red line,’ expert says”: *The Times of Israel*, April 28, 2013). Although Iran officially claims that her nuclear program is peaceful, both her President and her highest religious leaders have repeatedly made allusions to the “soon disappearance of the Zionist Entity” [i.e. annihilation of Israel]. International sanctions have hurt the Iranian people grievously, yet appear to have done little to slow down the development of war-grade uranium. If the “red line” is now truly past, that means that a window for a possible military strike by an alliance of nations or by Israel alone to try and at least slow down the development of nuclear arms in Iran may begin to close within the next couple of months. But if Israel deems such a strike necessary, is she ‘ready and armed’ for such a strike? and her citizens adequately shielded from the retaliatory measures which would surely follow?

This week word was released to the media of an enormous arms deal in process between the U.S. and Israel, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. For Israel the deal will include, new advanced radars for jets, “anti-radiation missiles that target air-defense radars”, and the V-22 Osprey aircraft, which can take off and hover like helicopters, but fly like planes, and which are able to swiftly transfer loads of troops or equipment into otherwise inaccessible locations.

Perhaps the most significant factor of the deal as related to Iran, is that for the first time Israel will be allowed to purchase KC-135 refueling tanker planes from American contractors (“Report: Israel, UAE, Saudis in huge US arms deal”; *The Jerusalem Post* (JPOST.com), 19 April 2013 12:19 IST). Last year when she attacked a hostile weapons depot in Sudan, Israel proved that her air force was capable of executing strikes as far away as Iran. But the great distance would nevertheless severely limit the effectiveness of strikes from Israel against the multiple locations in Iran which are developing the weapons. Reception of the new tanker planes could change all that—allowing the planes mid-air refueling in route to their targets or on their way back. Setting aside the question of the advisability from Israel’s perspective of vast arms sales also going to two countries (Arabia and U.A. Emirates) which are hardly friendly towards her, or the fact that no super “bunker-busting” bombs were included in the deal, Israel nevertheless, now finds herself more equipped for physical battle than she has ever been—along with the implication at least that her American allies expect the new weapons may soon be put to use.

And probably not in battle only with Iran. Israeli reports early last week of the use of poison gas by Assad’s troops against rebels in Syria have now been confirmed by American intelligence. This seems to indicate that yet another ‘red line’ laid by both Israel and America has just been crossed. At issue is not only the inhumane use of these evil weapons against the forces seeking to oust Assad’s regime. But what will happen should the enormous stockpiles of Syrian WMD’s get into the hands of these Sunni anti-Assad factions themselves—such as the notorious *al-Nusra* Brigade—a jihadist group which only two weeks ago openly declared its allegiance to *al-Qaeda*. This is a scenario which Israel has declared it will not allow to come into being.

Two days ago Israel shot down a drone approaching the coast near Haifa. It is presently assumed to have been Iranian, launched by Hezbollah forces in Lebanon. Whether it was on a reconnaissance spy mission, or was armed is not yet known. Our Prime Minister happened to be in the air over Northern Israel at exactly the moment the drone was discovered making its approach, and his plane had to be swiftly grounded until the danger could be dealt with.

As war clouds gather and Israel brings into array her weapons of warfare, we believe it is critical to recall and pray into the “intelligence report” about which we wrote last week—that given to Prime Minister Netanyahu when he and his wife attended the funeral of Margaret Thatcher on April 17th. No doubt, he was at that time already aware of the looming acquisition of the desperately-needed fuel planes and other new weapons needed to complete Israel’s armory. Yet here was a word to a world leader from a Higher Authority, one exactly within His timing and bearing a powerful anointing (Ephesians 6:17), able to cut through even into the consciousness of him and his wife. Although he would soon be equipped with new incredibly powerful weapons, these would in themselves not be enough. They might be effective against

flesh and blood—but Netanyahu must understand that his armies would not only be fighting against flesh and blood—**but against powers and principalities—against spiritual armies of wickedness in heavenly places, and for these he would need not only the new weapons but also a different kind of weapon and different armor.**

We believe the God of ancient Israel to be also the God watching over the Israel which today is being revived and returned to her Land. One of His very *names* is “One who places Israel’s Armies in Array” (see Scripture from I Samuel at heading). We believe that this arraying—this equipping and placing in order— extends to both her *physical* and *spiritual* defense and warfare. He has brought her back to the land. She is still very much in darkness, and we are not saying that all of her decisions are just or that all of her battles will be victorious. But His eye is on her—and He will be again revealed to her as *YHVH Tzevaot, Elohei-Ma’archot Yisrael*.

“It was not by their sword that they won the land, nor did their arm bring them victory; it was your right hand, your arm, and the light of your face, for you loved them. You are my King and my God, who decrees victories for Jacob” (Psalm 44:3-4).

PLEASE PRAY:

*For wise and godly counsels to make it through into the high places of Israel’s governmental and military leadership.

*If it be within God’s plan for Israel’s protection and His glory that she be instrumental in bringing down the nuclear threat against her in Iran, that this will be done in His way in His exact timing—and with as little loss of innocent life as possible. That those who take part will be of His choosing and preparation.

*That the Holy Spirit of God cause the words from Ephesians 6 which they heard in England to come to the memory of Prime Minister Netanyahu and his wife Sara. That these words which are “living and powerful” will not be able to be forgotten—and will not return to God without accomplishing the purpose for which they were sent forth. That they cause the Netanyahu’s to be aware of very real *spiritual* realities warring for and against Israel’s placement in the land and over Jerusalem. That they be prepared for godly messengers the Lord will send to grant them clearer understanding. That Netanyahu realize there is a **“Prince of the Kingdom of Persia”** (Daniel 10:13) much more powerful and filled with evil than President Ahmadinejad or the Ayatollahs, one who can only be overcome by angelic powers. That there is also a **“Prince of the Army of YHVH”** (Joshua 2:14), before whom his forebear Joshua worshipped and in whom he trusted—and *that “Prince” is near to him today; waiting for him to seek His Face!*

*For God to array Israel, including those who will be able to move in light and grace and healing and encouragement amongst the wounded in time of war. For believers in Israel and Iran and Syria and Lebanon and Jordan to be equipped to bring and speak life, and to stand in the Spirit against the powers of death.

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 there is a “double reading”:

NOTICE:

We have received a number of queries regarding the ‘double readings’ The reasons the readings are sometimes doubled is that the Torah has been divided into 54 portions so as to ensure it will cover all weeks of a year, including leap years. But most (non-leap) years require fewer than 54. And when the *Festivals of the Lord* (Leviticus 23) fall on weekends, different readings related to those festivals are read. For this reason, it is necessary to ‘double up’ several times in the year in order to be sure that the whole Torah is completed by *Simchat Torah* at the close of *Sukkot*.

We have also received questions regarding the ‘proper’ way and timing in which these portions should be read. We wish to emphasize as Believers in the New Covenant that Biblically we see NO special, ‘right’ way for reading these portions except as you are individually guided by the Holy Spirit! They are read in Synagogues each Sabbath—and the preceding week is the week in which we believe it to be an edifying period for familiarizing ourselves with this Word, and in that way coming into alignment with what will be being heard/read by Jews around the world at the weekend. As written in the Introduction above, we find this an avenue through which the Spirit may show us special ways to intercede in prayer on behalf of those who will be hearing these Words of Life. Apart from this, we find the Torah to be filled with Life and Truth and Guiding Principles for our lives—and with *Yeshua!* (Jesus). Luke 24:44-45 makes clear that there was much written in the “Law of Moses” about the Messiah who was to come. Having said this, we would also empathize that we believe *all* the books of both the Hebrew and New Covenant Scriptures to be “God breathed” and essential for our spiritual nourishment and our knowledge of God.

I. *Behar*—“On the Mount

TORAH: Leviticus 25:1—26:2

***HAFTARAH: Jeremiah 32:6-27**

*On weeks in which a “double reading” occurs, in synagogues usually only the *haftarah* of the second reading is used at the end of the service.

***Leviticus 25:2, 23:** *“When you come into the land which I give you, then the land shall keep a sabbath to the LORD...for the Land is Mine, for you are but aliens and sojourners with Me.”*

The land in which *Elohim* ordained that the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob should dwell is precious to Him. Last week’s readings spoke of His causing that land itself to spit out inhabitants who defiled it with gross sin. In this chapter Israel was commanded to allow the Land to observe its own regular ‘sabbaths’ to the LORD (a command which Israel would unfortunately ignore). When Judah was eventually carried away captive in Babylon, the LORD said that for 70 years the land would now finally receive the rests which it had been denied. **PLEASE PRAY:** that Israel will deal wisely with the land to which God has returned her, coming to realize that it is a holy charge as well as gift. That she will come into a relationship with her God which will enable her in His timing to be entrusted with *all* of the land He has promised to return to her oversight (Ezekiel 36:4-8 teaches of a time when the very land currently under contention in Judea and Samaria will “put forth its branches” to bear fruit for the returned children of Jacob).

***Leviticus 25:8-10:** *“You are to count off seven sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years, so that you have the time of the seven sabbaths of years, namely, forty-nine years. You shall then sound a ram’s horn abroad on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the day of atonement you shall sound a horn all through your land. You shall thus consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim a release [liberty] through the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a Jubilee for you, and each of you shall return to his own property, and each of you shall return to his family.”*

Just as we are presently ‘counting the omer’ up to the fiftieth day (Pentecost) when one day the Spirit of Freedom would be released! –the Hebrews in the land were also to count “Sabbaths of Years” and then proclaim Freedom; it would be a “Jubilee” for them. *Jubilee* is Hebrew: *yovel*—which is another name for a *shofar* or “ram’s horn” (the word is combined with the word *shofar* in Joshua 6:4). Here it is significant that this horn proclaiming freedom was sounded on *Yom Kippur* the “Day of Atonement”. The “ram caught in the thicket” (Genesis 22:13) had signified the substitutionary sacrifice for Isaac (God had provided the Lamb), it had been caught by its horn. Such a horn would be sounded every fifty years upon God’s *Day of Atonement* to proclaim freedom from slavery. Someday the shofar of God will sound to proclaim eternal freedom from our earthly bodies and Celebration in Heaven with the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the World!

***Jeremiah 32:15, 17** *“For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land.’ ... “Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard [wonderful] for You...” Please pray for believers in Israel to have means and favor to be able to purchase property—so as to truly “put down their roots” into the land for themselves and their descendants. That, as impossible as this often seems, we would realize*

that NOTHING is too difficult for our God to do on our behalf, who has promised again to root us and grant us ‘houses, fields and vineyards’ in His Land.

II. *Bechukkothai*—“In my Statutes”

TORAH: Leviticus 26:3—27:34

HAFTARAH: Jeremiah 16:19—17:14

With this reading we come to the end of the Book of Leviticus. Chapter 26 brings the book-proper to a close (Chapter 27 is an appendix “focusing on a variety of laws pertaining to voluntary offerings and taxed obligations to the sanctuary). Chapter 26 emphasizes the favor and blessing which will accompany walking in obedience to statutes and commandments of the Lord (vss 3-13)—Obedience will affect the very weather and soil of the land, even as Disobedience (in the Garden) had brought a curse on the ground. Then follow five necessary warnings of the consequences for getting out from under the Protection afforded by obedience to God’s directives. Each of these warnings is preceded by “*But if you do not obey Me*”—or, “*And after all this, if you do not obey Me*”—or, “*Then if you walk contrary to Me, and are not willing to obey Me*”—or, “*And if by these things you are not reformed by me, but walk contrary to me*’. (The clear implication is that it is the LORD’s desire that these severe disciplines will draw His people back into His way of Life, not away from it.) Verses 34-35 deal with the recovery of the Land if Israel is finally ejected, the plight of Israel in exile without God (36-39); and the restoration of the people when they at last humble themselves (“It is the Lord’s mercies which lead us to repentance”) and turn back to seek His ways. These closing words would be a comfort, an encouragement to repentance, a hope of a future for Jews—both during the future exile in Babylon, and through an even greater exile down to today.

As we complete our way through one of the Books of Moses, it is customary to end the reading with the following declaration:

“Chazak, Chazak, v’Nit’Chazek!!

“Be Strong! Be Strong! And may we be Strengthened!”

**Jeremiah 17:5-8 (NIV): “This is what the LORD says: ‘Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the LORD. He will be like a bush in the wastelands; he will not see prosperity when it comes. He will dwell in the parched places of the desert, in a salt land where no one lives. But blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in Him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.’”*

This is a wonderful passage to pray over the Body of Messiah in Israel. It is so essential that we be weaned from trusting in our own natural abilities—otherwise, we will not even see true prosperity when it arrives. We know that ‘heat’ will be coming, and in many forms (We have just come out of several “years of drought”). But it is God’s desire that we be so rooted in the streams of His living Spirit so that His grace will keep us green and

fruitful even during those times. **PLEASE PRAY:** that we be nurtured and trained in placing our trust and confidence totally in Him. We pray the same for you!

***Jeremiah 17:14:** *“O LORD, the hope of Israel, all who forsake you shall be ashamed. ‘Those who depart from Me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the source of living water, the LORD.’ Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed; Save me, and I shall be saved, For You are my praise.”* *HaTiqva*—“The Hope”, is the name of Israel’s national anthem. The ‘hope’ in that song is “to be a nation free in our Land.” But Israel will never be truly ‘free’ in her land until the Son has set her free and she is “free indeed” (John 8:36)—until she realizes that the LORD alone is her ‘Hope’. **THIS IS BEGINNING TO HAPPEN!!** Please continue to pray that more and more Israelis will find the ‘Source of living water’—our healing, our Salvation—and that He become “Our Praise!”



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[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week 5-11 May will be *BeMidbar*—“In the Desert”. TORAH: Numbers 1:1—4:20; HAFTARAH: Hosea 1:10—2:20.]

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