

Prayer Update From Israel (May 12, 2014)



*Counting of the Omer
Day 27*

1. THE RAINIEST DAY IN MAY

“When He utters His voice, there is a tumult of waters in the heavens, and He causes the clouds to ascend from the end of the earth, He makes lightning for the rain and brings out the wind from His storehouses” (Jeremiah 10:13).

This has been a strange and difficult year regarding rainfall in Israel. As you know, the vast majority of our crops depend upon water pumped from the Sea of Galilee and several underground aquifers. These depend for replenishment upon precipitation during a rainy season which extends from roughly mid-October to early May. After that, there are generally five months of no rain at all. For around eight years the Sea and the aquifers had become dangerously low, due to a continuing drought in the region. Then during 2012-13 came a good year, and the drought was declared ended. Too early, it turns out. By mid-December 2013 there had been virtually no “former” rains at all. Then came a phenomenal snow and rainstorm from the far north, one which closed down Jerusalem and left hundreds stranded in their cars both inside and outside the city limits. After two days of wonderful moisture, it stopped. January and February were record months for no rain (It was the driest February in 87 years). The rains returned for one week in March—then nothing again. It appeared that Israel was headed for a year with no “latter” (late spring) rains at all—until last Wednesday night.

On Wednesday, the temperature dropped steadily. By the middle of the night there were thunder and lightning storms throughout the land, followed by hours and hours of a steady drenching rain throughout the country. The dry wadis and riverbeds came to life, there was flooding in the deserts, buses of tourists were stranded and had to be rescued, schools were closed. In the end, Israel had received *the heaviest one-day rain in recorded history for the month of May!* The Sea of Galilee rose an astonishing 1 inch in less than 24 hours. Arad in the desert received 1.73 inches, 40 times the average for this time of year.

PLEASE PRAY:

***Thanksgiving for the rains from heaven on a dry and thirsty land.**

***Zechariah 10:1: “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.”** As we pray that these late rains will return and continue, remember the last verse of last week’s *Haftarah*: **“Behold, I am YHVH, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too wondrous for Me?”**

***We recommend praying the following song by our friend Patti Ridings on behalf of Israel:**

As We Wait in Your Spirit

*As we wait in Your presence, We will spread our wings and fly
We will soar in Your love, For it never runs dry
As the Rain of Your Spirit Washes over our souls
In a dry and thirsty land We will overflow*

*So let Your rain come down, Watering this thirsty ground
Let Your rain come down, Breaking up our fallow ground
Let Your rain come down, Soften our hearts with Your love
Let Your rain come down*

*Just like a mother eagle, You lift our wings up high
You breathe Your breath beneath them, And teach us how to fly
You bid us to fly higher, Where our true fulfillment lies
For the source of our refreshing is hidden in Your eyes*

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2. AT THE CROSSROADS, May 13-16

This week an important conference is taking place from Tuesday evening through Friday in Jerusalem. Called “At the Crossroads”, brothers and sisters from a number of Middle Eastern countries will be joining with their Christian and Messianic Jewish counterparts from within Israel to seek the Lord together. The first conference of its kind held in 2012 reportedly brought together more than 70 delegates from Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Lebanon, Israel, Iraq, the Palestinian Authority, Cyprus, Armenia, Turkey, Europe and North America. While there have been other international Christian conferences in the region in recent years whose organization and overall tenor displayed a decidedly anti-Israel bias, this one seeks to gather Middle Eastern believers with their Israeli brothers and sisters in Jerusalem itself to worship and seek the Lord and to dialogue for the purpose of reconciliation and unity in the Holy Spirit. Among resolutions adopted as a roadmap at the last conference, the resolve is: 1. To worship together at the ancient gates of Jerusalem; 2. In doing so, to strengthen the bonds of fellowship between believers in the Middle East; 3.

To explore practically how the Holy Spirit is presently leading towards building of the “Highway” described in Isaiah 19:24-25 (“*In that day Israel will be one of three with Egypt and Assyria—a blessing in the midst of the land, whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, ‘Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance.’*”); and 4. To fulfill the Great Commission in our region.

Many of the delegates to the conference are Believers with Muslim backgrounds. For security and venue reasons, attendance at the conference was by invitation only, and most of the meetings are closed to the general public. Some 45 delegates were able to participate in a tour around the North of Israel—they return to Jerusalem before the beginning of the Conference on Tuesday evening.

PLEASE PRAY:

***That all impediments of the enemy such as blocked visas will be removed. There has already been evidence of much stronger spiritual opposition than two years ago; some delegates have even been turned away from entering Israel.**

***Breakthrough allowing everyone ordained to attend “At the Crossroads” to be able to arrive safely.**

***Health and protection for all of the delegates.**

***For the agenda of the Holy Spirit to be clear and to prevail.**

***For anointed worship and praise at the Gates of Jerusalem!**

***For God’s *kairos* message to be released by all those who will be speaking.**

***That cultural barriers be overcome in the love and patience of the Holy Spirit.**

***For release of a spirit of the love and unity of the Father to affect *reconciliation where necessary, *mutual hearing and understanding of God’s counsels and agenda, *working together as One New Man Jew and Gentile in the Holy Spirit.**

***For release of God’s strategy for the Body of Messiah in Israel and the rest of the Middle East work towards the advance of God’s Kingdom during the season ahead.**

***That financial resources will be released to cover the conference. Many of the Middle Eastern delegates had to be brought in at the expense of the organizers.**

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.

The *Parashah* for this week 11-17 May is called *B'Chukotai*—"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 *dis*-obedience (in the Garden of Eden) 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 each 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 experienced another “year of drought”). But it is God’s desire that we be so rooted in the streams of His living Spirit 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!”**



*Martin and Norma Sarvis
Jerusalem*

[The readings for next week 18-24 May are called *B'Midbar*—"In the Desert". TORAH: Numbers 1:1—4:20; HAFTARAH: Hosea 1:10—2:20]

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