

Prayer Update From Israel (May 4, 2015)



Counting the Omer Day 44

1. THE NEW GOVERNMENT.

Benjamin Netanyahu’s 20-minister government was finally sworn in late Thursday night, following a razor-sharp approval vote (61-59) by the Knesset. The following short article, taken from the 17 May 2015 online bulletin of the *International Christian Zionist Center*, and written by its director *Jan Willem van der Hoeven*, we find to be a clear and succinct assessment of “where we are now” following the contentious storm surrounding the recent elections and formation of Israel’s 20th Knesset. Please pray that it survive in the form that God ordains for this next season. We continue to thank the Lord for protection of the Ministry of the Interior from the anti-Messiah faction which had been expected to receive oversight of that crucial “gateway”. We find it interesting that the Likud minister who has received that portfolio is named “Shalom”. May God’s peace guard and rule over this entrance way into the land, both for new citizens and those He sends to go in and out—preparing the way for the large *Aliyah* we believe is soon to come.

“ISRAEL’S NEW GOVERNMENT

For exaltation comes neither from the east nor from the west nor from the south. But God is the Judge: He puts down one, and exalts another. (Psalm 75:6-7)

We have never prayed as much for an Israeli election and for the formation of a new Israeli government as we did these past months. Therefore we believe that this government, under the premiership of Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu, is what the Lord purposed. And although at this moment it has only a slim majority of 61 out of Israel's 120-member parliament (Knesset), we believe it will last much longer than all Israel's enemies hope. Its composition of just religious and politically right parties makes it the most conservative government in Israel's entire history -

strong enough, if we continue to support it with our fervent prayers, to withstand the pressures from within Israel as well as from without.

After all the haggling for special positions and favors which they have received, none of Netanyahu's coalition partners will now want to vote against their own government for fear of losing their hard won perks. The excessive talk from Israel's left wing commentators - with their dire predictions about the brevity of the new government's term and its inevitably quick collapse - stems more from the Left's unwillingness to accept - even rage against - the vote of the majority of their countrymen who chose for the right and not for them.

With the manifold political pressures already building on Benjamin Netanyahu's government from Washington DC and European capitals, together with the ever-growing threat posed by Israel's enemies - Iran, Hamas with its renewed tunnel building and stockpiling, and the Hizbollah with their tens of thousands of rockets ready to be fired on all of Israel - we need to come behind this government with strength.

Let us uphold it so that it will withstand not only the many pressures from without, but also the unacceptable destructive criticism by many on Israel's left from within.

May God indeed prevail for the sake of His beloved people, I pray.

Heartcry is a half an hour film where Benjamin Netanyahu and myself speak up for Israel. I believe it is one of the best tools we have to make known the love and compassion God has for His own people. Use it not just for your own viewing but share it as much as possible with others also. People all over the world have been deeply moved through this film! Here is where you can find it: <https://vimeo.com/15210104>

Jan Willem van der Hoeven, Director
International Christian Zionist Center

2. VATICAN OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZES “PALESTINIAN STATE”.

The Vatican announced Wednesday that it has officially recognized a treaty (soon to be signed) recognizing the “State of Palestine.” The Holy See had already welcomed the decision of the UN General Assembly of 22 November 2012, recognizing such a state, but this first ‘legal document’ negotiated between the Vatican and the Palestinians, will constitute official recognition. Among other things, it means that the Holy See will be switching diplomatic relations from the Palestinian Liberation Organization to the so-called State of Palestine. In practice, it does not exactly constitute a new direction for the Vatican. When Pope Francis visited Israel in 2014, the Vatican’s official program referred to P.A. President Abbas as president of the “state of Palestine,”...and the Palestinian ambassador to the Holy See is listed in the Vatican’s latest yearbook as representing “Palestine (state of)”. (Ibid.). During a visit of Abbas to the Vatican last Saturday, Pope Francis praised the P.A. President as “an angel of peace.”

When the treaty is signed, the Vatican, with its 1.2 billion followers, will be joining 135 nations which have already recognized such a state. Of course, no such state in reality currently exists (nor has ever existed). Yet, the Vatican announcement comes at a time when movement in the international community is accelerating in the direction of unilateral recognition and declaration of a Palestinian State with or without a negotiated settlement with Israel. All are aware that the official guidelines of Netanyahu's conservative new government, while promising to "advance the peace process" and "make an effort to reach a peace agreement with the Palestinians," does not, as in previous governments, make specific mention of a "Palestinian State." This, along with certain remarks made by P.M. Netanyahu on the morning of the elections have awakened sharp responses, and pressure is intensifying. In the UN, France is expected soon to present a new resolution to the Security Council recognizing such a State. And the US, which up to now has always vetoed any such resolutions, has, since the re-election of Netanyahu, let it be known that it will now "reassess" that policy.

Israel quickly voiced official "disappointment" with the Vatican's decision. Israel respects the current Pope, is grateful for the gestures he has made towards Jews. But as *Times of Israel* editor David Horovitz was quoted in the *New York Times*, "Even this philo-Semitic pope, this pope who cares about the Jews, even he doesn't get it. Every time something like this happens, there's this sense of anguish. Why don't you understand? We want to separate from the Palestinians, but on terms that don't threaten our security." (2.)

Yet the true issue behind the Vatican's decision goes far beyond that of Israel's security—it involves the prospect of an entity which is seen by millions as the head of Christ's Church on earth questioning Israel's divine mandate regarding the specific land-areas in question.

If Pope Francis means by "Palestinian State" what the Palestinian leaders mean, in so recognizing it, he is affirming permanent oversight over Judea, Samaria and the Temple Mount in Jerusalem—oversight promised to the descendants of Israel by *El Elyon* "The Most High God" (whom Francis himself claims to serve)—to a *different* people who worship a *different* god. He is saying that this covenant land, including the Mountain where David once reigned and where Psalm 2 says the Messiah will someday have His throne, should rightfully be ruled by a people whose leaders have vowed that after they have once gained control, they will make that land desolate of the children of Jacob along with the God (YHVH) whom they serve. A veritable "abomination which makes desolate."

It is interesting that more than one article we read today spoke of the Vatican having welcomed the UN General Assembly's resolution of November 22, 2012, which first recognized Palestine as a state (albeit for now, as with the Vatican itself, one with observer, non-member status). Could it have been a harbinger of things to come that, as we have pointed out previously, that fateful vote took place on the Hebrew calendar date of the 15th of Kislev, a date according to I Maccabees 1:54 upon which another "abomination which makes desolate" was set up in Jerusalem?

PLEASE PRAY:

*That Pope Francis, who on more than one occasion has gone out of his way to bless the Jewish people, will be convicted of the gravity of the false course which the Vatican has taken as regards recognition of a Palestinian State on Jewish soil.

*That the resolution which has been drawn up will face impediments which will result in its not being signed.

*That Israel will seek her God for her security...and for how to relate to the Palestinian Arabs in the territories which the Lord has allowed to come again under her oversight.

*For wisdom, courage and gracefulness for P.M. Netanyahu in guiding his government and country through an atmosphere of growing hostility in the nations towards the people of Zion and the lands bequeathed to them by the God of the universe.

(1.) “Vatican officially recognizes Palestinian state”: *ynetnews.com*, 05 13 15 17:11)

(2.) Quoted in, “Vatican to Recognize Palestinian State in New Treaty”: *The New York Times*, May 13, 2015).

THIS WEEK’S TORAH PORTION:

From ancient times there has been a weekly portion (Parasha) 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, and follow the texts read in Ashkenazy Jewish synagogues..

The Parasha for this week 17-23 May 2015 is called *B’Midbar*—“In the Desert”:

TORAH: Numbers 1:1—4:20

HAFTARAH: Hosea 1:10—2:20

B’Midbar (“In the Desert/Wilderness”) is the Hebrew name for the book, called “Numbers” in most English Bibles—after the numbering in the census lists of Chps. 1 & 26. The book describes key events taking place between Israel’s leaving Mount Sinai and her arrival at the borders of Canaan some 38 years later.

Numbers 2:2-3:** *“The sons of Israel shall camp, each by his own standard...On the east side, toward the rising of the sun, those of the standard of the forces with Judah shall camp according to their armies; and Nahshon the son of Amminadav shall be the leader of the children of Judah.”* The tribe of *Yehuda* (Judah), along with Issachar and Zebulun, was to camp facing the East. The Hebrew root for *Yehuda* is related to hands or arms raised in the giving of praise or thanks (cf. Gen 29:35). Judah was to camp on the side of the Tabernacle facing eastward—as though to “awaken the dawn” with praise (Ps 57:8). Psalm 63:1-4 bears a beautiful picture of this holy principal being demonstrated hundreds of years later by David (himself a descendant of Nahshon and Amminadav). He is also “in a desert” —and his Hebrew literally says, ***“Elohim, my God are you, I will ‘dawn’ you...my lips shall praise you...I will lift up the palms of my hands in Your name.” Numbers 10:14 (in the Parashah two weeks from now) will show that the tribe of *Yehuda* was also God’s choice to be in the lead when the camp broke up and moved forward. Hundreds of years after David, Jehosophat would place singers in front of his army (II Chronicles 20:21) heading out to engage an overwhelming foe, singing *“Hodu la’Adonai ki tov, ki le-olam hasdo!”* (“Give thanks with the raising of your hands to the LORD for He is good, for to forever is his lovingkindness!”). A tribe epitomizing thanksgiving and praise, it is also the “royal tribe” which must always come first, from whom a royal scepter would arise which would never depart. From this tribe would come the King of Kings, Yeshua/Jesus—of whom Jacob had prophesied that his brothers would praise, and his father’s children bow down before Him (Genesis 49:8)! Zechariah 12:10 prophecies the repentance and renewal of “the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem”—yet 12:7 reveals that first must come salvation of the “tents of Judah.” We believe that spiritually this implies that the rebirth of Jerusalem and eventually all of Israel will be ushered in by an outpouring of Praise and Worship in Spirit and in Truth. There are many signs that this is beginning to happen!

PLEASE PRAY: For praise, thanksgiving and worship to again rise to its place in the forefront of Israel (whose call includes being a praise in all the earth (Isaiah 62:7; Zephaniah 3:20). Pray for strength and inspiration for those in houses of worship and prayer which have been raised up in recent years. Pray for believers in the *Israeli Defense Force* and police to have grace in making praise and thanksgiving a priority. Since *Nahshon* was to be Judah’s leader—his name has come in modern Hebrew to be one of the synonyms for “pioneer” (Tradition says that he was the first to place his foot in the Red Sea after the command came to cross over). **Pray for those called to pioneer worship in a resurrected Hebrew language in restored Israel today! There are many, both old and young, male and female, Jew and Gentile through whom praise and worship in the ancient language has, during the past 30 years, begun again to be awakened!**

Numbers 4:4-6, 15. *“This is the work of the descendants of Kohath in the tent of meeting, concerning the most holy things. When the camp sets out, Aaron and his sons shall go in and they shall take down the veil of the screen and cover the ark of the testimony with it; and they shall lay a covering of porpoise skin on it, and shall spread over it a cloth of pure blue (Hebrew: *tekhelet*—a sky-blue dye made from a special mollusk), and shall insert its poles...When Aaron and his sons have finished covering the holy objects and all the furnishings of the sanctuary, when the camp is to set out, after that the sons of Kohath shall come to carry them, so that they will not touch the holy objects and dies. These are the things in the tent of meeting which the sons of Kohath are to carry.”*

Given the clarity of these instructions, it is strange the pictures and figurines one may see in souvenir shop windows in Jerusalem depicting Levites carrying the golden Ark of the Covenant, with the *aron*—“chest” and its Cherubim plainly visible. As is here and in other passages make clear, no one *ever* was allowed to look upon the holy Ark, except the High Priest on the Day of Atonement (and then amidst clouds of incense). On the road, it was not paraded out for everyone to gaze upon. Before leaving, the Aaronic priests (not the other Levites) came in, took down the veil; it appears that they then moved forward holding it as a screen, until, upon reaching the Ark, they draped it over the holy object as a covering. Upon this, other coverings were then laid (upon this holy chest upon which *kippur*—another word for ‘covering’—was made in blood once a year on behalf of the people’s sin). But the Ark of the Presence was Holy...and touching it or even looking upon it was more than even the especially set-apart priests were allowed to do. Each person involved must embrace the special responsibility of his office—and not seek another. The Levites cared for the outer courts; from among the Levites, the sons of Kohath would be the ‘carriers’ of the Ark; from among the Levites, only descendants of Aaron (*kohanim*—“priests”) could approach the holiest chamber to dismantle it—and from within the descendants of Aaron, only he and his successor could actually enter, once a year, within the veil.

***Hosea 1:10:** *“Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered. And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, ‘You are not My people,’ there it shall be said to them, ‘You are sons of the Life-God.’”*

PLEASE PRAY: For more and more of the millions of returned Children of Jacob to be awakened to their true identity—to recognize that they are not merely an ancient people related to certain Patriarchs; they are, in fact, beloved children of the Life-God Himself (Heb: *El Hai*), Who has sent forth His Son that they may *“have life, and that they may have it more abundantly”* (John 10:10)!

***Hosea 2:16; 19-20:** *“ ‘And it shall be, in that day,’ says the LORD, ‘that you will call Me “My Husband,” and no longer call Me ‘My Master’...I will betroth you to Me forever; Yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and justice, in lovingkindness and mercy; I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness, and you shall know the LORD.”*

PLEASE PRAY: For awakening of a longing in Israeli hearts for these wonderful attributes—*righteousness, justice, loving kindness, mercy, faithfulness*---with which her God is wooing her. Pray that grace will be released on that longing which will result in the ‘knowledge’ of her Lord prophesied at the end of the verse! It is interesting that in verse 16, the substituted word “my husband” is *“ishi”*, which literally means ‘my man’. **This knowledge can only come about in revelation of “the ‘man’—Yeshua the Messiah!”**

***Hosea 2:14-16 (NIV):** *“Therefore I am now going to allure her; I will lead her into the desert and speak tenderly to her. There I will give her back her vineyards, and will make the Valley of Achor a door of hope. There she will sing as in the days of her youth, as in the day she came up out of Egypt.”* Achor means ‘trouble’. **“Door (or ‘Opening’) of Hope” is *Petah Tiqva* (There is a large city by that name in central Israel). PLEASE PRAY that Israel will find grace to**

lift her eyes from her troubles to the God of Hope (Romans 15:13), finding entrance into His life through the Door which He has provided (John 10:9).



*Martin and Norma Sarvis
Jerusalem*

**[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week (24-30 May 2015) are called *Naso*—
“Elevate!”: TORAH: Numbers 4:21; HAFTARAH: Judges 13:2-25.**

**SHAVUOT (Festival of Weeks/Pentecost) 24 May 2015: TORAH: Exodus 19-20/Numbers
28:26-31; HAFTARAH: Ezekiel 1:1-28, 3:12. Book of Ruth]**

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