

Prayer Update From Israel (May 22, 2012)

NOTICE

Today is the “Head” of the Hebrew month (*Rosh Hodesh*) *Sivan*. We have entered the final week of the “Counting of the Omer” (Sunday will be the 50th day—*Pentecost*). In preparation for that special day (which will come before our next *Update*) we have chosen to devote the first part of this Update to *Shavuot* and several key Scriptures which surround it. In the mean time, we would encourage you to continue in prayer for our Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu (whose picture appeared for the second time on the cover of *Time* magazine this week)—that he would be aided by the governmental angels of God in coalescing his new unity government (the largest in Israel’s history) and sensing God’s direction and timing for the decisions he must make. We would also encourage you to continue to pray into the points presented in last week’s Update regarding the Temple Mount. Interestingly, a few days after its release, the *Jerusalem Post* ran a very perceptive and informative article entitled “Who May Go Up to the Mountain of God”. The article, which may be accessed by “googling” that title, addresses not only the issues between Muslims and Jews, but controversies within Judaism itself (The only part of the article with which we would take issue is it’s labeling the fanatic who tried to burn down the *Al Aqsa* mosque in 1969 as a “Christian evangelical”—the man was in fact a member of the sect of Herbert W Armstrong’s “Worldwide Church of God”). As you read the article, ask God to give you insights into praying His will for *now* on this one earthly location upon which He has placed His Name...and from which His Son shall someday rule.

SHAVUOT



Day 45 of the “Counting of the Omer” to Pentecost.

**SHAVUOT (FEAST OF WEEKS, PENTECOST) BEGINS AT SUNDOWN
SATURDAY 26 MAY AND CONTINUES THROUGH THE FOLLOWING DAY MAY**

27TH (SYNAGOGUES IN THE DIASPORA (i.e. Outside Israel) WILL FOLLOW A RABBINIC TRADITION AND ADD A SECOND DAY 28 MAY).

“You shall count seven weeks for yourself; you shall begin to count seven weeks from the time you begin to put the sickle to the standing grain. Then you shall celebrate the Feast of Weeks to the LORD your God with a tribute of a freewill offering of your hand, which you shall give just as the LORD your God blesses you; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God, you and your male and female servants and the Levite who is in your town, and the stranger and the orphan and the widow who are in your midst, in the place where the LORD your God chooses to establish His name. You shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and you shall be careful to observe these statutes...” (Deuteronomy 16:9-12 NASB).

Seven weeks [Hebrew for “weeks” is *Shavuot*] from the day following Passover, when the Priest cut the first sheaf for the *Ceremony of Firstfruits*, comes the spring harvest festival of *Shavuot* (Greek: *Pentecost*, after the 50 days of Leviticus 23:16). On this same day, seven weeks after the risen Yeshua had presented Himself as a *Firstfruits* to God from the dead, The Holy Spirit—(Hebrew: *Ruach haKodesh*—“*Holy Wind*”) was released from Heaven out onto His Body here on earth. Leviticus 23:17 tells of another “firstfruits” offering made on this day...but this time involving fresh bread baked *with* leaven. Some see here a picture of the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing in a harvest in Messiah of One New Man, containing both Hebrews and those from the Nations! In the power of that Wind, the *Mevaser*—*Gospel, Good Tidings*—quickly spread out, to the Jew first and from thence to all peoples, bringing harvest for Salvation, and victory from the slavery of sin.

There are three Biblical texts traditionally read on Shavuot. A prayerful perusal of these passages will assist us all in our celebration of this Feast of the LORD, and we believe will also provide us with guidance in our prayers over Israel at this time:

a. Exodus 19-20. Calculations made from ancient times concluded that the *Torah* (Law) was released to Moses from the LORD on Mount Sinai on *Shavuot*. This passage (Ch. 20) describes that releasing. It describes the tenderness with which Israel’s God had by that time already “borne them on eagles’ wings and brought them to Himself” (19:4). It depicts the glory and power, the thunder and lightning and ever-increasing *shofar*-shout with which YHVH descended in fire onto the mountain (19:16-21). **PLEASE PRAY: For the Spirit of Truth to minister to Jews in Israel during this season...convicting of sin, righteousness and judgment; enlightening regarding the love that the Father has for them; awakening awareness that He is coming again in fire and the sound of the shofar; that those who will endure the Day of His coming will only be able to do so in the righteousness of the One of whom the Torah testified (Malachi 3:2; Luke 24:27).**

b. Ezekiel 1:1-28; 3:12. This *Haftarah* also describes a “coming” of the LORD in power and glory...but this time hundreds of years later in the land of Babylon, witnessed by the prophet Ezekiel in exile. Much speculation has been made over the centuries by Jewish religious, Jewish

mystical, Christian and secular writers regarding this strange, awe-full and fascinating passage, over the nature of what the prophet called *mar'ot Elohim*—“visions of God”, and which he attempted to describe here. He himself dared not claim his descriptions as replicating *exactly* what he was vouchsafed to view—rather, all was “the appearance of” or “the likeness of”. In 1:26, he describes a Figure, seated high on a throne atop the holy *merkava* or chariot, “a figure with the appearance of a man [Hebrew: *adam*]”. **PLEASE PRAY: That the Spirit released on Pentecost would awaken Israel (now returned to her ancient land) to a new sense of Holiness and of the Fear of the LORD. Pray for ‘visions of God’ to those Hebrews still in the nations. Pray for revelation amongst Israelis of the Son of God, who is the “Second Adam”, who carries away the sin of the world, who is both *Son of Man* and *Son of God*.**

c. **BOOK OF RUTH.** This beautiful book (still referred to as a ‘scroll’ in Hebrew) is always read at *Shavuot*. It takes place during the grain harvest. Ruth, a Gentile woman from Moab (included in the modern-day Kingdom of Jordan), comes with her Hebrew mother-in-law Naomi to Bethlehem (Hebrew: Bet-Lehem—House of Bread) in Judah at the beginning of the barley harvest. Her love for Naomi is expressed in the immortal words, “*Do not urge me to leave you or turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Thus may the LORD do to me, and worse, if anything but death parts you and me*” (1:16-17). The writers do not believe that in doing this, Ruth *became* a Hebrew (through ‘conversion’ as is taught by the Rabbis). She could not change her DNA to become the seed of Jacob...and she continued after her arrival to be referred to as “Ruth the Moabitess”. But through marriage to Boaz, God nevertheless brought her seed (4:12) into the house of Israel,—and the great-grandson of Naomi, borne in Ruth’s body, would be David the King. A thousand years later, through his line and in this same “house of bread”—Bethlehem, the *Bread of Life* Messiah Yeshua (Christ Jesus) would be born into the world.

We see in this marriage of Boaz and Ruth (along with the offering of bread made with yeast, mentioned above) a picture of the “One New Man” which would come forth in Messiah.

Many see also another picture, very relevant, in fact vital for our day. Naomi was old and broken, unable to conceive and bring forth life—yet Ruth young and strong offered her womb to bear the seed and bring forth life on behalf of Naomi, which would, as it were, *revive* her line to its place in God’s purposes. Today Israel, returned to her homeland, is for the most part old, exhausted, bitter and unable to reproduce. Yet, there is a way—as the “Body” of Messiah in the Nations loves Israel, her people and her God—enough to come alongside and offer herself as a “womb of intercession” in which to carry the burden which Israel herself is incapable of bearing—to even endure travail on her behalf until new life comes forth and her line is restored. And what will this rebirth mean but “Life from the Dead”!

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 reading for this week May 20-26 is “*Bemidbar*—“In the Desert”:

TORAH: Numbers 1:1—4:20

HAFTARAH: Hosea 1:10—2:20

Bemidbar (“In the Desert/Wilderness”) is the Hebrew name for the book called “Numbers” (after the census lists of Chs. 1 & 26) in most English Bibles. The book describes key events taking place between Israel’s leaving Mount Sinai and her arrival at the eastern 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 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. And hundreds of years after David, King Jehosaphat, heading out to engage an overwhelming foe, would place singers in front of his army (II Chronicles 20:21) 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.”)

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. Pray for strength and inspiration for those in houses of worship and prayer which have been raised up in Israel 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 resurrected Hebrew in restored Israel today! During the past 30 years, there are many in Israel, both old and young, male and female, Jew and Gentile through whom praise and worship in the ancient language has been and is being released.**

***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 (Heb: *El-Hai*) Himself, 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; 16:** *“ ‘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 with which her God is wooing her—righteousness, justice, loving kindness, mercy and faithfulness. Pray that grace will be released on that longing which will result in the ‘knowing’ of her Lord at the end of the verse! This knowledge can only come in the knowledge of “the man” Messiah Yeshua. (It is interesting that in verse 16, the substituted word for “my husband” is “*ishi*”, which literally means ‘my man’).

***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 (John 10:9) which He has provided!



*Martin and Norma Sarvis
Jerusalem*

[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week:

**I. 27 May: *SHAVUOT/PENTECOST* : TORAH: Exodus 19-20, Numbers 28:26-31;
HAFTARAH: Ezekiel 1:1-28, 3:12.]**

**II. 27 May –2 June: *Naso*—“Raise” a census”: TORAH: Numbers 4:21—7:89 ;
HAFTARAH: Judges 13:2-25]**

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