

ISRAEL PRAYER UPDATE

Glory of Zion International Ministries



Wednesday May 31st is Pentecost

1. SHAVUOT/PENTECOST.

"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: shavuot] from the day after Passover, that "third day" upon which the Priest would have cut the first sheaf of new grain and waved it as a "firstfruits" before the LORD, comes the spring harvest festival of Shavu'ot. Shavu'ot means "weeks" in Hebrew. (Its other name Pentecost is derived from the Greek for "fifty"—after the "50 days" of counting the omer in Leviticus 23:16.) And it was on Shavuot, seven weeks after the Messiah Yeshua had risen on the "third day" and presented Himself as a firstfruits to God from the dead, that Ruach haKodesh ("The Holy Spirit" or "Holy Wind") was released (Acts 2) from Heaven out onto His Body here on earth!



It had been on this same day that the LORD had long before Himself descended upon Mount Sinai in fire and the voice of the shofar (see Exodus 19-20 below). Out of that fire had been released *Aseret-haDvarim*—the “Ten Words” or “Ten Commandments,” through which God’s people would have a holy standard for judging between what was “good” and what was “evil.” In the power of that Holy 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.

In ancient Israel, it was during the festival of Unleavened Bread that immediately following Passover, the single sheaf of grain was offered by the Priest to the LORD as “firstfruits”. Yet on *Shavu’ot* two loaves of bread baked *with leaven* were brought and waved before the LORD. One picture we see here is the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing in a harvest of men and women from both Israel and the Nations, both in need of cleansing (through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit Titus 3:6)—both brought clean before the Father as One New Man! This is portrayed in the Book of Ruth which we read during this festival. In it we see a non-Israelite woman (in fact, from a nation at enmity with Israel) coming to Bethlehem during the time of spring harvest. Here, by coming to the God of Israel, she becomes joined to that people. As one with them, she actually becomes part of the line which will give birth two generations later to David the King!

In addition to the Book of Ruth, two other Biblical texts are traditionally read on Shavuot.

Exodus 19-20. The Delivery of God’s righteous Law to Israel on Sinai—through the LORD, the Living Word who Himself “came down” onto the mountain.

Ezekiel 1:1-28; 3:12. In which an appearance of the likeness of the Glory of the LORD comes to Ezekiel among His people in exile, “*and above the firmament over their heads was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like a sapphire stone; on the likeness of the throne was a likeness with the appearance of a Man high above it.*”

In Biblical times, *Shavu'ot* was one of the three major festivals in which all males were required to come up and present themselves before God in Jerusalem; and of course there were prescribed rites in the Temple. **Today in Israel, it is perhaps the least demonstrative of the festivals.** Israelis go to synagogue where the above-mentioned passages are read. Since it is thought that the Law was given on this date, many observant Jews will spend all night studying “Torah”. It is, of course a holiday...and school is out for children most of the week. Everywhere there will be dairy food eaten (especially cheesecake). Many Messianic congregations will gather together for corporate praise and worship, and a picnic.

PLEASE PRAY:

- * For the Holy Spirit of God to move over Israel and the nations during this festival.**
- * That the Spirit of grace and supplication will be poured out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem (Zechariah 12:10)—bringing conviction of sin and a revelation of the One who was pierced through for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities (Isaiah 53:5).**
- * That the Body of Messiah in Israel *hear* what the Spirit is saying to the congregations.**
- * That as Israel moves into this 50th year jubilee since liberation of Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the Golan Heights, the Spirit who “sets free indeed” (John 8:36) would be poured out on the inhabitants of those places.**
- * For protection over Israel during this special holiday week.**

* For celebration of Shavu'ot outside of Israel, a rabbinic tradition is followed which adds a second day, June 1st.

2. PRESIDENT TRUMP'S VISIT.

We thank you for your prayers surrounding the whirlwind visit to Israel by President Trump last week. The President's visit to Jerusalem was extremely friendly. He appeared at times deeply moved by where he was. Shortly after arriving and visiting the Israeli President in his dwelling, he and his wife and daughter visited the Church of the Holy Sepulcher (which many consider the place where Jesus was buried), and then the Western Wall. In doing so, Mr. Trump became the first sitting American President to visit that site since it came under Israeli authority 50 years ago last week. In his speech the following day at the Israel Museum, President Trump spoke of that visit, *“Yesterday, I visited the Western Wall, and marveled at the monument to God's presence and man's perseverance—I was humbled to place my hand upon the wall and to pray in that holy space for wisdom from God.”* He spoke of the stone blocks of the wall, into

which “Jews place the prayers from their hearts.” Since the international community has never recognized Israel’s right to those parts of Jerusalem taken in 1967 (including the Old City, with the Temple Mount and Western Wall), visiting Presidents have in recent years been hesitant to mention a “Jewish” connection. But for Mr. Trump, this didn’t seem a problem, *“Jerusalem is a sacred city. Its beauty, splendor and heritage are like no other place on earth. What a heritage. The ties of the Jewish people to this Holy Land are ancient and eternal. They date back thousands of years, including the reign of King David whose star now flies proudly on Israel’s white and blue flag.”* And he spoke of *“the two holy Temples [in which] we see an incredible story of faith and perseverance. That faith is what inspired Jews to believe in their destiny, to overcome their despair, and to build here a future that others dared not to dream.”*

The President spoke of his commitment to Israel’s security, and of his determination that Iran would never obtain a nuclear weapon. He met with Prime Minister Netanyahu and with Palestinian President Abbas and spoke of his confidence that both leaders were open to negotiations for a settlement and his belief that one was possible. Notably absent, however, was any reference during his visit to a “two state solution” (a mantra insisted upon by the last two Presidents and leaders of many nations), nor was there mention of “pre-67 lines” or a “Palestinian State.” In his speech President Trump did not divulge any substantive clues regarding what he has in mind for a new peace initiative, beyond saying that one will soon be forthcoming—and that he believes “peace is possible, not only between Israelis and Palestinians, but throughout large parts of the Middle East.” This was greeted with relief by some Israeli government leaders, consternation by others. But the President seemed intent on sticking to what he considered the goal of this first trip to Saudi Arabia, Israel and the Vatican—visiting the centers of the three monotheistic religions in the world, in a conviction that dialogue within this arena is an essential element in obtaining answers and strategies towards curbing the terrorism rampant in the world today.

PLEASE PRAY:

- * That spiritual realities sown into President Trump’s experience by the Holy Spirit during his visit to the Holy Land would be nourished with revelation and understanding.**
- * That the President would seek counsel from the God of Israel in any future dealings with that Land.**
- * That Mr. Trump’s expressed attitude of “assisting” Israel and the Palestinians in finding a solution would remain such, with no attempts at coercion beyond those sanctioned by God Himself.**
- * That Prime Minister Netanyahu will also seek God in how best to respond to overtures from the Trump administration towards reviving a “peace process.” That he will have wisdom in how to lead Israel in moving within Judea and Samaria during this Jubilee Year since their liberation.**

*** That God guide our government in His direction during this coming year—and that we be able to maintain a strong relationship of blessing, integrity, and trust with the United States, and other nations who choose to ally themselves with us.**

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. The Haftarah, unless otherwise noted, will be that read in Ashkenazy synagogues around the world. The references for all texts are those found in English translations of the Scriptures.

The Parashah for this week 28 May—3 June 2017 is called *Naso*— “Elevate”—the heads (Take a Census):

TORAH: Numbers 4:21—7:89

HAFTARAH: Judges 13:2-25

Numbers 5:11-31 "The Law of Jealousy". This difficult and for many highly-offensive passage deals with what has been called "the only clear-cut instance of trial by ordeal in the Bible" (Robert Alter). It describes a ritual for determining a woman's guilt or innocence after a spirit of jealousy has aroused within her husband a suspicion that she has "gone astray and behaved unfaithfully toward him" (5:12-13, 29) by having physical relations with another man, yet there being no physical or circumstantial evidence of this. Verse 14 alludes to the possibility of a "spirit of jealousy" coming upon men, both when their wives are guilty or when they or innocent of this sin.

The man is to bring her to the priest with an appropriate offering. The priest then brings her near and sets her "before the LORD" (5:16). He takes holy water in an earthen vessel and sprinkles in it dust from the floor of the tabernacle. The woman is bound under an oath that drinking this water will bring a curse upon her body if she has lied and is guilty. The oath is written into a book and scraped into the mixture, a grain offering of jealousy from the woman's hand is waved before the LORD, a portion of it burnt on the altar-and the woman is required to drink the bitter water. If she is guilty, her stomach will swell, her thigh rot, and she will "become a curse" among her people. If she has not defiled herself and is pure, she will be clean and able to conceive seed, her stomach to swell with the blessing of children.

The situation described in this passage strikes many commentators as bazaar, primitive, superstitious, not to mention demeaning, unfair and irrational in the extreme. For some, it seems an ordeal "based on a kind of archaic magic" (Alter). But that is through the paradigm of a modern mind not used to taking into consideration such factors as the existence of a supernatural God of love, truth and justice, the Creator and Lord of the universe, One able and determined when necessary to intrude what appear to be supernatural and marvelous ways into the affairs of those He calls His children. Consider the following:

****This was not some arbitrary, occult divination, but a directive of the Creator of the world who was at that time present and traveling with His people in a real and tangible way.*** The dust the lady was to drink was not mere filth from the ground, it was from the floor of the *mishkan* (dwelling place, tabernacle), sanctified by the manifest presence of the God of Gods who dwelt there, the Same who had molded man from the same dust and breathed into his nostrils the breath of Life.

****Even as the Creator had placed "light-bearers" to illumine the heavens (Gen. 1:14), it was the destiny and high call of the Israeli women to bear within their wombs progeny through whom the families of the world would experience illumination into God's nature and blessing for all humankind (Gen. 12:3; 26:4; 28:14)—Indeed, one would eventually bear and bring forth the Light of the World.*** Satan hated this destiny and its fruit. He had sought to thwart it from the beginning by attempting to violate the wombs of both Sarah and Rebekah (Gen. 12:10-20; 20:1-17; 26:6-11). He had attempted to slay all the male children in Egypt. After God had delivered His people from Egypt, the nature of their call and destiny began to clarify—***they were to be a special treasure to Himself, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation before the whole world*** (Exodus 19:5-6). Vital to this was that the bearers of that treasure keep themselves pure.

****In this circumstance, the wife is obviously seen as being "under" her husband's oversight*** (vss 19, 20, 29). Verse 31 seems to imply that that oversight extended to being held responsible before God if she defiled her body by adultery, and he failed to take action. If he did so and she were convicted, "Then the man would be free from iniquity, but that woman shall bear her guilt."

****Ultimately, rather than an abuse of the woman, it in fact served as a protection for her***—the God of Heaven would be her supernatural defense and vindication, even when her honor was impugned by the Accuser working through the fallen nature of her husband under whose authority she had been placed. ***And what of the men? Were they free to be sexually unfaithful with impunity, while the onus for unfaithfulness rested only upon the wife?*** Again, the God of Israel was dwelling in their midst. He released directives for maintaining order and governance in the society through responsibilities appointed to those positioned at every level—including the oversight of families. The righteous God who worked supernaturally to vindicate or to convict the actions of the daughters of His people through laws He had laid down regarding their conduct, would surely be also faithful to see and judge the actions of the men whom He had appointed to administer those laws.

****Numbers 6:1-21-"The Law of the Nazirite".*** *Nazir* has to do with "separation"-in this case by a person consecrating him- or her-self with a special vow, usually for a specific period of time, for devotion to God. Another word for separation or "being set apart" used in verse 2 is linked

with that used in Psalm 4:3, "*But know that the LORD has set apart for Himself him who trusts in His lovingkindness.*" But here, the person chooses to set himself apart. An outward mark of one engaged in this vow was his abstinence from eating or drinking anything related to the grape. Another, in the case of a male, was abstinence from allowing his head to be touched with a razor for the duration of the vow. In the case of Samson (see this week's Haftarah) and probably Samuel (I Samuel 1:11) and John the Baptist (Luke 1:15), the person was dedicated to the Lord in this way for life.

***Numbers 6:22-27.** *And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 'Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, "This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel. Say to them:*

***'YHVH bless you and guard you
YHVH make His face shine upon you and grace you
YHVH lift up His face to you and give you Shalom.'***

"So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them."

With this blessing the LORD's holy name YHVH was placed over the Israelites by the priests as a covering and protection. No other name would have true power to bless them, to be their guard and keeper, to release grace upon them, or to guard their hearts and minds with true *shalom*. Twice this blessing refers to the LORD's *face* in relation to the one blessed. The absolute necessity of being in the light of that face permeates the Hebrew Bible from beginning to end. Without God's face (sometimes in English translated 'presence') attending them, Moses prayed to God not to bring "a *face from me*" (Psalm 27:8).

So this was the blessing which would attend the Children of Israel when the priests placed God's name YHVH over them. Today Israel has lost the pronunciation of that Name; when the blessing is recited, it is usually replaced by another name for deity, *Adonai* (Lord/Master). However, the root of the original Name it is hidden within the Hebrew name for Jesus. ***Yeshua***, a contraction for *Yehoshua*, means ***YHVH Saves!*** ***He*** is "*the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being, sustaining all things by His powerful word*" (Hebrews 1:3). ***He*** is *Sar Shalom*, the Prince of Peace. **As members of a Holy Priesthood (Rev. 1:6), we would encourage you to pray this blessing over the Jewish people, placing *The Name* conjoined with *Salvation-Yeshua* over them. Pray for the veil to be removed from Jewish eyes through the power of the Holy Spirit that they may come into His presence, to know their LORD face-to-face. "And I will not hide my face from them anymore; for I shall have poured out my Spirit on the house of Israel," says Adonai YHVH-the Lord GOD" (Ezekiel 39:29).**

***Numbers 7:6-9.** "*So Moses took the carts and the oxen, and gave them to the Levites. Two carts and four oxen he gave to the sons of Gershon, according to their service [i.e. transfer of the outer coverings, etc., of the tents of the Tabernacle]; and four carts and eight oxen he gave to the sons of Merari, according to their service [i.e. transfer of the skeletal structure of the Tabernacle, bars, pillars, etc.], under the authority of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest. But to the sons of Kohath he gave none, because theirs was the service of the holy things, which they carried on their shoulders.*"

Deuteronomy 17:18 would require future Kings of Israel to hand-write out a copy of the Five Books of Moses, the Torah, so that its instructions would be infused into every aspect of their reigns-yet David evidently failed to do this-or at least attend to this graphic directive that carts were ok for everything else, but the "holy things" (including of course, the Ark of the Covenant) were to be "*carried on their shoulders.*" His failure to follow God's special instructions for dealing with The Holy, resulted, even in the context of genuine ardent praise and worship in other ways, resulted in disaster (II Sam 5:13; I Chron 13:5-14).

Numbers 7:89. "*Now when Moses went into the tabernacle of meeting to speak with Him, he heard the voice of One speaking to him from above the kaporet ["Mercy Seat"] that was on the ark of the Testimony, from between the two cherubim; thus He spoke to him.*"

Centuries later, the word of the LORD here had become "rare" and there was "no widespread revelation" (I Samuel 3:1). Yet here, "*before the lamp of God went out in the tabernacle of YHVH where the ark of God was. YHVH called Samuel. And he answered, 'Hineini- "Here I am!"*" **PLEASE PRAY: for believers in Israel to keep themselves pure-and to be willing to wait in the Presence of the LORD to "hear what the Spirit is saying to the congregations."**

***Judges 13:6.** "*A man of God came to me, and his appearance was like the appearance of the angel of God, very awesome.*" In this recounting of the coming of the angel/messenger of God to Manoah's wife to herald the conception of Samson, at least five times he is referred to as a '*man*'. Two of those times he is called a "Man of God", which, interestingly, could just as easily be translated from the Hebrew "The God-Man" (*Ish ha-Elohim*). Later in the story he refuses to give his name, since it is 'wonderful'-and at the end Manoah is convinced that he and his wife must die, "*because we have seen God.*" Of course, at this time Yeshua/Jesus had not yet taken on human flesh. But it appears, nonetheless, to be an instance of a pre-incarnate manifestation of the One who was to come.

PLEASE PRAY for the understanding of Jews who read or hear these words next weekend to be opened, that they may comprehend the identity of the *One* who came to Manoah and his wife and ascended in the flame-of the *One* who was seated on the throne of the chariot in the Ezekiel passage-of the *One* who came down in flame onto the mountain in Exodus 19 (Luke 24:44-45)-of the *One* who has come in the flesh once before, and *Who is coming again!*



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[The Parashah for next week 4-10 June 2017 is called *B'ha'alotcha*— “When You Light Up” (i.e. the Lamps). TORAH: Numbers 8:1—12:16; HAFTARAH: Zechariah 2:10—4:7.]

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