

Prayer Update From Israel (May 4, 2015)



Counting the Omer
Day 30

1. PRAY FOR A *STABLE GOVERNMENT* TO COME INTO PLACE THIS WEEK.

“Coalition conundrums: Will Israel finally get a stable government?”
(Headline in the editorial section of the The Jerusalem Post, May 1, 2015)

I. Wednesday at 8 p.m. is the deadline for Benjamin Netanyahu to present a coalition representing at least 61 seats to President Reuven Rivlin. If he is unable to do so, the President must choose either another member of the Knesset whom he considers capable of forming a coalition (probably Labour head Isaac Herzog)—or initiate yet another election. As of this writing, there are still two of the smaller parties which are balking at joining unless certain demands are met. If the demands are not resolved, Mr. Netanyahu might still squeak through with a coalition—but it would be an extremely narrow (and therefore very weak) one—capable of collapse at any serious dispute along the way.

We believe it to be of critical importance that the Israeli government currently being formed be comprised of a stable coalition, one able of facing the grave challenges soon likely to arrive in a spirit of co-operation. Although always desirable, this has not always been God’s priority—as was the case in the last government, when the Lord allowed two strongly incongruous parties to rise and form a temporary unity in order to avert a greater immediate evil. We believe that on this occasion it is of paramount importance to pray for this unity—even at the expense of certain commendable advances made in the last government.

PLEASE PRAY: that the One who “watches over Israel” (Psalm 91) will intervene, show negotiators the way, turn hearts which need to be turned, and bring into a being a Government which can work together in crisis. Pray supernatural wisdom over Benjamin Netanyahu—that God will grant him counsel and guide his judgment in the next two days.

II. On Thursday morning, *Shas* head Aryeh Deri announced that he would no longer seek the post of Interior Minister in the next Government. WE BLESS THE LORD!! Seeing this is a true miracle—brought about in the Lord’s mercies through the earnest prayers and Spirit-led

proclamations of His people. Deri (who ended his previous term in office there with a conviction and prison time for bribery) had been seeking the position for months. The media, even the day before his announcement, were still considering it a foregone conclusion that the ministry would be his. Yet with the prospect of certain modifications of powers for the office, insisted upon by MK Moshe Kahlon (currently slated for the Finance Ministry)—plus a petition signed by 40,000 people demanding he not be granted the post, Deri decided unexpectedly to let it go.

As we have said, his receiving it would have resulted in positions and directives being implemented which would, among other things, almost certainly insure increased harassment of Believers in the Land, while effectively strengthening impediments to Messianic Jews seeking to immigrate to Israel. Without this party in control, a deceptive darkness will be kept from the gates—through which we believe must soon be passing a strongly increased influx of Jews immigrating from around the world.

PLEASE PRAY: that the resolve of Aryeh Deri will not change, and his party will have no part in the Ministry of the Interior. That neither this man nor his party will be allowed a place for implementing their anti-Messiah agendas within the next government.

***Hodo La'Adonai, ki tov—ki le'olahm Hasdo!!* “GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD FOR HE IS GOOD—AND HIS LOVING KINDNESS ENDURES FOREVER!!”**

2. AN ERUPTION OF RACIAL FRUSTRATION IN ISRAEL.

“Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married; for he had married an Ethiopian woman... ” (Numbers 12:1).

Even as racial riots in Baltimore seem to have entered a lull, Israel is this week experiencing an (in some ways) similar explosion within its community of citizens of Ethiopian descent. These citizens, whose ancestors hail from the ancient Biblical region of Cush and bear physical as well as religious links to the Hebrew race, began immigrating to Israel a little over 30 years ago. Their numbers (over 135,000) now make up a little over 2% of the population. They serve with distinction in the military, and are making progress in assimilating into the community. Yet the process has been slow, impeded by unquestionably racist discrimination related to their color and line of descent. As one man was heard recently to remark, “You did have mercy on us [when Israel facilitated a mass *Aliyah* from Ethiopia in the early ‘70’s], but you’ve never seen us as equals.” The discrimination surfaces in the job market, in education, community government. It has been specifically felt in incidents of racist police brutality, often followed by unjust incarceration and unfair treatment in the courts

It all boiled over last week when a surveillance video camera captured what appeared to be an unprovoked attack on a young Ethiopian soldier in uniform named Damas Pakedeh by police in the town of Holon. Pakedeh was filmed being accosted and beaten by an officer and his assistant. He was afterwards taken and detained overnight in jail, where he was slated to be arraigned on charges of assaulting an officer—had not the images from the camera been made public the following day. On Thursday, a demonstration against racism and police brutality was

organized in Jerusalem. Over a thousand protestors blocked every major intersection of the city, the light-rail system was brought to a halt, and demonstrators marched towards the Prime Minister's residence. It took more than three hours for the police to restore order. There were a relatively small number of police and demonstrators hurt. But this was only a beginning. On Sunday, demonstrations spread to Tel Aviv, culminating in a massive gathering at Rabin Square, which turned violent. In the end, 68 (56 of whom were security forces) were injured; there were 43 arrests.

The Israeli government has condemned the attack on Damas Pakada, as have the police; a special committee is being set up by the Inspector General involving high-level police officers and representatives of the Ethiopian community. Today Prime Minister Netanyahu is scheduled to convene a meeting in his office with Ethiopian community leaders; he will also meet with Damas Pakada, the soldier who was attacked. But representatives from the community warn that this was merely the tip of the iceberg—that such attacks are not uncommon, and they are themselves only manifestations of a deeper societal problem. As Israeli President Reuven Rivlin said this morning, the anti-racism protests have revealed an “open wound” of Israeli society which must be confronted: *“Yesterday we saw the pain, distress and anger arising from the Israeli Ethiopian community, most of whom were born and raised here...Protest is an essential tool for democracy, but violence is not the path nor the solution.”* He emphasized that the legitimacy of the issue should not be stymied by the violent outbursts of a handful of people, “We are not strangers, people, we are brothers and we must not regress to a place in which we will regret them.” (“Protests renew in Jerusalem after Tel Aviv anti-racism rally turns violent”: *JPOST.com*; 05/04/2015 11:04). Meanwhile, protests in Jerusalem were renewed on Monday morning.

PLEASE PRAY:

***That the Lord who mercifully caused this injustice to be blatantly exposed, will lead Israel's governmental and civil leaders into imposing measures which will deal strongly and decisively with racism in the Israeli society.**

***That the LORD go forth on behalf of righteousness and justice for the community of Ethiopian Jews in Israel.** *“In your majesty ride forth victoriously in the cause of truth, humility and justice; let your right hand achieve awesome deeds”* (Psalm 45:4); *“Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your Throne”* (Psalm 89:14; 97:2).

** “Your watchmen shall lift up their voices...For they shall see eye to eye when YHVH brings back Zion”* (Isaiah 52:8). **” Pray for God to bring unity of vision into the people whom He has loved from afar, and in that loving kindness draw them back to Zion (Jeremiah 31:3). Satan hates this, and sows discontent, disunity, and hatred, so as to in every way thwart returned Israel coming into the wholeness, which will bring about a change throughout the world (Romans 11:12, 15). Of course, this must ultimately include Israel's coming into relationship with her Messiah, who brings all into the unity of His Father (John 17:23).**

***For the brothers and sisters of Ethiopian descent who make up a significant part of the Messianic Body of Messiah in Israel.** Some of the strongest believers we know in the Land are

from this community. Many were believers (or their parents were believers) before immigrating to Israel—and the hardships they endured in that passage equip them with a strength, experience, wisdom needed here today. They also have brought with them a unique, powerful experience of praise and worship (see Zephaniah 3:9-10), which it is the privilege of the rest of the Body here to avail ourselves of.

***Pray for guidance in the Ethiopian believers in relation to the tensions and upheavals taking place today.** That there be leaders amongst them who are mantled with wisdom and counsel—granted favor as peacemakers both within their communities and across racial lines. Pray for Ethiopian believers to rise into positions of influence in the military, the government and the workplace.

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 3-9 May 2015 is called *BeHar*—"On the Mountain!":

TORAH: Leviticus 25:1—26:2

HAFTARAH: Jeremiah 32:6-27

NOTE: As mentioned last week, above are the texts for the Parasha read in Jerusalem. Because in the *Diaspora* (communities of Jews outside of Israel) an extra day is celebrated at Passover (and this year, that day came on a Sabbath), the readings there became "off" a week from those read here. Through the use of special "double readings", with the beginning of the Book of Numbers on May 23rd, the readings in the Diaspora and in Israel will again coincide.

***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. Every seven years, the land was to be allowed to rest. Unfortunately, Israel chose to ignore this earnest direction from her Lord. 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 a 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 (Trans: Alter): “And you shall count you seven Sabbaths of years, seven years seven times, and the days of the seven Sabbaths of years shall come to forty-nine years. And you shall send round a blasting ram’s horn, in the seventh month on the tenth of the month, on the Day of Atonement, you shall send round a ram’s horn through all your land. And you shall hallow the fiftieth year and call a release [or liberty] in the land to all its inhabitants. A jubilee it shall be for you, and you shall go back each man to his holding and each man to his clan, you shall go back. It is a jubilee, the fiftieth year it shall be for you. You shall not sow and you shall not reap its aftergrowths and you shall not pick its untrimmed vines. For it is a jubilee. It shall be holy for you.”*

Just as we are presently ‘counting the omer’ up to the fiftieth day (Pentecost) upon which the Spirit of Freedom (II Corinthians 3:17) was released, the Hebrews in the land were also to count seven “sabbaths of years” and then proclaim *Dror!*— “*Release!*” “*Freedom!*” “*Liberty!*” This was to be a year of “freeing up”—both the land, and those Israelites who had placed themselves, because of financial hardship, under servitude to their brothers. It was to be a “Jubilee”! The name is related to the Hebrew *yovel*—which is another name for a *shofar* or “ram’s horn” (The word *yovel* is actually combined in usage with the word *shofar* in Joshua 6:4). It is significant that in the 50th year, this freedom-proclaiming horn was carried round on *Yom Kippur*, the “Day of Atonement”—the very day in which the congregation was released from its sin for the previous year. And it was significant that the freedom-blasts were made with a ram’s horn. The “ram caught by its *horn* in the thicket” (Genesis 22:13) had signified the atoning, substitutionary sacrifice for Isaac (God had provided the Lamb). Such a horn would release its redemptive sound every fifty years upon God’s *Day of Atonement* to proclaim freedom from slavery and debt. It is significant that today, the fast of *Yom Kippur* always comes to an end with one long blast of the *shofar*. We believe this to signify the coming Great Day when the “last *shofar*” of God (I Cor. 15:52, Hebrew translation) is sounded to proclaim eternal freedom from death and our fallen earthly natures, and Celebration in Heaven and on Earth with the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the World!

Not by might and not by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD



This copy of the “Liberty Bell” in Philadelphia hangs in Gan haPa’amon, Jerusalem. Along its top is a passage from this week’s Torah Portion (see below), Lev. 25:10:

***Leviticus 25:10b.** “...*Proclaim liberty throughout all the land, unto all the inhabitants thereof.*”

This portion of Lev. 25:10 is quoted on the American “Liberty Bell” in Philadelphia, founded in 1753. A park just southwest of the Old City in Jerusalem has a replica of this bell, and is in fact named “Bell Park”. But it is important for Israelis to realize that the word *dror* in the context of this verse is by no means referring to a humanistic general “liberty” from all human constraints. Rather, it is a God-ordained *release* from oppression and bondage into a new freedom in His presence! This is the same word used in Isaiah 61 where the “Spirit of the Lord GOD” (*Adonai YHVH*) is present to “*proclaim liberty to the captives*”.

We are grateful for the freedoms we have in the nation of Israel. But for our people to be really free, it will take a work of the “Spirit of the Lord GOD! II Corinthians 3:17 of the New Covenant Scriptures reads, “*Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom!*”

PLEASE PRAY: FOR A RELEASE OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD OVER ISRAEL TO BRING US INTO A TRUE FREEDOM: *through grace and supplication* to see, be convicted for, and freed from our sin (Zech. 12:10); *through washing of regeneration and renewing* to become clean and born anew (Titus 3:5); *through the love of God having been shed abroad in our hearts*, to be filled with hope, no longer disappointed and ashamed (Romans 5:5); *through being filled*, to speak the word of God with boldness, stretching out our hands to heal, that signs and wonders may be done through the name of God’s holy Servant Yeshua! (Acts 4:29-31) .

“ ‘...and I will not hide my face from them anymore; for I shall have poured out my Spirit on the house of Israel,’ says the Lord GOD” (Ezekiel 39:29).

***Leviticus 25:18-19.** *“So you shall observe My statutes and keep My judgments, and perform them; and you will dwell in the land in safety. Then the land will yield its fruit, and you will eat your fill, and dwell there in safety.”* **It is essential to realize in our prayers, that Israel’s capacity to dwell safely in the land, and the land’s capacity itself to stay fertile and productive, is related to her relationship with her God. Israel is in a period of grace as her gathering is completed—but God has brought her back to give her revelation and understanding of herself, to be cleansed and to return to her God (Ezekiel 36, 37; Jeremiah 31). The fact that she is a “chosen people” does not in and of itself guarantee her safety. We must pray that the veil be removed, and she return to the Shepherd of her soul.**

***Leviticus 25:23.** *“The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are strangers and sojourners (“sojourning settlers”) with Me.”*

***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.**



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[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week (10-16 May 2015) are called *B’Chukotai*—“In My Statutes”: TORAH: Leviticus 26:3—27:34; HAFTARAH: Jeremiah 16:19—17:14]

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