

## *Prayer Update From Israel (June 2, 2014)*



### SHAVUOT

**NOTICE:** Since this festival centers around several key Scripture passages including those recounting the release of God's laws on Mount Sinai, we will confine this week's prayer focuses to the Scriptures involved. Next week we will return the focus of our prayer points to include current events.

**THIS YEAR SHAVUOT (FEAST OF WEEKS, PENTECOST) BEGINS AT SUNDOWN, TUESDAY, JUNE 3RD AND CONTINUES THROUGH WEDNESDAY, JUNE 4TH. SYNAGOGUES IN THE DIASPORA (i.e. OUTSIDE ISRAEL) WILL FOLLOW A RABBINIC TRADITION AND ADD A SECOND DAY, JUNE 5.**

*“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 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—*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 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.

***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 at Mount Sinai on this day. This passage (Ch. 20) describes that releasing. It describes the tenderness with which Israel’s God has 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 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 (now a portion of modern-day 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). We 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 Moabite”). 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* 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.

**We and many others 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, 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”!**

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#### **THIS WEEKEND’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 June 1-7 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**



*“At the command of the LORD the sons of Israel would set out...even when the cloud lingered over the tabernacle for many days, the sons of Israel would keep the LORD’s charge and not set out.”*

**(Numbers 9:19. From this week’s Torah Portion; see below. Photograph of pillar-like cloud taken by the authors in the Judean Desert east of Jerusalem.)**

*As we travel through the desert of Numbers (Remember, the Hebrew name for the book is “In the Desert”), we will actually discover areas of very fertile soil for understanding both the human condition as manifest in Israel, and the “goodness and severity” (Rom. 11:22) of God as demonstrated towards His chosen people. Of the many important points present in this week’s narrative, we would point out the following:*

**\*Numbers 8:14:** *“Thus you shall separate the Levites from among the children of Israel, and the Levites shall be Mine.”* “God so loved the World”—yet in expressing that Love, He may in His own sovereign, holy purposes choose to set particular peoples (Israel), tribes (Levites), families (Cohenim-Priests), prophets (Miriam) and individual leaders (Moses, Joshua) apart. These are only a few examples as related to Israel—and He continues this in the Body of Messiah today. It is extremely important that we accept and honor those lines which it is plain *He* has drawn for us and for others. By the end of this Torah Portion, both Israel’s prophet (Miriam) and her priest (Aaron) get into serious trouble for becoming resentful regarding the ‘place’ of their brother Moses. **Please pray for a generosity and humility in the Body of Messiah in Israel, with regards to race, spiritual gifts, age, sex, and talents and acquired skills.**

**\*Numbers 9:18-21; 23:** *“At the command of the LORD the sons of Israel would set out...even when the cloud lingered over the tabernacle for many days, the sons of Israel would keep the LORD’s charge and not set out. If sometimes the cloud remained a few days over the tabernacle, according to the command of the LORD they remained camped...At the command of the LORD they camped, and at the command of the LORD they set out; they kept the LORD’s charge...”*

The word “charge” is the same as that used for a military “watch”, and “kept” also means “guarded”. So, twice here an essential element of Israel’s camp routine is described as **“guarding the Watch of the LORD” --keeping alert and obedient for His directive, whether**

**it required immediate galvanization into action or the watchful patience necessary for an open-ended waiting.**

**\*Numbers 10:25:** *“Then the standard of the camp of the children of Dan (the rear guard of all the camps) set out according to their armies...”* We wrote two weeks ago of the place of Judah in taking the lead (followed closely in leadership by Issachar and Zebulun). Dan was to bring up the rear. His name is related to “godly judgment” (Genesis 30:6). The word for “rear guard” (Heb: *me’aseph*) bears within it the concept of “gathering”. A rear guard not only protected the rear from outward attack, it also kept stragglers from fraying-out behind—it was responsible for “gathering” loose ends, keeping the rear tight and pressing forward. Often, the older more-experienced warriors held oversight of this position.

**\*Numbers 11:1a, 4, 33-34 (NASB):** *“Now the people became like those who complain of adversity in the hearing of the LORD”... “Now the mixed multitude who were among them yielded to intense craving....the LORD struck the people with a very great plague. So he called the name of that place “The Graves of Cravings” because there they buried the people who had yielded to craving.”* “T’aveh—Cravings” is related to physical appetites awakened into strong lusts.

**\*Numbers 11:29:** *“...O, that all the LORD’s people were prophets and that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!”* (cf: I Corinthians 14:5; 39-40: *“I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied...Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak in tongues. Let all things be done decently and in order.”*).

This section and all of chapter 12 show that prophecy—the proclaiming forth in spiritual authority and timing of what the LORD is speaking—is an important part of His government for His people. But it is essential that recognized prophets know and work within their place of authority. When Miriam leaves that place, it is, because of her recognized position, an extremely serious matter which must be dealt with strongly and, in her case, publically.

### **A REPEATED WORD FROM THE PROPHETS**

It seems safe to assume that when the Holy Spirit allows God’s Word to be repeated twice, there is something within it which warrants His people’s special attention and understanding (Genesis 41:32). This week’s *haftarah* from Zechariah is exactly the same passage as that used during the week of Hanukkah. This is presumably because the Zechariah 3:2 mentions a *menorah*—“lampstand” (This week’s Torah Portion begins with instructions regarding the menorah in the Tabernacle; the Hanukkah season is traditionally celebrated with a special menorah). This passage contains so very much prophetically about the “Light” who would come into the world to cleanse us from our filthiness, whose Word would be our defense against that of our Adversary, whose oil would “keep our lamps burning”, whose Spirit would be our Victory! **PLEASE PRAY: the illumination of the Holy Spirit on these words as they are read at the close of Hebrew services around the world this weekend. Pray that many Jews will realize and believe that the LORD has come to dwell in their midst--the BRANCH whose name is Yeshua, and that His Father, the LORD of Hosts, has sent Him!**

**\*Zechariah 2:10-11.** “ ‘Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion! For behold, I am coming and I will dwell in your midst,’ says YHVH, ‘Many nations shall be joined to YHVH in that day, and they shall become My people. And I will dwell in your midst. Then you will know that YHVH of Armies has sent Me to you.’ ”

We find this passage to be “Messianic” indeed! First, YHVH-the LORD says, “I am coming and I will dwell in your midst”—then presumably the same Speaker says, “Then you will know that YHVH of Armies has sent me to you.” There is nothing in the construction of this passage which demands that the last sentence is by Zechariah and the next-to-last the LORD. Only one who was “One with” the LORD would fit here. Yeshua/Jesus said something remarkably similar in John 11:41b-42, immediately before calling Lazarus forth from the grave, “ ‘Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me.’ ”

**\*Zechariah 2:12-13:** “And the LORD will take possession of Judah as His inheritance in the Holy Land, and will again choose Jerusalem. Be silent, all flesh, before the LORD, for He is aroused from His holy habitation!”

As the warfare intensifies over Israel, Jerusalem, the ancient City of David and the Temple Mount, **PLEASE PRAY for believers here—that we will not pray nor worship nor act out of our emotions—that in the power of the Spirit we will silence our flesh so as to hear clearly what the Spirit is saying to the Body of Messiah, finding our confidence in God alone who will ‘take possession’ and ‘again choose Jerusalem’.**

**\*Zechariah 3:1-2:** “Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the LORD, and the satan standing at his right hand to “satan” (i.e. be an adversary to) him. And the LORD said to Satan, ‘YHVH rebuke you, satan! YHVH who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?’ ”

All of Israel today stands as a ‘brand plucked from the fire’ (The Hebrew for this expression is in fact sometimes used as a euphemism for ‘Holocaust Survivor’). She is continually under accusation. Yet within her is an awakened Messianic Body, coming into its place as a “Kingdom of Priests”. This remnant is also bombarded by the satan (the adversary, accuser). **Please pray for grace and growing maturity in spiritual warfare in the Body of Messiah in Israel to stand against the Adversary in the name of the LORD—while allowing, as did Joshua in this chapter, the LORD to provide constant cleansing from sin, and clean garments—including a head covering to protect her mind.**

**\*\*It rings significant to us** that part of the “word” wielded against the Adversary by the Angel (“YHVH rebuke you, Satan!”) is the LORD’s identity as **the One who has Chosen Jerusalem** (“YHVH who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you!”). Today, we may use the Name **YESHUA**, which bears within it in condensed form the words “YHVH Saves”. From this example it can be inferred that a part of the “Word of our Testimony” (Revelation 12:11) which defeats the Enemy is a **confession of the LORD’s choosing of Jerusalem!** Suspicion of the truth of this terrifies the evil one, who knows that Yeshua will one day dwell and rule from there!

**\*Zechariah 3:7.** *“If you will walk in My ways and guard my watch, then you shall also judge My house and likewise have charge of my courts; I will give you places to walk among those who stand here.”* It is God’s desire that we walk in His path and watch over the things to which He assigns us. As we are faithful in this, we will grow in judgment so as to be entrusted with other responsibilities and positionings—including when necessary movement among and in harmony with those other “armies”—the angelic beings.

**\*Zechariah 4:6b:** *“ ‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ says the LORD of Armies.”*

This Scripture is written across the bottom arms of the menorah which stands in front of Israel’s Knesset Building. **PLEASE PRAY:** *that more and more in Israel will come to see the necessity of spiritual power for finding hope and a future—through a HOLY spirit provided by her Father!*



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[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week 8-14 June will be *Sh'lach L'cha*—“Send for Yourself” (men to spy-out the land of Canaan): TORAH: 13:1—15:41; HAFTARAH: Joshua 2:1-24.]

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