

Prayer Update From Israel (June 27, 2012)



Waterfall in the Golan Heights, the ancient domain of Og King of Bashan; taken by Moses and granted as part of the inheritance of Menasheh (see Torah Portion below).

1. WARS AND RUMORS OF WARS

It has been a disturbed, tumultuous week in the Middle East, with many important occurrences, movements, developments. Some appear large, some small; some seemingly insignificant alone, yet not so when viewed as part of the whole. Following is a selection of these presented all together. It is sometimes helpful to have something of an “overview” in order to sense the movement taking place in the big picture.

* The war raging in Syria experienced one of the bloodiest weeks yet, with almost 700 people reported killed.

* Last week a Syrian *Mig 21* fighter aircraft flew into Jordan, where its pilot requested and was granted asylum. Sunday night 38 Syrian soldiers, including a General and two Colonels defected, crossing into Turkey, which is in sympathy with the resistance against the regime of Syrian President Assad.

*This sympathy will have been deepened when a Turkish fighter was shot down two days ago by Assad’s troops.

*This was likely accomplished with weapons systems supplied by Russia, who was accused this week of sending advanced defensive missile systems (both anti-air and anti-ship) and attack helicopters to aid Assad.

*A ship loaded with such defense systems and helicopters and flying a flag of the Caribbean island of Curacao was forced by England to abandon its voyage to Syria and to return to Russia when the Brits pulled its insurance cover. Russia has vowed to sail it again, this time with a Russian flag, so that any attack by the British would awaken an international incident.

*Last week Iranian media outlets reported that Iran, Russia, China and Syria will be carrying out “war games” in Syria next month. According to this story, not yet been confirmed by Russia, China and Syria, the operation would include 90,000 troops from the four countries, 400 aircraft, 1,000 tanks and hundreds of rockets.

*Meanwhile, Israel’s *Maariv* yesterday morning (Monday) reported, almost as if in answer to the Iranian report, that Israel and the US will hold their largest ever joint military exercise next October, involving thousands of soldiers, and advanced missile defense systems with simulated massive barrages of rockets being released towards Israel simultaneously from Iran and Syria.

*In a strange turn of events, Russia’s President Vladimir Putin has chosen this time to visit Israel and is as we write in private talks with Prime Minister Netanyahu, presumably focused upon the Syrian and Iranian situations. He visits with Palestinian and Jordanian leaders tomorrow.

*After being put on hold by the military all week, the results of the first Egyptian democratic election for President were finally announced last night in Cairo, confirming Muslim Brotherhood candidate Mohammed Morsi as winner. President-elect Morsi, who won the runoff with 51.7% of votes, will be the nation’s first Islamist president. In last week’s Update, we copied some promises he made upon the initial assumption that he had won the election. Monday all news services were copying an Iran news service report that Morsi had vowed to renew Egypt’s ties with Iran and to review its treaty with Israel. Morsi later vehemently denied the report, calling it a fabrication. For its part, Israel released a cautious statement upon the new president’s victory: “Israel looks forward to continuing cooperation with the Egyptian government on the basis of the peace treaty between the two countries, which is a joint interest of both peoples and contributes to regional stability.”

*Five years ago this month Hamas forcibly seized Gaza in a short civil war following the “democratic” elections which brought it to power in the Strip. This week Israel found herself again under strong attack from Gaza, with more than 130 rockets and dozens of mortar shells being fired into southern Israel between Monday and Friday evening. Hundreds of thousands of Israeli citizens were required to spend much of the week in fortified areas. A 50-year-old Sderot resident was seriously injured. One rocket hit a school, another a factory but no others were hurt. Israel responded with a number of

air attacks into Gaza. However, Israel continues to restrain itself for the present from mounting a strong offensive into the Strip to crush the perpetrators of the attacks. For one thing, the rocket fire is not all coming from Hamas; there are a number of factions, several of these have acquired rockets, working independently and often in opposition to each other in the Gaza Strip. By the weekend, Egypt had brokered a truce with Hamas, the rockets subsided—and amid the tensions surrounding the Egyptian elections, the war in Syria, and Russian President Putin’s visit to Israel this week, it was felt by the war cabinet to show relative restraint. But this cannot go on forever.

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We must not allow ourselves to be unaware that there are enormous spiritual powers both Holy and Evil at work behind the scenes...influencing, drawing leaders, peoples and nations towards “positionings” for future events. As Israelis, we often pray rightly to *Elohei-Yisrael* the “Israel God” (Genesis 33:20). But in seeking to pray God’s purposes into the movements of nations about us, we have found it helpful, in a broadening, bigger-picture sort of way, to see Him as not only *Elohei-Yisrael*, or as *YHVH Tzevaot* “Yehovah of Armies”—but also as *Melekh haGoiim*—“**The King of Nations.**” God loves and has redemptive purposes over all nations (Hebrew: *goim*; the descendants of Abraham are also referred to with this word in Genesis 12:2). To effectively respond when called to pray over them, our vision of *Him* must be sufficient to encompass them within His holy sovereignty. The NASB and ESV translations of Revelation 15:3b-4 bring out this aspect of God, as does the modern Hebrew translation, an English rendering of which reads, “**Great and wondrous are your works, YHVH God of Armies! Righteous and True your ways, KING of the NATIONS. Who will not fear you, YHVH, and not give glory to Your Name? For you alone are holy. For all nations will come and worship before you, for revealed are your righteous judgments!**”

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 17-23 June is called *Chukat*—“Ordinance” (regarding the Red Heifer):

TORAH: Numbers 19:1—22:1

HAFTARAH: Judges 11:1-33

Because of the dead who would be constantly in their midst as an entire generation passed away, Chapter 19 deals with a special ‘decontamination’ regarding death. Then 38 years silently pass; by Chapter 20, with the death of Miriam, they are already drawing towards a close. In this reading Moses and Aaron themselves enter into a rebellion which will bar them from entering the Land. After the passing of his mantle to his son Eleazar, Aaron dies on Mount Hor. Shortly thereafter a further remnant from the complaining generation are slain by serpents—but the new generation begins to move into warfare and to prevail against the giants barring their way into their inheritance.

***Numbers 19: Ordinance of the Red Heifer.** With the death of those offering incense in Korah’s rebellion, the 14,700 who died by plague in the uprising shortly thereafter, and the prospect that hundreds of thousands would pass away in the wilderness wanderings, *death* hung over the camp continuously. There was need for an especial cleansing for those who came in contact with a dead person. “*The wages of sin is death*”—In Hebrew the very word for “purification” or “decontamination” (vs. 12) bears the word for sin *chet* within it. A cow, perfect and never yoked, was burned in totality outside the camp, with cedar wood, hyssop and scarlet fed into the burning. Then the ashes were stored outside the camp. When needed, they were mixed with “living water” (vs17, Hebrew: *mayim haim*) and used as a decontaminant (literally, “water kept apart to expel, serving as a sin offering”, vs. 9b) for those who had come into contact with death.

PLEASE PRAY: from the letter in the New Covenant written specifically to Jews of the First century: “*For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Messiah, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the Living God?*” (Hebrews 9:13-14).

***Numbers 20:10, 24: MOSES:** “*Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?*” **YHVH:** “*...because you both (i.e. Moses and Aaron) rebelled against My word at the water of Meribah.*” A great leader of courage, compassion and humility, Moses nevertheless appears to have had a ‘blind spot’ regarding anger. One sees it quietly alluded to or mentioned a number of times during his life (Exodus 2:12, 11:8, 32:19, Lev 10:16, Numbers 11:10, 16:15). Although there is a place for anger, if it is released in the flesh or outside of God’s timing, it will “*not produce the righteousness of God*” (James 1:19). In the end, it triggered in him the very rebellion against God’s command which he accused the people of when he spoke to them (20:10) rather than to the Rock. Titus 1:7 speaks of the necessity that God’s stewards be “not quick-tempered”.

PLEASE PRAY: *For leaders in the Body of Messiah in Israel to be trained by the Holy Spirit in self control. Pray that we will deal with issues which the Spirit discloses, which otherwise could cause us, in moments of critical decision under intense pressure, to operate out of our emotions or woundings.*

***Numbers 21:9 (Alter):** *“And Moses made a serpent of bronze and put it on a standard, and so then, if the serpent bit a man, he looked on the serpent of bronze and lived.”* The word *ness* here translated “standard” happens also to be the Hebrew word for “miracle”. **John 3:14-15:** *“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”* **II Corinthians 5:21:** *“He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”*

***Numbers 21:34-35:** *“Do not fear him (i.e. Og, King of Bashan), for I have delivered him into your hand, with all his people and his land...So they defeated him, his sons, and all his people, until there was no survivor left him; and they took possession of his land.”* **Deuteronomy 3:11:** *“For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of the giants.”* As Israel arrives 38 years later at the border of Canaan, only one of the fabled “giants” which had terrified their fathers remains. God gives them exactly the same directive he’d given their fathers...and this time they take Him at His word and destroy him. The significance of defeating this Og was huge—he is mentioned many times in Deuteronomy, Joshua, I Kings, Nehemiah and the Psalms.

The territory which this text says God Himself “*delivered into Israel’s hand*” is that area of modern Israel taken from Syria in the 1967 War—the Golan Heights. That area became part of the territory allotted to the tribe of Manasseh. The territory southward to the Arnon River was taken from King Sihon of the Amorites and eventually became territory of the tribes Reuben and Gad. This area is presently occupied by the north-western part of the Kingdom of Jordan. **PLEASE PRAY:** *That the “different spirit” of Caleb and Joshua which motivated this younger generation of Israelites would awaken again in Israel—that we would come to trust God for defeat of the many giants which have arisen again in the land to which we have returned.*

***Judges 11:23-24:** *“And now YHVH Elohei-Yisrael (Yehovah, the Israel God) has dispossessed the Amorites from before His people Israel; should you then possess it? Will you not possess whatever Chemosh your god gives you to possess? So whatever the LORD our God takes possession of before us, we will possess!”*

Jephthah (Hebrew: Yiphtakh) has regrettably, come by many to be dismissed (when thought of at all) because of an unfortunate vow he made regarding his daughter. But this has not always been so. The Bible remembers him as a heroic warrior (*gibor-hayil*) who, although born of a harlot, despised and dispossessed by the rest of his family, rose nevertheless to command the respect of both friends and enemies. He was a leader who trusted in the LORD for victory (**vs. 9**); a wise judge who made his agreements and pacts in the Presence of the LORD (**vs. 12**). He was intimately acquainted with the history of his land (**vss. 14-29**), acknowledging the LORD’s hand in that history, and bringing it to bear in reasoning with his enemies so as to avoid conflict if possible. For Jephthah, judgment rested with the LORD. So highly respected was this man before both God and man, that he is included in the chapter of Heroes of Faith in Hebrews 11. **PLEASE PRAY:** *For warriors like Jephthah to be raised up in Israel in the Last Days. Pray for God’s oversight of those from broken families (there are so many)—that seeds of*

grace and faith will be sown which will catch and germinate in fertile soil! Pray for God's Kingdom to come in Gilead, that section of land (a western portion of the present-day Kingdom of Jordan) where the action in this chapter took place. It was from this land that the Prophet Elijah “who is coming first and will restore all things” (Malachi 4:5; Matthew 17:11) came forth—and from whence he was taken up into Heaven. Under the power of the Spirit of God, the prophet Zechariah foretold a day (Zech. 10:10) in which Gilead would one day be among the areas to which the houses of Judah and Joseph would be returned.



*Martin and Norma Sarvis
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[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week 1-7 July 2012 will be *Balak*:
TORAH: Numbers 22:2—25:9; HAFTARAH: Micah 5:7—6:8]

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