

Prayer Update From Israel (June 5, 2013)



Dormition Abbey, Jerusalem

1. “PRICE TAGS”

“Price Tag” is a form of lawlessness behavior which began amongst Jews living in Judea and Samaria a couple of years ago, and is now spreading within recognized borders of Israel itself. It originally described attacks by extremist Jewish settlers upon their Palestinian neighbors in retribution for governmental decisions with which they disagreed. These might include settlement freezes, demolition of illegally built outposts, etc. At issue here isn’t just that the settlers feel they have been wronged or slighted by the Israeli government, it is the fact that they are ‘taking it out’ on innocent Palestinian Arabs, who have had nothing to do with the Government’s decisions. The attacks involve burning and desecrating mosques, torching automobiles, slashing tires, uprooting or burning olive trees, and defacing walls of private property with inflammatory and often racist graffiti. Generally, the graffiti will somewhere include the Hebrew words *tag machir*—“price tag”, a parting shot to the Israeli Government, as if to say, “this violation of innocent Palestinian’s rights is the ‘price’ you pay for your policies against us.” These attacks are increasing against Arabs in Judea and Samaria and East Jerusalem and Jaffa.

More recently, attacks have crossed over to attacking Christian churches. Last week the Dormition Abbey (above) in Jerusalem and cars parked outside it were vandalized. “Christians are Apes” and other insults were spray painted in Hebrew on its walls, On one of the cars was the name of a settler who was stabbed to death in a terrorist attack last month, with the word “price tag” alongside. On another car was scrawled the name of an unlicensed Jewish outpost near Hebron torn down by Israeli soldiers earlier in the week. In February a Baptist-owned building housing several congregations in the center of Jerusalem was defaced with “price tag” and derogatory remarks about Jesus. Sunday, Prime Minister Netanyahu spoke out against the

racism and lawlessness behind such attacks and vowed to bring into implementation stronger measures to put a stop to them. It is thought that one such measure might be to classify such actions as “acts of terror”.

With most of the world constantly attacking the legitimacy of their existence and calling for the dissolution of their communities, with a gloomy resignation by many in the government to an eventual necessity of that dissolution taking place, with hostile neighbors on every side—one may sympathize with the Settlers’ feelings of bewilderment, alienation and abandonment. Yet rebellion against the governmental authority is not the answer. Nor will the venting of their anger by the perpetration of violence against their innocent neighbors ever bring about the “righteousness of God” (James 1:20), even they consider themselves to be His zealous followers. Such actions give legitimacy to the accusations of their enemies in the nations. Indeed, they appear dangerously akin to the actions by Simeon and Levi at Shechem, which Jacob cursed before he died: ***“Simeon and Levi are brothers; instruments of cruelty (Hebrew: hamas—See below) are in their dwelling place...Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce; and their wrath, for it is cruel!”*** (Genesis 49:5,7).

PLEASE PRAY:

***Against the spirit of anger, lawlessness and violence which is behind the “price tag” attacks by religious Jews in Judea, Samaria and within present-day Israel.**

***For an effective strategy by the Israeli government to apprehend those individuals who are committing these acts and to bring them to justice.**

***For the ‘veil’ to be lifted from the hearts of the religious Jews in the “Territories”—for revelation of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—and of His Son and Messiah Yeshua, who has paid the “price” for their sin. He is the only Way to a future life of righteousness and prosperity for them and their families in their covenant land.**

2. HAMAS...THE VIOLENCE IS SPREADING

The Hebrew word *hamas* (the ‘h’ pronounced with a slight rasp in the throat) appears at least 38 times in the Hebrew Bible, from which it is most often translated ‘violence’ or ‘cruel violence.’ As we have pointed out in the past, it is by an interesting coincidence that the Arabic acronym for the radical “Islamic Resistance Movement” *Hamas* is pronounced and may be spelled in exactly the same way. This violence may be manifest as cruelty to one’s fellow-man; and it may also refer to the violation and outrage of moral and civil law. What it does *not* mean is “use of force”, which may be required in the administration of legitimate law and order in a society. (Yeshua himself used a whip to drive out merchants who were violating the spirit of His Father’s Law in the courts of the Temple [John 2:13-15], yet Isaiah 53:9 makes clear that at His death, *“He had done no violence--hamas”*.) Psalm 11:5 (NASB) informs us that *“the LORD tests the righteous and the wicked and the one who loves violence (hamas) His soul hates.”* And

Joel 3:19 speaks judgment upon Egypt and Edom (present-day southern Jordan) “because of *hamas* against the people of Judah.”

The word first appears in the Bible in Genesis 6:11, 13, “***The earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence...And Elohim said to Noah, ‘The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth.’***” As we know, Yeshua taught that during the age preceding his return, conditions over the earth (Luke 17:26, 28) would be “as it was in the days of Noah” and “as it was in the days of Lot” –both characterized by the utmost in lawlessness and cruel violence.

It is hardly necessary to mention that the spirit fueling this condition is presently spreading rapidly over the earth, and nowhere more intensely so than in the Middle-East. A remarkably insightful analysis of one aspect of this was published Saturday in *The New York Times* (which may be accessed by ‘googling’ “**As Syrians Fight, Sectarian Strife Infects Mideast**”). The article points towards a wave of violence arising across the Middle East, spawned initially by the bloody war in Syria, which has left already more than 80,000 dead. Yet the author finds that

*The killing is no longer just about supporting or opposing the government, or even about Syria...the Syrian civil war is setting off a contagious sectarian conflict beyond the country’s borders, reigniting long-simmering tensions between Sunnis and Shi’ites, and, experts fear, shaking the foundations of countries cobbled together after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire [i.e. following the close of WWI] (“As Syrians Fight, Sectarian Strife Infects Mideast”: *The New York Times* [Online], 1 June 3013).*

Thus, Lebanese *Hezbollah*, Iraqi and Iranian Shi’ite forces are coming to the aid of the embattled President Assad (of the Shi’ite derivative *Alawite* sect), while Arabia, Qatar and Turkey are seeing this as a clear case of Shi’ites accosting their Sunni brothers in Syria, and preparing measures with which to go to their assistance. Meanwhile, all of this is serving to awaken Sunni-Shi’ite violence throughout the Middle-East, each seeing their faith as being attacked by the other.

Then, in Turkey during the past week and a half a major uprising seemed to erupt out of nowhere. It has already resulted in more violence than has been seen there in years, and of a different kind. According to one Christian source, over 240,000 people have taken to the streets...most of them young and opposed to what they see as growing religious coercion in the government. As in Syria, the demonstrations began peacefully, but soon turned violent. The protests have already spread to 61 of Turkey’s 84 provinces, some 3000 have now been injured by government forces, and some have died. President Erdogan, promoted until now by western governments as “*a democratic Islamist model that could be copied elsewhere in the Middle East after the fall of authoritarian leaders* (while at the same time being adulated by much of the region’s Muslim Arab community for his harsh stand against Israel), may be finding his own foundation shaking (“Second Turkish protester killed in anti gov’t demonstration”: *REUTERS*, 06/0-4/2013 10:43).

We are not attributing all societal upheaval to *hamas*, nor implying that there are not situations in which taking part in civil resistance to social injustice may be justified. But given the fallen

nature of humankind, it takes a stronger, *Holy Wind* to resist the lawless winds of power, pride, the ‘anger of man’, and the desire for revenge which are generally blowing to steer it into violence.

Yet in the midst of the swirl of *hamas*-violence arising in the world, there is HOPE and a way of Life!

***Psalm 72:12-14 tells us that when the needy cry to God, He will rescue their souls, “*He will redeem their life from oppression and violence (hamas)*!”** Indeed, David calls on the LORD to

***“*Consider my enemies, for they are many; and they hate me with cruel hatred (hamas hatred). Guard my soul, and deliver me; Do not let me be put to shame, for I have placed my trust in You!*”** (Psalm 25:19-20). And in another place,

***“*Teach me Your way, LORD, and lead me in a smooth path because of my enemies. Don’t deliver me to the soul of my adversaries, for lying witnesses have arisen against me who breathe out violence (hamas). Oh...had I not believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD in a land of Life!*”** (Psalm 27:11-13).

PLEASE PRAY:

***The Scriptures above over Messianic Jews and Christian Arabs in Israel.**

***That as violence continues to rise, Believers throughout the Middle East will entrust themselves to the One who guards their souls—that with the Shield of Faith, the fiery darts of violence and lawlessness will be quenched—that they will be strengthened and encouraged to move forward in the Love of God, shod in the Good News of the Shalom which comes in Messiah.**

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 2-8 June is called *Korach*—“Korah”).

TORAH: Numbers 16:1—18:32

HAFTARAH: I Samuel 11:14—12:22

NOTE: Because the coming Saturday and Sunday mark the beginning of a Hebrew month (*Rosh Chodesh-Machar Chodesh*), the following passages will, in many synagogues, be substituted for the *Haftarah* cited above: Isaiah 66:1-24, 23; I Samuel 20:18, 42

This week's Portion focuses on the rebellion of Korah.

***Numbers 16:3; 16:7b:** *Korah and His Followers to Moses: "You take too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation is holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?" Moses: "Take censers, Korah and all your company; put fire in them and put incense in them before the LORD tomorrow, and it shall be that the man whom the LORD chooses is the holy one. You take too much upon yourselves, you sons of Levi."*

Perhaps we see here one reason for the severity with which the LORD dealt with Miriam and Aaron in Chapter 12. If those in the *office* of Prophet and Priest are discontent with their "place" in relation to the positions of others whom the LORD has chosen and appointed, will not their behavior be seen as license by their followers to do likewise. Moses had not appointed himself as leader over Israel, God had. Ironically, Korah was speaking a truth when he claimed that "*all the congregation is holy, every one of them*"—the congregation as a whole *was* holy (i.e. "set apart") from the other nations, and within that congregation individual tribes and families and individuals were also "set apart". Setting-apart implies boundaries both from without and from within which must be respected by those set apart to other responsibilities. **PLEASE PRAY: for unity amongst believers in Israel—for humility, respect and honor towards the gifts and callings of each. For realization that it is the Holy Spirit who makes these distinctions; it is 'taking too much upon ourselves' when we criticize or envy them. PLEASE PRAY for Godly discipline in the love and fear of the LORD within the Congregations. It may be helpful to read the Book of JUDE in this respect (especially vss 8-11) which prophecies how "rejection of authority" and "speaking evil of dignitaries—the "rebellion of Korah"—will resurface in latter days, and the spirit in which it must be addressed when it does.**

***Numbers 16:48:** *"Then Aaron took the censer as Moses had commanded, and ran into the midst of the assembly; and already the plague had begun among the people. So he put in the incense and made atonement for the people. And he stood between the dead and the living; so the plague was stopped."* Even in the midst of a rebellious people, the LORD is longing to find those who will "stand in the gap" on their behalf and on behalf of His land ("*So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found no one. Therefore, I have poured out My indignation on them...*" —Ezekiel 22:30). **PLEASE PRAY: For sensitivity and readiness on behalf of God's Intercessors—willingness, surrender and resolve to share His burden, so as to be released at just the right time to "stand between the dead and the living" (and to be able to differentiate between the two)—to "make a wall" and stand in the gap so that plague will be stopped.**

***Numbers 17:10.** *“And the LORD said to Moses, ‘Bring Aaron’s rod back before the Testimony, to be kept as a sign against the rebels, that you may put their complaints away from Me, lest they die.’”* “Rebels” is literally *b’nei-meri*—“sons (or children) of bitterness”. Lest we be too quick to distance ourselves from those who fell in Korah’s rebellion and the mutinous disruptions which followed, we would note that in the Hebrew translation of Ephesians 2:1-3, exactly the same words *b’nei-meri* are used to translate “sons of disobedience”—*“And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. But God...”* (Emphasis ours).

***I Samuel 12:21-22:** *“You must not turn aside, for then you would go after futile things which cannot profit or deliver, because they are futile. For the LORD will not abandon His people on account of His great name, because the LORD has been pleased to make you a people for Himself”* (NASB). The word “futile” or “emptiness” is in Hebrew (“*tohu*”) the same word used of the state of the earth (Genesis 1:2) before Elohim began breathing His Life into it (Psalm 33:6).

PLEASE PRAY: For Israeli believers and those who intercede for her, that our faith not be distracted into reasonings which are emptiness and void—but rather that we base our hope and prayers on God’s faithfulness to honor His Name, that we be encouraged in the knowledge that it is “His pleasure” to make Israel a “*people for Himself.*”



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[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week 9-15 June will be *Chukat*—“Ordinance” (regarding the Red Heifer) : TORAH: Numbers 19:1—22:1; HAFTARAH: Judges 11:1-33]

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