

## *Prayer Update From Israel (July 11, 2016)*



### **1. THREATENING LEGISLATION FOR BELIEVERS IN RUSSIA—PRAYING FOR “LIGHTS” IN A DARKENING SKY.**

*“In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it” (John 1:4-5 ESV)*

*This past week, Vladimir Putin inked legislation into law in Russia which, under the guise of fighting terrorism, would actually serve to silence the very army whose voices are its greatest enemy.* Mr. Putin is perhaps unaware of the very real spiritual warfare which rages in “heavenly places” in this world, including the nation over which he serves presently as leader. Nor is he likely cognizant of the “powers” in that war which are pleased to make use of his personal ambitions in order to control and “carry him along” for their own malevolent purposes. The followers of the *El Elyon*—“*The Most High God*” are called to hold such leaders up to Him (II Timothy 2)—to the end “*that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*” It is His *holy Spirit* who must guide us in how strategically to pray regarding leaders to that end. Israel is presently walking a delicate line in her relationship with Russia. Our Prime Minister met with Putin in June (their fourth meeting in the past year), a meeting in which the Russian leader pledged that Israel and Russia are “unconditional allies” in the war against terror. Yet Russia continues to supply military hardware to Iran which last week yet again forecast the “annihilation of the Zionist state”.

As the governments of these two nations maneuver warily for positions and alliances of strategic advantage on the present world stage—the citizens of God’s Kingdom here on earth, must bring the intelligence reports we receive before our Commander in Chief, trusting Him to place us in

His array. We the Body in Israel have a deep concern for what is taking place with our brothers and sisters in Russia—as well as in all of the former Soviet Union. Over a fifth of our present population emigrated from there during the past 30 years—and there are vast numbers still to come. And we care for those of our non-Jewish family in Russia who are warring for God’s redemptive purposes for that Land. We must not allow ourselves to revert to the unholy mindsets of the Cold War, which too often came to view entire nations as “evil” and “the enemy”. The children of the Kingdom in Russia are our allies, as are citizens of that Kingdom throughout the world! The call of all the “Children of Abraham” continues to be that through them, *“every family will find blessing”* (Genesis 12:3).

It is for this reason that we share with you this report (below) which we received Friday. We know that in Israel (Daniel 12), as well as throughout the world, darkness and oppression shall be increasing. But we know also that there will be a great army of those whose *“insight will shine like the brightness of the sky above, and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever”* (vs 3). Please join with us in praying for our beleaguered “allies” in Russia as their natural “sky” appears for the present to be darkening.

***Late on the afternoon of July 7, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed into law legislation against terrorism and extremism. An amendment in this law prohibits freedom of religion in a way that is considered the most restrictive measure in post-Soviet history.***

The law, which passed the upper and lower houses of Russia’s Parliament on June 24, could go into effect as early as July 20.

Under the law, all personal evangelism on the streets and in individual homes is now restricted. Evangelizing outside registered churches will result in fines. Christians meeting in homes are not allowed to invite unbelievers.

Christians wishing to share their faith must secure government permits through registered religious organizations. Even with such permits, they are not allowed to witness anywhere besides registered churches or religious sites. Churches that rent rather than owning their facilities will be forcibly disbanded.

Besides rendering evangelism illegal, the law will also punish not reporting violations. Russian believers and missionaries will be under constant scrutiny of officials and even neighbors.

Individuals found guilty of violating the new law will be fined up to \$800 USD, while organizations found in violation will be fined up to \$15,500. Foreigners found in violation will be deported. All aspects of the law also apply to internet activities.

This decision will severely restrict missionary work and the ministry of local churches in Russia.

AG General Superintendent George O. Wood has assured Russian believers of global AG support. “God will grant you faith and strength. We are standing with you.”

“Regardless of potential challenges in Russia, or any other nation,” AGWM Executive Director Greg Mundis says, “we will keep relying on the Holy Spirit to accomplish Christ’s mission.”

The Russian church has been in constant prayer and fasting as the situation has developed. “Pray that God will save us and give us wisdom to do His will,” a Russian Pentecostal leader states. “We will preach the gospel.”

(Copied from “Religious Freedom Revoked in Russia” by Kristel Ortiz: PE News, 8 July 2016)

## **2. REPORT FROM THE *DOR HABA* ISRAELI NATIONAL YOUTH WORSHIP CAMP.**

*Many of you joined with us in prayer over the Youth Worship camp which took place west of Jerusalem last month.* Below is a report by Rick Ridings, Director of *Succat Hallel* which sponsored the camp, and whose daughter Bethany oversaw its direction. Please pray that the lights ignited and nourished by this camp would continue to burn keen and with a steady flame...through the summer and into the new school-year in the fall!

### **Highlights from the “Dor Haba” Israeli National Youth Worship Camp 21-24 June, 2016**

*Succat Hallel was privileged to pour into the lives of about 80 Jewish, Israeli Arab, and Palestinian youth this June.* “Dor Haba” is Hebrew for “Next Generation”, and the camp’s purpose was to envision and train teenagers in the joy of becoming worshippers.

Inspirational teachings were given by Bethany Rosenfeld, Jon Mark Davis, David Seguin, and Rick Ridings. There were some powerful ministry and intercession times where many youth had encounters with the Holy Spirit. There was also a powerfully anointed moment praying over youth to receive an anointing to write new songs in Hebrew and in Arabic.

The teenagers attending were assigned into groups according to their levels to be trained in sensitive and spontaneous worship on instruments such as guitars, keyboards, drums, etc. There was also teaching on song-writing. In addition to teachers from within Israel, we were blessed by the help of a large team of musicians from IHOP Kansas City. The youth were then formed into worship teams, coached in workshops, and given a time and place to rehearse what they learned. Each team then had an opportunity to lead worship in one of the meetings.



In addition to all that happened in their relationship with the Lord in worship, the camp also encouraged the building of friendships between Jewish, Arab, and Palestinian youth who no longer see themselves so much by those labels, as they now see themselves simply as “friends”. By the Lord’s grace, the One New Man is arising in the Land! Relationships between different age groups were also valued and strengthened.

Pray for each of these teenagers to continue to press in to know the Lord; to find other teens with whom they may worship and pray regularly; to write anointed new worship songs in Hebrew and in Arabic; and to grow in their friendships as One New Man, Jew and Gentile.

**The next opportunity to bless the youth of Israel will be through our national youth and young adult conference “ELAV” (Hebrew for “Unto Him”). This will take place in Jerusalem 25-26 August, 2016. You may sponsor one Jewish, Arab, or Palestinian youth for \$150. You may find directions of how to mail a check or you may give securely online on our website: <http://www.succathallel.com/donate/>**

Thank you for standing with us as we seek to bless the Next Generation in this Land.

**Rick and Patti Ridings**

*Succat Hallel*

(24/7 worship and prayer overlooking the Temple Mt in Jerusalem)

### **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.*

**NOTE:** Below are the texts for the Parasha read in *Jerusalem*. Because in the *Diaspora* (i.e. communities of Jews outside of Israel) an extra day is celebrated at Passover (and this year, that day came on a Sabbath), the readings read outside of Israel are now behind one week from those read here. On August 6<sup>th</sup>, through the use of a special “double reading” covering the final chapters of the *Book of Numbers*, the readings both inside and outside of Israel will once again coincide.

**The *Parashah* for this week 10-16 July 2016 is called *Balak*:**

**TORAH: Numbers 22:2—25:9**

**HAFTARAH: Micah 5:7—6:8**

**This week’s Portion focuses upon the story of the pagan prophet Balaam (Hebrew pronunciation: Bil’am). He was called by the Moabite king Balak to come from his homeland in the Euphrates area and curse Israel, at that time spread out on the plain just across the Jordan from Jericho. But Israel’s God is in charge of the vocal chords of Balaam, and the intended curses pour forth as blessing. Portions of the oracles are recognized as being amongst the most magnificent examples of Hebrew poetry in the Bible, and elements of the blessings continue to awaken prophetic resonance into our own day!**

**\*Numbers 22:8.** *“And he [i.e. Balaam] said to them, ‘Lodge here tonight, and I will bring back word to you, as the LORD [YHVH] speaks to me.’”* This as well as vs 18 (“YHVH my God”) might seem to suggest that Balaam was a worshipper of the LORD. However, Joshua 13:22 describes him as a “soothsayer”—an occult occupation strongly condemned in Deuteronomy 18:9-14. As such, it is more likely that he wished to present himself to Balak as an ‘expert’ on all gods, including YHVH the God of Israel. It is interesting that in the Deity’s early dealings with Balaam in 22:9, 12, 20, 22 the term “God” is used, instead of “YHVH” as would likely have been the case had he truly been a follower of the LORD of Israel. Although God speaks to Balaam, and in fact takes over his mouth to speak *through* him, it is obvious from later allusions in the New Testament (II Peter 2:15-17, Jude 11, Revelation 2:14) that this magician was divided—he *“loved the wages of unrighteousness”* (II Peter 2:15-17); he *“ran greedily into error for profit”* (Jude 11)—and, after the failure of his attempts to curse Israel by his magic arts (Numbers 24:1), he later *“taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality”* (Numbers 25:2; Revelation 2:14). For such he was eventually slain (Joshua 13:22)—and believers in the Church age are warned against falling into his evil ways.

**\*Numbers 22:20.** *“...only the word which I speak to you shall you do.”* In the Hebrew, this is not a command but rather a simple statement of fact—“This is what is *going* to take place”. **PLEASE PRAY:** that God’s living, creative Word be released in Israel. It comes best through His willing servants—but He is Lord, and as such exercises sovereignty over the lips of all humankind (and even the beasts). **Pray** for spiritual discernment among the Body in Israel—to recognize *His* Word, to discern *“between the righteous and the wicked— between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him”* (Malachi 3:18).

**\*Numbers 22:22.** *“But Elohim was angry because he [Balaam] was going, and the messenger/angel of the LORD took his stand in the way as an adversary [Literal Hebrew: “as a satan”] against him.”* The Hebrew word “satan” originally meant “one who is an adversary”. In this case, the adversary was *good*— “The Angel of the LORD”. In Zechariah 3:1-2, “The Satan” standing to accuse Joshua the high priest was evil. *“Against whom one stands”* as adversary is the issue. Better that the LORD’s adversaries be also ours and His angel standing with us against them, than that the Holy One *Himself* come to be revealed as adversary against *us!*

**\*Numbers 22:31.** *“Then the LORD opened [Hebrew: revealed] Balaam’s eyes, and he saw the Angel of the LORD standing in the way with His drawn sword in His hand; and he bowed his head and fell flat on his face.”* PLEASE PRAY: that God will open the eyes of those who are allowing themselves to be honored as spokespersons to the Gentile church regarding Israel, albeit with impure motives—that they will see that they are playing with fire. Pray that the eyes of the hearts of Israeli believers be opened to see into the heavenlies, where we are seated with Messiah. Pray that we will flow *with* God’s heavenly armies rather than contrary to them (Ephesians 1:3,18-21; II Kings 6:16-17).

**\*Numbers 23:3b.** *“So he went to a desolate height...”* This is exactly the same word (only in the singular) used in Isaiah 41:8, *“I will open rivers in desolate heights, and fountains in the midst of the valleys.”* What God was about to release through Balaam was a torrent of prophetic truth which would stream through the centuries, and which is still nourishing Israel today!

**\*Numbers 23:9.** *“...Behold, a people who dwells apart, and will not be reckoned as being among the nations.* PLEASE PRAY: that modern Israel would rise up to her place of calling—that God would wean us away from the habitual longing to be “like other nations.” Pray that the believing Body of Messiah in the Nations will release Israel to “be set apart” to what God has called her to be.

**\*Numbers 23:21.** *“He has not observed iniquity in Jacob, nor has He seen wickedness in Israel. The LORD his God is with him, and the shout [or royal shofar blast] of a King is among them.”* PLEASE PRAY: *“Your Kingdom come, Your will be done—in Israel—as it is in Heaven!”*

**\*Numbers 24:7, 20.** *“His [i.e. Jacob’s] King shall be higher than Agag, and His kingdom shall be exalted...Amalek was first among the nations, but shall be last until he perishes.”* As we have mentioned during our traversals of Exodus 17:8-16 and Deut. 25:17-19, *Amalek* signifies a covenant-hating spirit which has historically manifested in seeking to destroy God’s covenant-people Israel; this spirit is at the heart of all anti-Semitism. *Agag* was an Amalekite king (I Samuel 15:8) and *Haman*, the “Enemy of the Jews” (who sought to exterminate them out of the Persian Empire) was a descendant of *Agag* (Esther 3:1, 10). God’s covenants with Israel are covenants of Life, through which flows blessing for all humankind made in His image. Therefore, He has sworn war with *Amalek* from generation to generation until He has utterly blotted out his memory from under Heaven (Exodus 17:14-15). “His King”—(His Son, Psalm 2:6-7) *“was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed”* (Daniel 7:14).

**\*Numbers 23:23.** *“For there is no sorcery [In Hebrew, the word used here for “sorcery” and that used for “serpent” are identical] against Jacob and no magic against Israel. It now must be said of Jacob and of Israel, ‘Oh, what God has done!’”*

**\*Micah 5:12.** *“I will cut off sorceries from your hand, and you shall have no soothsayers. Your carved images I will also cut off, and your obelisks from your midst; You shall no more worship the work of your hands.*

Both this passage from the Torah and that from the Haftarah are very pertinent for us in Israel today. The enemy knows that his time is short—and he has sown sorcery throughout the land. In secular schools, children are often taught the horoscope and New Age in the early grades (we have seen the homework papers ourselves). Much of ultra-Orthodox Judaism is permeated with the occult. Often Israelis flocking to Asia (particularly India and Thailand) after military service, bring back Eastern mysticism to fill the void within. And there are New Age festivals several times a year which attract thousands. **Please Pray:** that the works of the serpent will be exposed and cut off in Israel. Pray for release of signs and wonders and deliverance from demons in the Name of Yeshua through the power of the *Holy Spirit*. **Pray** that curses made against this Land and people from outside will hit a wall and fall to the ground. **Pray** for God to raise up leaders like Josiah who will work with holy Zeal and Jealousy for the cleansing of our land.

**\*Micah 6:8:** *“He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the YHVH require of you but to do justly, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”* PLEASE **PRAY** this verse over Israel—God *“resists the proud but gives grace to the humble,”* and He longs to “walk” with her again!



*Martin & Norma Sarvis  
Jerusalem*

[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week (17-23 July 2016) are called *Pinchas*—“Phinehas”: TORAH: Numbers 25:10—29:40; HAFTARAH: I Kings 18:46—19:21]

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