

PRAYER UPDATE FROM ISRAEL (July 27, 2011)

BELLS



“And you shall make on its hem pomegranates of indigo and purple and crimson, on its hem all around, and golden bells within them all around. A golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, on the hem of the robe all around. And it shall be upon Aaron when he serves, so that its sound be heard when he comes into the sanctum before the LORD and when he goes out, that he shall not die” (Exodus 28:33-35, Robert Alter, trans.).

“In that day there will be inscribed on the bells of the horses, “HOLY TO THE LORD...” (Zechariah 14:20).

A tiny golden bell (pictured above) was discovered last Thursday in an ancient drainage channel in the City of David, just south of the Temple Mount. The ditch is thought to have lain alongside the famous road over which priests made passage in Biblical times from the Pool of Shiloah (Siloam) up to the Temple Mount. The bell is very small (only about ½ inch or 1 cent. wide) with a loop for sewing to clothing. Archaeologists date it back 2000 years ago to the 2nd Temple period (515 B.C.-A.D. 70); it is the first such bell ever to be found in Jerusalem. Although there is no certainty, they are saying that it lies not outside the realm of possibility that this could indeed be related to those bells prescribed in the Torah to be worn round the hems of the High Priests’ robes. If so, they surmise that it may have fallen off during one of the High Feast days, such as the last day of Succot, when water was drawn from the pool and borne up Mount Moriah to be poured out before the LORD in the Temple.

Might there be something which the Holy Spirit would speak to us, through the finding of such a bell in such a place at this time? We must ask for revelation, for interpretation. Perhaps the following facts, thoughts and questions may at least serve to assist us in getting started:

THE WORD ‘BELL’ IS MENTIONED SPECIFICALLY ONLY THREE PLACES IN SCRIPTURE:

I. The first two are in Exodus 28:33-35 (quoted above) and 39:24-26 (a partial repetition of the former), where they describe the gold bells and woven pomegranates which were to line the hem of Aaron's robe (and those of the High Priests who would succeed him). These were to be worn as he ministered, and their sound was to be heard as He approached and departed from the Holy Place before the LORD. The golden sound of the bells tinkling against the pomegranates as the High Priest went about his service was required. If it did not precede and succeed him as he walked towards and away from the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement, he would die. Whatever its far-deeper significance, it seems clear that in this context, the sound was related to the comings and goings of **one who had been made holy** (the following verse describes a gold plate for his forehead bearing the inscription, HOLINESS TO THE LORD) as He went about his service of performing a holy work of atonement on behalf of God's people. It is significant here that the sound signaled the service of only *one* person. As we shall see, there would come a time when the bells will signal the sanctification of all people and their possessions!

The Hebrew word for bell in these first two passages is *pa'amon*, which relates to a *stroke* (producing the peal of the bell). It comes from the word *pa'am*, which has to do with:

1. A beat, a footfall or footstep, such as produces a cadence. This is reflected in Psalm 17:5, "*My steps have held fast to Your paths. My feet (p'amim) have not slipped.*" In the New Covenant, we are urged, "*since we live by the Spirit, let us **keep in step** with the Spirit*" (Galatians 5:25 NIV).

Are we in God's timing? Are we moving in step with what He is doing? As members of His human army here on earth are we "in step" with God's heavenly army—tuned to "hear the sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees" (II Samuel 5:24)—so we will know when to "advance quickly" or when to pause and wait?

2. An anvil (which is stricken by a hammer): (Isaiah 41:7).

Are we willing to be tempered and then laid on His anvil for forming or even reshaping into that which will be strong, sharp and trustworthy in His Hand in the battles ahead? Are we patient and a strength and encouragement to brothers or sisters currently on that anvil?

3. Time or Occurrence, as a point or stroke in time, "*And he said to the king of Israel, 'Strike the ground'; so he struck three times, and stopped*" (II Kings 13:18). II Timothy 4:2 charges, "*Be instant, in season and out of season*".

Are we aware and trusting that our "times" are in His hand? Are we sober-minded and alert so as to come to attention at any 'point in time' when we are called by our Commander in Chief?

4. P'imah is another word with the same root, and relates to a throbbing, beating pulse—especially as that of the heart.

Are we including first among our priorities times of drawing-near to our Lord, that we might sense and be in tune with the very pulse of His heartbeat, as was John who leaned on His breast? PLEASE PRAY: that God will release in Israel a heart to hear and know His own-- "Then I will give them a heart to know Me, that I am the LORD; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God, for they shall return to Me with their whole heart" (Jeremiah 24:7).

II. The other reference to bells in the Bible is in Zechariah 14:20, "In that day 'HOLINESS TO THE LORD' shall be on the bells of the horses. The pots in the LORD's house shall be like the bowls before the altar."

A different Hebrew word is used here *metzilot*, which relates to the *tinkling* voice of bells used on horses. While the ringing of the first bells announced the coming and going of the holy High Priest who *alone* was allowed to enter the Holiest Place, Zechariah prophesied of a time for *all* people when "not only shall 'Holy to the LORD' be written on their persons, and on all the outward and inward life of the whole community, but on everything they possess...The whole external character of life—that which is exhibited in the streets of a city (represented by the tinkling sound of the bells of the passing horses) shall bear in all its parts, throughout all its detail, the impress of holiness unto the Lord." (Baron, David: Zechariah: A Commentary on his Visions and Prophecies, p531).

PLEASE PRAY THAT EVEN AS THIS GOLDEN SYMBOL OF A SOUND OF HOLINESS AND REDEMPTION HAS BEEN UNEARTHED IN THE CITY OF DAVID, THAT A ROYAL RINGING SOUND OF HOLINESS WILL BE RELEASED THROUGH BELIEVERS THROUGHOUT JERUSALEM AND OVER ALL OF ISRAEL THIS MONTH. THE MUSLIM MONTH OF "RAMADAN" BEGINS ON MONDAY AUGUST 1ST. PRAY THAT DURING THIS SEASON VOICES "LIKE THE SOUND OF A THOUSAND BELLS" WILL RISE AS A TEMPERED AND HEAVENLY WROUGHT WEAPON IN THE HAND OF THE LORD TO DO BATTLE IN THE HEAVENLIES, AN ANCIENT SOUND OF HOLINESS WHICH WILL TRANSCEND THE CALLS TO ANOTHER DIETY WHICH WILL BE RISING DAILY FROM HIS HOLY MOUNTAIN—A GOLDEN SOUND, IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH RINGING OUT LOVE AND SANCTIFYING FREEDOM FOR ALL PEOPLES.

RING THEM BELLS!!

When the Jewish poet/minstrel/folk-rock artist Bob Dylan recently visited Israel, he opened his concert with a song from his old *Slow Train Coming* album. That album from 1979 was a bold testimony to the world of his new-found faith in Yeshua (Jesus) as Messiah, Saviour and Lord. In a world much of which did not like or want its hero "saved", rumors began circulating within only a few years that Dylan had abandoned Christianity. There seems to be no sound evidence, however, that he has ever publically renounced his faith. On the contrary, over the course of the past three decades it has become not at all unusual for a powerful song or lyric to surface on an album revealing that, whatever personal storms or failures he may have come or is going through, he still believes, as in 2006's "Thunder on the Mountain", that "Some sweet day I'll stand beside my king/I wouldn't betray your love or any other thing". The following song from his 1989 album *O Mercy* (written over ten years after his coming to faith) not only

illustrates this clearly, *it rings out an alarm, resounding—for those with ears to hear--into our present day:*

Ring them bells, ye heathen/From the city that dreams/Ring them bells from the sanctuaries/'Cross the valleys and streams/For they're deep and they're wide/And the world's on its side/And time is running backwards/And so is the bride

Ring them bells St. Peter/Where the four winds blow/Ring them bells with an iron hand/So the people will know/Oh it's rush hour now/On the wheel and the plow/And the sun is going down/Upon the sacred cow

Ring them bells Sweet Martha/For the poor man's son/Ring them bells so the world will know/That God is one/Oh the shepherd is asleep/Where the willows weep/And the mountains are filled/With lost sheep

Ring them bells for the blind and the deaf/Ring them bells for all of us who are left/Ring them bells for the chosen few/Who will judge the many when the game is through/Ring them bells, for the time that flies/For the child that cries/When innocence dies

Ring them bells St. Catherine/From the top of the room/Ring them from the fortress/For the lilies that bloom/Oh the lines are long/And the fighting is strong/And they're breaking down the distance/Between right and wrong

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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 24-30 July is *Massei* ("Journeys").

TORAH: Numbers 33:1—36:13

HAFTARAH: Jeremiah 2:4-28; 3:4; 4:1-2

THIS WEEK WE COME TO THE END OF THE BOOK OF NUMBERS (Hebrew: *BE'MIDBAR*—"IN THE DESERT").

***CHAPTER 33.** "Now at the end of the long chain of Wilderness stories that began in Exodus, as the Israelites are poised to cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan, we get a grand recapitulation of the whole narrative in the form of an itinerary of all the way stations in the Wilderness march" (Alter, Robert: *The Five Books of Moses*, W.W.Norton & Co: New York, London, 2004 (p. 852, n 1).

***Numbers 33:2.** "*And Moses wrote down their departure points for their journeying by the word of the LORD, and these are their journeying by their departure points*" (Robert Alter, trans).

"Departure points" is also sometimes translated "Starting points". Both have validity, albeit with slightly different perspectives. The literal Hebrew word is closely related to one used in blessing bread, "*Ha'motzei lechem min haAretz*"—"Who **brings forth** bread from the earth." So yet another perspective might be, "**those places from which they were brought forth for their journey**". An old Jewish proverb goes something like this, "*You can't know where you're going 'til you know where you came from.*" Writing down these starting/departure points from which they had been drawn forth back into their journeying had been commanded by the LORD.

***Numbers 36:7.** "*And an estate of the Israelites shall not turn round from tribe to tribe, but the Israelites shall cling each man to the estate of the tribe of his fathers*" (Robert Alter, trans.).

"Cling" comes from the same Hebrew word used in Genesis 2:24 regarding a man and his wife. It was this charge which likely fueled Naboth's response to Ahab in I Kings 21:3, "*YHVH Forbid! That I should give the inheritance of my fathers to you!*"

***Jeremiah 2:13.** "*For my people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the Source of living water, and they have hewed themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water.*"

***Jeremiah 3:4 (NKJV).** "*Will you not from this time cry to Me, 'My Father, You are the guide of my youth?'*"

***Jeremiah 4:1-2 (NASB).** "*'If you will return, O Israel,' declares the LORD, 'Then you should return to me. And if you will put away your detested things from My presence, And will not waver, And you will swear, 'As the LORD lives,' In truth, in justice and in righteousness; Then the nations will bless themselves in Him, And in Him they will glory.'*"

As Israel comes into a right relationship with her God, it has always been God's plan that repercussions will be felt throughout the world, and the nations will come into a new revelation of His Glory and "*bless themselves in Him*"



*Martin and Norma Sarvis
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[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week 31 July—6 August will be *D'varim* (“Words”): TORAH: Deuteronomy 1:1—3:22; HAFTARAH: Isaiah 1:1-27.]

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