

Prayer Update From Israel (July 27, 2015)

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד וְאַהֲבַת אֵת
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל לֵבְבְךָ וּבְכָל נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל מְאֹדְךָ וְהָיוּ
הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֱשֶׁר אֲמַנִּי מִצֵּד הַיָּם עַל לֵבְבְךָ וּשְׁמֹנֶת
לְבָבֶיךָ וְדַבַּרְתָּ בָּם בְּשֹׁמְרֶיךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְלִמְתְּךָ בְּדֶרֶךְ
וּבְשֹׁמְרֶיךָ וּבְקוֹמֹתַי וּמְשֻׁרְתֵיךָ לְאוֹת עַל יַדְּךָ וְהָיוּ לְטֹעֲפֹת
בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ וּמְתַבָּנִים עַל מַזְלוֹת בֵּיתְךָ וּבְשֹׁמְרֵיךָ
וְהָיָה אִם שָׁמַעְתָּ שִׁמְעֵנִי אֵל מְצִוֵּי אֱשֶׁר אֲמַנִּי
מְצִוֵּה אֲתָם הַיּוֹם לְאַהֲבָה אֵת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וּלְעֲבֹדוֹ
בְּכָל לֵבְבְכֶם וּבְכָל נַפְשְׁכֶם וּלְחַנּוּתֵי מִלְּחָמָה אֲרִצְלָם בְּלִטּוֹ
יִרְאָה וּמְלִקוּשׁ וְאַסְפֹּת דָּגָל וְהַיְוִשָׁף וְיִלְהַרֵךְ וְלִמְתֵי
עָלַם בְּדֶרֶךְ לְבַהֲמֹתַי וְאַכְלֵת וּשְׁמֵרֵת הַשְׁמֹרִי לָכֵן
פֶּן יִפְתָּה לְבַבְכֶם וְסַרְתֶּם וּלְעַבְדֵתֶם אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים
וְהַשְׁתַּחֲוִיתֶם לָהֶם וְהָרָה אַף יְהוָה בְּכֶם וְעָלָר אֵת
הַשְׁמַיִם וְכֹא יִהְיֶה מִלְּחָמָה וְהָאֲדָמָה לֹא תִתֵּן אֵת יְבוּלָהּ
וְאַבְדֵתֶם מִהֲרָה מִעַל הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה נָתַן לָכֵן
וּשְׁמַעְתֶּם אֵת דְּבָרֵי אֱלֹהֵי עַל לֵבְבְכֶם וְעַל נַפְשְׁכֶם וּמְשֻׁרְתֵיכֶם
אֲתֶם לְאוֹת עַל יַדְּכֶם וְהָיוּ לְטֹעֲפֹת בֵּין עֵינֵיכֶם וּמְתַבָּנִים
אֲתֶם אֵת בְּנֵיכֶם לְרַבֵּר בָּם בְּשֹׁמְרֵיכֶם בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְלִמְתְּךָ
בְּדֶרֶךְ וּבְשֹׁמְרֵיכֶם וּבְקוֹמֹתַי וּמְשֻׁרְתֵיכֶם עַל מַזְלוֹת בֵּיתְךָ
וּבְשֹׁמְרֵיכֶם לְמַעַן יִרְבוּ יְיָכֶם וְיָסִי בְּנֵיכֶם עַל הָאֲדָמָה
אֲשֶׁר נָשָׁבַע יְהוָה לְאַבְתָּיִם לְהַתְּ לָהֶם כִּימֵי הַשְׁמַיִם
עַל הָאָרֶץ

Manuscript on parchment of Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and 11:13-21, which begins, “Hear O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is One”. Such manuscripts are placed within a receptacle which is then attached to the doorpost (*mezuzah*) of a Jewish home as an aid in fulfilling the commandment in Deuteronomy 6:9. (See Torah Portion below.)

1. THE TEMPLE MOUNT ON TISH'A B'AV, AND ISRAEL'S ALLIANCE WITH THE KINGDOM OF JORDAN.

As mentioned in last week's Update, Saturday night and Sunday were observance days for Tish'a B'Av—“The Ninth of Av,” a day of mourning for religious Jews, who fast and remember the destruction of the First and Second Temples. During this observance the *Book of Lamentations* is read, and in Jerusalem thousands of Jews visit the *Kotel* (Western Wall/Wailing Wall) or ascend the Temple Mount itself to pray.

Early Saturday evening, Jerusalem police began receiving intelligence reports that Muslim youths had accumulated stones, planks, Molotov cocktails, fireworks and concrete blocks and stockpiled them within the doors of the Al Aqsa Mosque on the Temple Mount for the purpose of hurling down upon Jewish worshippers at the Wall the next day. They had also erected barricades inside the door of the Mosque. When security forces arrived on the Mountain Sunday morning to remove the barricades, they were greeted with a hail of stones, planks and fire. (During the past year Palestinian militants have increasingly begun using fireworks such as roman candles as weapons against Israeli police or soldiers.) Several officers were injured. During the violence, a group of religious Jews and a large group of Christian visitors (many of whom had gathered for a time of worship in the writers' living room the previous evening) were required to leave the Mountain. In the end, police and Border Patrol forces drove the rioters into the Mosque, entering the outer extremities of it to remove the barricades. Usually, after such an incident, the Temple Mount it will be closed to non-Muslims for the rest of the day—but due to the site's special significance for Jews on this particular day, both Jews and other non-Muslims were allowed to return for a limited time after order had been restored. Some 1200 did so.

Last year, riots on the Mountain resulted in Israeli security forces actually entering and briefly occupying the Mosque, which had then as now been stockpiled with stones and Molotov cocktails. That entry was seen as ‘violation’ of the holy site on the mountain where Mohammed is said to have ascended to heaven” and served to ignite anger and threats against Israel from Muslims around the world. The Kingdom of Jordan, which is in charge of overseeing Muslim holy sites on the mountain, temporarily broke diplomatic relations with Israel. Because of her role since the ’67 War as a custodian over what is considered Islam’s 3rd holiest site, Jordan feels compelled to be seen as voicing strong disapproval whenever Israel violates the “status quo” there. Accordingly she was quick to condemn the visit by Jews on *Tish’a B’Av* as a “provocative act designed to ignite hostility.” Maintaining the “status quo” (non-Muslims may visit the Mountain during prescribed hours, but must not openly pray or worship) is a key stipulation in the treaty which was signed between Israel and Jordan in 1994.

That 21 year old treaty between Israel and Jordan has been a great blessing. The two countries continue to engage in many cross-cultural projects together, and despite the presence of great streams of anti-Israel sentiment in different parts of Jordan, ties have continued to strengthen in other ways. With burgeoning violence throughout the region, the desirability of meeting the constant threats with strengthened ties with our allies for the purpose of mutual protection has become evident. Israel has assured Jordan that should ISIS make good on its threats and attempt to cross her borders with Iraq or Syria, Jordan will not stand alone. In fact, this past week it was made public that Israel last year turned over 16 Cobra attack helicopters to Jordan to assist the Hashemite kingdom in defending her borders.

We believe the maintenance of a friendly relationship between the Jewish state and our eastern neighbor to of critical importance. We see the present leadership of Prime Minister Netanyahu in Israel and King Abdullah II in Jordan as having been divinely set in place for this season—in fact, an alliance which may prove of such importance in the near future that the Evil One will seek any means of damaging or destroying it. Stirring up trouble on the Temple Mount is certainly the most natural way for mounting his attack against that alliance.

PLEASE PRAY:

*** That the powers of evil will be bound from successfully stirring up major violence on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem outside the timings of the Lord. A prophetic word released last year regarding such a stirring, we believe to still be in effect, “Not Now!”**

*** That God’s purposes in placing Netanyahu and Abdullah together in office will be fulfilled. That they and their families will be under the protection of the Lord. That God will guard their positions, and strengthen them in carrying out the responsibilities of their offices in wisdom and integrity.**

*** That God will grant revelation of His Redeemer Messiah to both of these men. Mr. Netanyahu has had much exposure to the Faith—and King Abdullah has a close member of his family who is a Believer.**

*** That their relationship as neighboring leaders would be strengthened and protected—that nothing, including activities on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, will be allowed to weaken or rupture the integrity of that relationship.**

*** For the very large Body of Messiah in Jordan, that they be encouraged and strengthened in their Faith; that they be granted revelation in praying for their government, their land, and for Israel. Pray for believers in Israel to gain a burden to stand in prayer as “Brothers & Sisters in Arms” with the Body of Messiah in Jordan.**

*** That God’s Kingdom Come in the Kingdom of Jordan, and in its relationship with Israel. Remember, God has declared that that region will one day be an area which will provide welcome to His people Israel! (Zechariah 10:10; See Torah Portion Deut. 4:43 below)**

2. THE IRANIAN NUCLEAR DEAL...TO THE UN, THEN THE US CONGRESS.

There was anger in the US Congress last week (even amongst Democrats) at the Obama administration’s decision to have the UN Security Council vote on the Iran nuclear agreement before the US Congress had opportunity to accept or reject it. After that UN body voted unanimously to affirm the deal, Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Bob Corker stated, “It is inappropriate to commit the United States to meet certain international obligations without even knowing if Congress and the American people approve or disapprove of the Iran agreement” (1)

Israel remains strongly opposed to the deal as it stands, and is anxious that the American congress will reject it. There are reports that AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee; the strongest pro-Israel group) is planning to deploy some 300 lobbyists on Capitol Hill this week in an attempt to convince lawmakers to vote against. On Friday, Secretary of State John Kerry warned, “I fear that what could happen is if Congress were to overturn it [i.e. the Iranian nuclear agreement], our friends in Israel could actually wind up being more isolated and more blamed”. And regarding the renewed possibility that Israel might consider a preemptive strike on Iranian nuclear facilities, the Secretary stated, “That’d be an enormous mistake, a huge mistake with grave consequences for Israel and for the region, and I don’t think it’s necessary” (2)

Remarks such as this, rather than being viewed as earnest cautions on behalf Israel’s welfare, are seen as thinly-veiled threats by many Israelis—as they were in November 2013, when Mr. Kerry declared over Israeli and Palestinian television, “I believe that if we do not resolve the issues between Palestinians and Israelis, if we do not find a way to find peace, there will be an increasing isolation of Israel, there will be an increasing campaign of the de-legitimization of Israel that has been taking place on an international basis.” —followed by the query, “Does Israel want another intifada?” (3)

Responding to the Secretary’s Friday remarks, MK and former Ambassador to the US Michael Oren stated, “If American legislators reject the nuclear deal, they will do so exclusively on the basis of US interests. The threat of the Secretary of State who, in the past, warned that Israel

was in danger of becoming an apartheid state, cannot deter us from fulfilling our national duty to oppose this dangerous deal.” (4)

PLEASE PRAY:

*** For wisdom and courage for U.S. lawmakers in examining the particulars of this agreement—that if what might be released with its passage is not within the purposes and timings of God, it will be rejected.**

*** For God’s protective guidance over Israel through whatever painful circumstances may be required in order for her to come to realize that ultimately her sole hope and protection lies not with the U.S. or any other earthly power, but with her God.**

***That God’s redemptive purposes for all the countries in this region, including Iran, will move forward. That the Body of Messiah in each of these lands will come to “*know their God, Be Strong, and take Action?*” (Daniel 11:32)**

1 “Bipartisan Anger in Congress over Obama’s UN Move”: *Arutz Sheva*; 7/21/2015 8:21 a.m.

2 “World would blame Israel if Congress vetoes Iran nuclear deal, Kerry says”: *The Jerusalem Post*; July 26, 2015 15:26 IST.

3 Quoted in “Immoral to say Israel should stay out of Iran accord debate in US, minister says”: *The Jerusalem Post*; July 26, 2015 20:09.

4. “World would blame Israel...”

THIS WEEK’S TORAH PORTION:

From ancient times there has been a weekly portion (Parasha) 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 Parasha for this week 26 July—1 August 2015 is called *Va’Et’chanan*—“And I pleaded...”:

TORAH: Deuteronomy 3:23—7:11

HAFTARAH: Isaiah 40:1-26 (*Shabbat Nachamu*—“Sabbath of Comforting”)

Shabbat Nachamu—Following the three weeks “between the straits” ending with *Tisha b’Av*, the *haftarah* for each of the next seven weeks will be from the Book of Isaiah—focusing upon the LORD’s desire to *comfort* His people. This week’s *haftarah* begins, *Nachamu, Nachamu ami*—“Comfort you (plural), Comfort you my people...”. This first week is therefore sometimes called *Shabbat Nachamu*—the “Sabbath of Comforting.”

In addition to the “preparations and warnings for crossing-over and possessing inheritance” (3:27-28; 4:14, 21-22, 26-28; 6:1), this week’s rich and powerful reading contains the ‘Ten Commandments’ (5:6-21); the *Shema* “Hear O Israel” (6:4); instructions regarding knowing and memorizing God’s Word within the home, and other often touchingly earnest counsels and admonitions of Moses to the young generation preparing to enter Canaan.

***Deuteronomy 3:25.** *“I pray thee, let me go over, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon”* (KJV). Although many English (and a Greek) versions interpret ‘mountain’ as being plural, the literal Hebrew (as with the original King James cited above) is singular, leaving room for the implication that one of the great longings in Moses’ heart was to be allowed to see with his own eyes “*that good mountain*”—the one about which he had been given a prophetic song immediately after leading his people through the Red Sea over 40 years before—“*You will bring them in and plant them in the mountain of Your inheritance, in the place, O LORD, which You have made for Your own dwelling*” (Exodus 15:17). This is of course the Temple Mountain in Jerusalem, upon which the King of Kings will one day be enthroned (Psalm 2:6).

***Deuteronomy 3:28.** *“And charge Yehoshua (Joshua), and encourage him and strengthen him; for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which you will see.”*

PLEASE PRAY: *for the raising up if spiritual leaders in Israel*—that these be noticed by alert and obedient elders who will, under the direction of the Holy Spirit “*charge, encourage and strengthen*” them in the power and direction of their calling. That a new godly generation will love and trust their God, fight the battles necessary and inherit the land.

***Deuteronomy 4:7.** *“For who is the great nation whose gods are near to it the way YHVH our God is to us in all the ways in which we call to Him?”*

***Deuteronomy 4:29-31.** *“But from there [i.e. scattered throughout the world] you [the Hebrew people] will seek YHVH your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul. When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you in the last days, when you turn to YHVH your God and obey his voice (For YHVH your God is a merciful God), He will not forsake you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them.”*

PLEASE PRAY: For awakening of a powerful longing in the hearts of Jews still in the nations, a longing after the God of their Fathers and faith in this word that He will hear when they turn to Him.

***Deuteronomy 4:43.** *“Betzer in the wilderness on the plateau for the Reubenites, Ramoth in Gilead for the Gadites, and Golan in Bashan for the Manassites.”*

These are locations of Cities of Refuge in land taken by Israel from the Amorites, running along the eastern side of the Jordan River to Mount Hermon, an area once known as the “Land of the Giants” (Deut. 2:20; 3:13), until *Og*, the last and greatest of the giants, was defeated by Israel before their crossing into Canaan (Deut. 3:3-11). The location of the first two lies within land presently under the oversight by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (which modern kingdom came officially into being in 1946). The last is the area of the Golan Heights, taken by Israel from Syria in the 1967 War. Zechariah 10:10 prophesies that someday Jews will return to Gilead, as well as portions of Lebanon.

PLEASE PRAY: That the Israeli government will sense and move in God’s timetable regarding these lands. Twenty years ago, the Israeli government was seriously considering the return of the Golan Heights to Syria in exchange for peace. The present state of turmoil just outside the borders of that region and throughout Syria testifies to the mercies of God in not allowing that exchange to take place. *Please pray for God’s Kingdom to come in the Golan Heights—1)* that Israel will not despise this land taken once by Moses and bequeathed to Manasseh, and now in these last days entrusted once again to the stewardship of God’s people Israel. Pray that this strategic land will never be bartered for a false peace with our neighbors. **2)** That it will be protected from the forces of violence in Syria which continually threaten to invade it. **3)** That revelation of the true God and His Savior/Messiah Yeshua to the Druze peoples living along the Israeli borders of the Heights. **4) For the Messianic presence (Including houses of prayer) in the Golan Heights—that God encourage, strengthen and give strategy.** **5) Pray that God’s Kingdom come!—for all the regions mentioned in Deut. 4:45--that in His way and timing the LORD of Hosts will bring all of the land promised to his Covenant people into the borders He has ordained.**

***Deuteronomy 6:4-5.** *“HEAR! [Hebrew: Shma!] ISRAEL; YHVH [the LORD] OUR GOD, YHVH ONE!”*

There are other “*Hear, O Israel’s*” in Deuteronomy (4:1, 6:3, 9:1, 20:3, 33:7)—but this is the one which for centuries has become the central cry of Jews throughout the world, and continues to be sung each week in Synagogues (including most Messianic ones). It takes revelation, removal of the ‘veil’, for this people to realize that Yeshua’s (Jesus’) being *Son of God* (Proverbs 30:4), as well as Son of David and Son of Man, does not violate this proclamation. It is a deep, eternal truth that *He and His Father are ONE!* (John 10:30). Satan hates this truth being voiced—when Yeshua proclaimed it, the religious Jews present took up stones to kill him.

PLEASE PRAY for this revelation of the *one-ness* of the Father and the Son, and that the voice and false message of the Deceiver be silenced in the ears of the Jewish people.

***Deuteronomy 6:5.** *“You shall love YHVH your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.”*

Yeshua quoted this verse in the New Covenant, calling it the First and Greatest commandment (Matthew 22:37-38; Mark 12:29-30). *“All your strength”* is unique in the Hebrew. Rather than a usual expression for “strength”, the word *me’od* is used. Elsewhere in both Biblical and Modern Hebrew *me’od* is an adverb meaning “very.” Webster’s describes the adverb “very” this way: *“In a high degree; to a great extent; extremely; exceedingly; used as a qualifier before an adjective or another adverb.”* Yet here *me’od* or “very” is used as a *noun!* To love our God with all of our very “*very-ness*”—in every way, “in a high degree”; “to a great extent”; “extremely”; “exceedingly”.

Only once in the Hebrew Bible is this passage repeated—in reference to the Israelite leader, King Josiah (II Kings 23:25), *“Now before him there was no king like him, who turned to the LORD with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the Torah of Moses, nor after him did any arise like him.”* “With all our heart” implies a tender and humble heart. Significantly, 22:19 reveals that God heard and responded to Josiah *“because his heart was tender, and he humbled himself before the LORD when he heard what he had spoken.”*

Might we not pray for the current leader of Israel that he will have a softened heart like Josiah which might be pierced when he reads God’s word (something which Prime Minister Netanyahu has on more than one occasion claimed that he does with regularity)?

***Deuteronomy 6:6-9.** *“And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them (Literally, “teach them by memory”) diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts (Hebrew: *mazuzot*) of your house and on your gates.”*

It is so important to read, learn and memorize God’s word. That is obviously the sense here—the placing of portions about the house as an aid in learning. Every Jewish house has a *mezuzah* on its doorpost. This is a little box with the letter *Shin* on it (Standing for *Shaddai*—“Almighty”) and bearing within a tiny scroll of parchment or paper with words from this passage Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and 11:13-21. Observant Jews touch the *mezuzah* upon entering or leaving a dwelling and then touch their fingers to their lips as a sign of love for the Word. There is certainly nothing in and of itself wrong with this. However, as so often happens with such traditions, for many it has become laden with legalism or superstition. People with no belief whatsoever in the Word or the God who gave it will nevertheless touch a *mezuzah* with the hope of its bringing luck. And there is a distressingly frequent scenario in which a family in anguish over a tragedy taking place within their apartment receives the diagnosis from their rabbi that it befell them because of this or that small imperfection in the way their *mezuzah* had been mounted; or it hadn’t been cleaned; or the scroll within it hadn’t been ‘blessed’ properly. Such unscriptural, unfeeling legalism crushes the spirit of those religious Jews trying to do right, and brings down the fury and contempt of secular Jews, driving them even further away from the God of their Fathers.

PLEASE PRAY: For Israelis to return to the Word of God; that they will embrace it, and that the Holy Spirit will awaken its life within them. Pray against occult and legalistic deception regarding the Living Word. Pray for Jews to investigate the God-breathed pages of the New Covenant as well as the Old!

***Isaiah 40:1-2, 9.** *“Comfort You (plural), Comfort You My people!’ says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem...You who bring good tidings to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, ‘Here is your God!’”*

As mentioned at the beginning of the “Torah Portion” section, the Sabbath immediately following the 9th of Av is sometimes called *Shabbat Nachamu*—“The *Comfort You* Sabbath”—after the first words of Isaiah 40 which are read that day. From this Sabbath until *Rosh Hashanah* (14 September this year), the seven readings from the Prophets will be taken from Isaiah, focusing like a balm upon the *comfort* and *love* which God has for His people. **PLEASE PRAY** that Israel’s ears will be opened to the Voice of Good News coming from her Father. *Pray that the voice of the bearer of Good News to Zion (Meveseret Tzion) will be released strong and clear from high places around the Holy City!*

***Isaiah 40:11.** *“He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those who are with young.”* **PLEASE PRAY** for revelation and dreams amongst Jews regarding the One who said, *“I am the good shepherd; and I know my sheep, and am known by My own. As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep”* (John 10:14-15).

***Isaiah 40:26.** *“Lift up your eyes on high, and see who has created these things, Who brings out their host by number; He calls them all by name, by the greatness of His might and the strength of His power; not one is missing.”* **PLEASE PRAY** that Israelis remember God’s word to Abraham our father, how *“He brought him outside and said, ‘Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.’ And He said to him, ‘So shall your descendants be.’”* (Gen. 15:5). Pray that they realize WHO is the “Word” referred to in Psalm 33:4-6 who made all these, *“For the Word of the LORD is right, and all His work is done in truth. He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD. By the Word of the LORD the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.”*



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[The *Parashah* for next week 2-8 August 2015 is called *Ekev*—“In Consequence Of...” (the Children of Israel heeding God’s judgments): TORAH: Deuteronomy 7:12—11:25; HAFTARAH: Isaiah 49:14—51:3]

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