

Prayer Update From Israel (August 1, 2016)



2nd week *Bein haMetzarim*—“Between the Straits”

(A narrow gorge near SdeBoker in the Negev south of Beer Sheva)

1. FRIDAY 5 AUGUST BEGINS THE HEBREW MONTH OF “AV”.

Friday will be *Rosh Hodesh*, the “head” of the Fifth Month in the Hebrew Biblical calendar. Since the return from Captivity in Babylon, the month has been called by the Babylonian name, *Av*.

This day is mentioned in the Hebrew Bible as that of the death of Aaron the High

Priest. Aaron had not been without serious failings—the incident of the golden calf; that with his brother Moses in striking the rock after God had commanded them to speak to it—but he had also fallen on his face with Moses in intercession to God when the people sinned, and for decades he had “borne iniquity” on behalf of all of the house of Israel (Numbers 18:1) as he went about his duties as High Priest in the Tabernacle. Now his mantle had been passed on to the next generation; they would likewise be fallible, they also must one day die. This passing of that first High Priest, from whom the “Aaronic” priesthood would take its name, brings to our minds a “greater” priesthood, that of *Malki-tzedek*—“King of Righteousness”, and of the still greater Priest of *that* order who would take Aaron’s place before the Father as an intercessor, not only on behalf of Israel, but all Humankind.

“There were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them (Hebrews 7:23-25).

In Hebrew, the word for “father” is *av*. Although the name used for this fifth month is of Babylonian origin, its spelling happens to be identical with that of this Hebrew word. As we pray over our land and people at the beginning of this new month, we would draw attention to

the last verse of this week's *Haftarah* portion, Jeremiah 3:4: "***Will you not from this time cry to Me, My Father, You are the guide of my youth?***"

It is a strange tragedy that in much of religious Judaism today (and consequently influencing all Jews), the concept of God as "father" is minimized. It is alright to say *Avinu-Malkeinu*—"Our Father Our King"—but to speak of Him in an intimate way as "Father" alone is discouraged. This is difficult to line up with the Holy Scriptures themselves. For instance, Isaiah 63:16, "***For you are our Father, though Abraham does not know us, and Israel does not acknowledge us; you, O YHVH, are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is your name.***" And in the next chapter, 64:8, "***But now, O YHVH, You are our Father; we are the clay, and You our potter; and all we are the work of Your hand.***" Strange—strange as the current religious system which forbids Jews to kneel down on their knees (for all the fact that the Aramaic of Daniel 6:10 could not be more clear that that is what Daniel did three times a day... "*as was his custom since early days.*"). Without the guidance of the Holy Spirit, "religion" can carry men far afield from the intimacy the Father desires to have with His children.

Abba

One of the first things one notices in a young spirit-filled Jewish believer is the appearance of the word *Abba* in their prayers. Often, especially in the young, it will be used with almost every breath! *Abba* is an intimate "family" sort of way for saying "Father". Religious Jews would consider it disrespectful to use *Abba* in addressing God. But not those, who have been brought near to the Father through the work of the Son!

Yeshua used this name for His Father (Mark 14:36);

The Holy Spirit uses it in Galatians 4:6.

Through that Spirit, we who have come near to the Father through faith in the Son also use that name! (Romans 8:15).

The enemy of our souls—and of Israel's soul—hates this kind of intimacy.

As we continue through this season "Between the Straits" during which, through the ages, Darkness has repeatedly sought to take occasion for evil against the covenant land and people, and into the month of *Av*,

PLEASE PRAY:

*** For the Body in Israel to come into a deeper awareness of the work of Yeshua (Jesus) as our High Priest. A few years ago the Bible Society in Israel released a small booklet containing an annotated Hebrew language printing of the *Book of Hebrews*. Please pray that this wonderful Book centered on the Priesthood of Messiah, written specifically to First Century Messianic Jews, would be rediscovered by Israeli Jews in the 20th Century!**

*** For an awakened longing for “fatherhood in Israel”—for an awareness that the God of Israel’s “fathers” (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) is in fact, the One from whom all fatherhood gets its name (Ephesians 3:14-15). That Yeshua the Messiah has opened a way to bring us all, Jew and Gentile, as fellow sons and daughters to His Father!**

*** For illumination in Jewish hearts from the Father of Lights (James 1:17)—who longs for intimacy with His children, that of a child and his or her “Abba”!**

2. THE FRENCH JEWS ARE “GOING UP”.

*An unprecedented Aliyah from France continues—with 206 Jews on a recent flight organized by the Jewish Agency. (Aliyah—means literally “going up” and is the word used for Jews immigrating to Israel. This use is thought to come from the last word in the book of II Chronicles, where Cyrus king of Persia issues a proclamation releasing Jews of the Babylonian captivity to “go up” to Jerusalem). This was the largest Aliyah flight of the year. The Jewish community in France is the largest (just under ½ a million) in Europe and 3rd largest, behind Israel and the U.S., in the world. But there is a large awakening of that community to a desire to relocate to Israel. In 2012, 1,900 Jews made Aliyah from France—in 2015 the number rose to over 7,800. The Agency claims that 10% of the French community has emigrated to Israel since 2000. **Of the huge flight, half of the new immigrants were teenagers, children and infants—most of whom will find themselves in the Israeli education system at the beginning of the fall school term.** (“Over 200 French Jews Immigrated to Israel”: “Jewish World”/ynetnews.com; 06/21/16, 19.59*

*When the present writer himself made Aliyah 20 years ago, it was common to hear Russian in the streets of Haifa and other parts of Israel—today more and more, one hears French. With the rise of violence towards Jews, primarily from the huge Islamic presence in France, many are feeling threatened. The French government is doing what it can, but the presence of armed security forces around Jewish schools and places of worship has actually increased the sense of unease. As one of those arriving on the recent flight explained, **“we always wanted to make Aliyah, we just didn’t know when.”** But now, **“we understood that our lives there aren’t normal. The hardest part was to see the soldiers standing around outside of my children’s school every day...We understand that our absorption process will be difficult, but we hope and believe that here we will be able to have a different life, that we’ll be able to find happiness here and start a new life for us and for our children here.”** (Ibid.)*

Isaiah 27:13 speaks of the Lord releasing a shofar blast which calls His covenant people back to their land (a portion of a mosaic by Marc Chagall in the Knesset depicts a shofar sounding in a corner above the Western Wall). We believe that this sound is beginning to be released—among Jews around the world who *“always wanted to make Aliyah, but just don’t know when.”* This year prophetic Words have been released from sources we respect calling on Israel to prepare for an influx of Jews from France.

PLEASE PRAY:

- * For the Jewish community in France to hear and respond as the Lord’s call is released drawing them back to the land of their fathers.
- * Preparation to be made for reception and absorption of those who are presently and who making *Aliya*.
- * Courage and strength for believers in the Body of Messiah in France—vision for their place in God’s redemptive purposes for their nation. Direction for how they are to assist and support those Jews He is calling to return to Israel.
- * Connection of those who have returned with the Messianic Body in Israel... revelation of His hope and salvation in which He has known them with an everlasting Love and drawn them in Loving Kindness.

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.

The *Parashah* for this week 31 July—6 August 2016 is called *Massei*- “Journeys of...”

TORAH: Numbers 33:1—36:13

HAFTARAH: Jeremiah 2:4-28; 3:4; 4:1-2 (2nd “Haftarah of Affliction/Admonition”)

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 33:1.** “*These are the journeys of the children of Israel, who went out of the land of Egypt by their armies under the hand of Moses and Aaron.* (Emphases ours)

As noted when this ‘going forth’ from Egypt was first recorded (Exodus 12:41, 51; 13:18), although the Children of Israel may not yet have been fully aware that they were an “army” (with each member assigned his/her positioning in its arraying), *YHVH Tz’vaot, Elohei Ma’arkhot Yisrael* (“Yehovah of Armies, God of the Arraying of Israel”—I Samuel 17:45) was well aware! *When people are brought out of the slave-house of sin into the Kingdom of Heaven, they will soon discover that they are in a war—but also that they have a place especially reserved in the army of the Captain of the Hosts of the LORD!*

***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” (Hebrew: *motz’a*) is also sometimes translated into English as “starting points” or “places of origin”. All have validity, albeit resulting in slightly different perspectives. In fact, this word is related to that used of God in the traditional Hebrew blessing over meals, *Ha’motzi lechem min haAretz*—“Who **brings forth** bread from the earth”. So the passage might even be interpreted to read, *“Moses wrote down **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.”* It was important that the Hebrews keep a record of these starting/departure points from which, in the timings of the LORD, they had been continually drawn forth—back into the path of their journeying (Numbers 9:18).

***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 as related to inherited land 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!”*

It is important to pray for Israelis returning to the Land of their Fathers—that they will receive from the Lord a fierce, strong zeal after that land, a holy jealousy in valuing this inheritance passed down from the Fathers, who received it as an eternal *Covenant* from the God who chose them and met with them here!

***After Numbers 36:13:**

***KhaZAK! KhaZAK! V’Nit’khaZEK!*—“Be Strong! Be Strong! And we Shall Become Stronger!!**

It is traditional to chant this admonishment after reaching the end of each of the Five Books of Moses.

HAFTARAH:

("Haftarah of Affliction/Admonition"): Jeremiah 2:4-28; 3:4; 4:1-2

***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** [Read in Ashkenazy Synagogues]: *“Will you not from this time cry to Me, ‘My Father, You are the guide of my youth?’”*

***Jeremiah 4:1-2** [Read in Sephardic Jewish Synagogues]: *“‘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.”*

It has always been God’s plan that as Israel comes into a right relationship with her God 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 & Norma Sarvis
Jerusalem*

[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week (7-13 August 2016) are called *D'varim*—“Words” TORAH: Deuteronomy 1:1—3:22; HAFTARAH (*Shabbat Chazon*—“Sabbath of Vision”): Isaiah 1:1-27.]

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