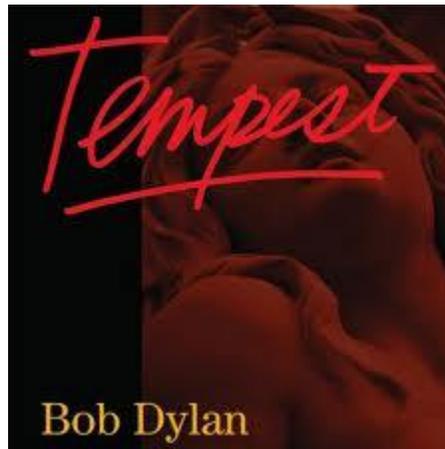


## Prayer Update From Israel (August 13, 2012)

*“O you afflicted one, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay your stones with colorful gems, and lay your foundations with sapphires.”*

(Isaiah 54:11—From this week’s *Haftarah* section; see below.)



Jewish poet/minstrel Bob Dylan’s new album *Tempest* is due out on September 11th.

In a recent interview [*Rolling Stone*:16 Aug 2012], Dylan said that his original intention had been to make an album of new “specifically religious songs”, but “that takes a lot more concentration to pull that off 10 times with the same thread—than it does with a record like I ended up with.” We have only hints thus far of predicting what may have been stirred up in this album. Reports from select reviewers who were granted a listening preview suggest indeed a whirling “tempest” of conflicting, often disturbing images. (The longest song reportedly views the approach of the doomed *Titanic*—with all that *that* may signify—from an iceberg.) One thing is for certain, when Dylan gets into this vein, things are seldom what they may first on the surface appear. (Might the “t” of *Tempest* set in lower-case script and slightly apart, forming a “Cross” at the beginning of the word be intentional? —a sign of “shelter from the storm?” It would not be the first time that that symbol has been naturally but intentionally hidden within the design of a Dylan album cover.) For over five decades now, lines from his poetry have been surfacing which thrust into relief or reflect in some remarkable way serious societal or personal issues to which many are inclined to turn a blind eye. Might there be flashes of truth, wisdom, warning in the midst of this storm? Of course we do not yet know, we hope so. For certain, his work must not be foolishly and indiscriminately embraced as an ‘oracle’—it must be tested as Christians have been instructed to test all “words” which may be suspected of bearing [divine] truth. Dylan made a very public profession of faith in Yeshua in 1979. He has been through many ups and downs, victories, struggles, defeats since; yet he has never publically denied his faith, and Biblical and Christian imagery has continued to inform his writings—along with an acknowledged awareness that he will someday stand beside his King. For now, we find the stark title of his newest work alone

significant of the upheaval, both physical and spiritual, being released here in the Middle East and across the world.

### 1. PSALM 27 AND THE RISING UP OF WAR.

Sunday August 19 is *Rosh Chodesh*—the first day of the Hebrew month of *Elul*. In some streams of religious Judaism it has become a tradition, dating back centuries, to read through Psalm 27 each day from the first of *Elul* through *Hoshana Raba*—the last day of the Fall Feasts at the end of *Sukkot*. Depending upon the source, one may find several different reasons put forward for doing this. We have entered a season here in Israel in which, even apart from the “tradition”, we sense a strong and steady drawing from the Holy Spirit into the pertinence and relevance of this Psalm. In fact, we would go so far as to say that never in modern Israel may it have been a more important and urgent necessity for the Body here to take its truths into themselves—and to be led by the Holy Spirit in believing, practicing, trusting in them.

We have just finished rereading a profoundly insightful albeit disturbing article which appeared in yesterday’s *HaAretz.com* online news report (It may be accessed by going to the following web site: <http://www.haaretz.com/weekend/magazine/a-grave-warning-on-iran-from-the-decision-maker.premium-1.457158>, or by “googling” the title: **A grave warning on Iran from ‘the decision maker’**). The article is part of a special series of interviews made with key figures in or related to the Israeli government as to their thoughts on the feasibility of an eminent Israeli strike on Iran’s nuclear development facilities. This one is made with someone the article refers to as ‘the Decision Maker’—with the hints dropped (including the grand piano in the living room) no Israeli would be misled into thinking this could be anyone other than *our current Minister of Defense Ehud Barak*. **We would sincerely and soberly recommend that you read it carefully.** Nothing else which we have seen so clearly lays out for those with eyes to see the position in which Israel’s leaders find themselves right now—this month, August 11<sup>th</sup>. The logic of the “Decision Maker” seems incredibly lucid on the subject with which he is being confronted. Please God that any holes in that logic may be exposed and corrected by *Elohei-Ma’archot Yisrael*—the “God of Israel’s Arraying” before it is felt necessary to put it into action.

### More Rumors of War

This weekend’s papers and the TV news have been filled with articles and programs related to Israel going to war. Of the nation’s four largest Hebrew newspapers, only *Yediot-Ha’Achronot* came out strongly questioning an Israeli strike, claiming that the ‘home front’ was far from ready for its likely consequences and claiming evidence that the nation’s top military leaders are opposed to a strike without the U.S. On Sunday the Prime Minister spoke of the Iran threat as dwarfing all others. His Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon called on the international community to declare diplomatic overtures to curb Iran’s nuclear development a failure. Some consider the media blitz as a tool by the administration to win over the hearts and minds of the Israeli public in favour of a strike, and at the same time to persuade the hesitant generals. Some are voicing deep concern about so much being spoken in public, and not a few taking the Prime Minister to task for alienating the U.S. with his remarks about Israel having to be the one ultimately responsible for her security. Meanwhile, the Home Front Command

Sunday began five days of testing a cellular alert system through which would warn citizens of incoming missiles via an SMS message on their cell phones in Hebrew, Arabic, English and Russian.

**With a growing sense of worry if not alarm in Israel about our immediate future, we turn again to Psalm 27...its truths can surround, protect and encourage us:**

**\*1 *YHVH (The LORD) is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? YHVH is the strength nourishing my very life, of whom shall I be afraid!***

**\*2 *“When the wicked came against me to eat up my flesh, my enemies and foes, they stumbled and fell.”*** This gruesome analogy could have a very relevant literal application to Israel’s present threat—“eat up flesh” graphically describes the horrid result for humans (See also Zechariah 14:12) of a thermonuclear explosion.

**\*3. *“Though an army may encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; Though war may rise against me, in this I will be confident.”***

**\*4 *“One think I have desired of the LORD, that will I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in His temple.”***

**\*5 *“For He hides me in His shelter [sukka, tabernacle] on the day of evil. He conceals me in the recess of His tent, on a rock He raises me up”*** (Alter).

**\*6 *“And now my head is lifted up above my enemies all around me. I will offer up in His tent sacrifices sacrifices of shouting; I will sing and I will play to the LORD.”***

**\*7 *Shma! Hear! O LORD, my voice when I cry out—Grace me! And answer me!***

**\*8-9 *“In your behalf my heart said, ‘Seek my Face!’ Your face LORD I will seek, Don’t hide your face from me. Don’t turn away in wrath your servant—You have been my help! Don’t leave me, and don’t forsake me my Salvation-God!***

**\*10 *“Though my father and mother forsook me, the LORD will gather me in”*** (Alter)

**\*11 *“Teach me, LORD, your way, and guide me in a straight path because of my oppressors.***

**\*12 *“Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes, for false witnesses have risen up against me such as breathe out cruel violence [Lit. hamas].***

**\*13 *“Unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of life”*** (See Caleb in Numbers 14:7, *“The land we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land.”* And from last week’s Torah portion, Deut. 8:7-10; 11:11-12).

**\*14 *“Hope in the LORD, Be Strong! And He will encourage your heart. And Hope in the LORD!”***

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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.

**TORAH: Deuteronomy 11:26—16:17**

**HAFTARAH: Isaiah 54:11—55:5**

\***Deuteronomy 11:26.** *“See! I am setting before you today blessing and curse.*

***PLEASE PRAY: for eyes in Israel to be opened to an awareness of when we are walking in ways whose very nature brings a curse. Pray for sight to see the difference in ways which are cursed and those which are blessed—for grace to ask “for the ancient paths, the good way,” to see and to walk in it! (Jeremiah 6:16; 18:15)***

\***Deuteronomy 12:2, 5.** *“You shall utterly destroy all the places where the nations which you shall dispossess served their gods...” “But you shall seek the place where the LORD your God chooses, out of all your tribes, to put His name for His dwelling place; and there you shall go.”*

At least *16 times* in this Torah portion this ‘place’ (singular) is mentioned where Israel’s One God YHVH would *choose* to place His name and to dwell—One place as compared to the many “places” where the multiple gods of Canaan were worshipped. Those places were to be utterly destroyed—and with them the very *names* of the gods which had been worshipped there (12:3). The “place” where the One God would place *HIS* name and choose to dwell in a unique way was, of course, Jerusalem. This had been prophetically alluded to by Moses 40 years before in his Song, just after the crossing of the Red Sea (Exodus 15:17). ***PLEASE PRAY: For the peace of Jerusalem...that God’s glory would return there, that there the believing Body of Messiah would be established in maturity and unity. Pray that God would raise up wise and anointed Messianic leaders to be Elders in the Gates of Zion. That as God “chose” Jerusalem when He first returned Israel to the land following the Exodus, He would now, with the return of His people from around the world, “take possession of Judah as His inheritance in the Holy Land, and will again choose Jerusalem” (Zechariah 2:12).***

\***Deuteronomy 12:8.** *“You shall not at all do as we are doing here today—every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes...”*

God had a special order for worship and government waiting for the people when they would enter the land—it wasn’t to be “everyone for himself.” There would be Judges (the title for next week’s *Parasha*) for civil matters, and the Priesthood to keep the worship “in line”. There would be periods during the next 400 years when the people followed this directive—but eventually it would be abandoned: the closing words of the Book of Judges reads, *“Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”*

\***Deuteronomy 12:16; 12:23.** *“Only you shall not eat the blood; you shall pour it on the earth like water.” “Only be sure that you do not eat the blood, for the blood is the life (Hebrew: *nefesh*—soul); you may not eat the life with the meat.”*

This prohibition is made repeatedly in the Torah, yet long before the Law of Moses it was forbidden by God. In fact, in Genesis 9:4-5, it was placed right alongside murder. Thousands of years later, after Yeshua had returned to Heaven, the high council of the Messianic Body in Jerusalem forbade the consumption of blood by all Gentile as well as Jewish believers of the New Testament Church (Acts 15:20,29). With the recently awakened popularity of vampirism in books and films in the West (catering especially to the young; the “Twilight” series being only the tip of the iceberg), accompanied by graphic, sensual descriptions of awakened blood-hunger, might it be that Satan is seeking to bring back this ancient sin (albeit, for now, in a vicarious “fantasy” form)? As in Eden, Satan’s way is to suggest, “*Has God indeed said, ‘Thou shalt not...?’*”

**\*Deuteronomy 14:2.** *“For you are a holy people to the LORD your God, and the LORD has chosen you to be for Him a specially treasured people of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.”*

**\*Deuteronomy 14:26.** *“You may spend the money for whatever your heart desires; for oxen, or sheep, or wine, or strong drink, or whatever your heart desires; and there you shall eat in the presence of the LORD your God and rejoice, you and your household.”*

**\*Deuteronomy 16:1.** *“Observe the month of Aviv (The “First Month”; Babylonian and modern usage: Nisan), and keep the Passover to YHVH your God, for in the month of Aviv YHVH your God brought you out of Egypt by night.”*

**\*Deuteronomy 16:16.** *“Three times a year all your males shall appear before YHVH your God in the place which He chooses; at the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Pesach/Passover), at the Feast of Weeks (Shavuot), and at the feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot); and they shall not appear before YHVH empty handed.”*

#### **NOTE**

Last week’s *Haphtarah* extended from Isaiah 49:14 to 51:3; this week’s is 54:11—55:5. Next week’s will go back to 51:12—52:12, and the following will come again to 54:1-10. ***What is mysteriously absent here is the great poem of the “Anointed Suffering Servant”, extending from Isaiah 52:13 through all of Isaiah 53.*** Because many Jews are only exposed to the readings they hear in Synagogue, many, many are unaware that Isaiah 53 even exists. It is in their Bibles if they looked... although often with rabbinic commentaries carefully calculated to turn them away from any possible interpretation which might lead them in the direction of associating the “servant” with the Messiah Yeshua. Yet there are ancient Jewish commentaries which do associate the Servant here with the coming *Anointed One* (i.e. Messiah). Certainly, the Messianic Jews of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century knew to whom it was referring. In Acts 8:35, Philip, a deacon in the early Messianic Body of Jerusalem, “*beginning at this Scripture, preached Yeshua*” to a visiting Ethiopian official. Of course, Yeshua’s presence may also be discerned in almost all of these Isaiah passages (See especially last week’s Isaiah 50:5-7). But all of Israel is starving for the truths of Chapter 53. ***PLEASE PRAY: That the Holy Spirit will lead many to read the portion 52:13-53. Pray for the “veil” to be lifted that they may see and have understanding and believe in the one who came first to live and release Kingdom life among us, to suffer and “bear the sin of many”, to die and be buried, to***

*be raised to see His seed and prolong His days. Pray for revelation of this righteous One, the knowledge of whom “justifies many!”*

**\*Isaiah 54:11:** *“O you afflicted one, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay your stones with colorful gems, and lay your foundations with sapphires.” PLEASE PRAY: That Israel’s sense of identity be restored—not an identity related to her rejection, suffering, persecution and the Holocaust, but rather an identity of a people chosen to be set apart as a special treasure of the God Who created the Universe.*

**\*Isaiah 54:13-14.** *“All your children shall be taught by the LORD, and great shall be the peace of your children.” PLEASE PRAY: For the present generation of Israeli children...that the loving jealousy of God would be loosed over them, cutting through the evil values being taught in so many homes and schools in Israel, awakening a zeal for Truth; that they would respond to the Holy Spirit and ask for the ancient paths where they will find rest for their souls (Jeremiah 6:16).*

**\*Isaiah 54:14.** *“In righteousness you shall be established; You shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near you.” For Israel to be delivered from terrorism she must first become established in righteousness. “He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (II Corinthians 5:21 NASB). PLEASE PRAY: That in God’s mercy the Spirit which was sent to convict the world concerning Sin and Righteousness and Judgment (John 16:8) will move strongly across all of Israel.*

**\*Isaiah 54:17.** *“No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment you shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is from Me,” says the LORD.”*

**\*Isaiah 55:3.** *“Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live...” PLEASE PRAY: “That Israeli ears will be opened to hear the living Word. There are many “winds” blowing in Israel right now (In Hebrew “wind” and “spirit” are the same word). Pray that believers in Israel will “have ears to hear what the Spirit is saying to the congregations.”*

**\*Isaiah 55:5b.** *“...For He has glorified you.” The Hebrew word for “glorified” here might better be rendered “beautified you.” It is the verb form of the same word used in Isaiah 61:3, where the Spirit anoints the Messiah to give those who mourn in Zion “beauty for ashes.” PLEASE PRAY: For Israel to come to realize that the one whom she has been resisting for 2000 years is the very One who longs to make her beautiful...and will!*



*Martin and Norma Sarvis*  
*Jerusalem*

**[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week 19-25 August are called *Shophetim* (“Judges”): TORAH: Deuteronomy 16:18—21:9; HAFTARAH: Isaiah 51:12—5:12]**

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