

Prayer Update From Israel (August 15, 2016)

שמע ישראל יהוה אלהינו יהוה אחד ואהבת את יהוה אלהיך בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך ובכל מאדך והיו הדברים האלה אשר אנכי מצוך היום על לבבך ושוננתם לבניך ודברתם בם בשבתך בביתך ובכלכתך בדרך ובשכבך ובקומך ומשרתם לאות על ירך והיו לטוטפת בין עיניך וכתבתם על מזוזות ביתך ובשעריך והיה אם שמע תשמעו אל מצותי אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם היום לאהבה את יהוה אלהיכם ולעבדו בכל לבבכם ובכל נפשכם ונתתי מטר ארצכם בעתו יורה ומלקוש ואספת דגן ותירשך ויצהרך ונתתי עשב בשדך לבהמתך ואכלת ושבעת השמרו לכם פן יפתה לבבכם וסרתם ועבדתם אלהים אחרים והשתחוויתם להם וחרה אף יהוה בככם ועלז את השמים ולא יהיה מטר והאדמה לא תתן את יבולה ואבדתם מהרה מעל הארץ הטובה אשר יהוה נתן לכם ושמתם את דברי אלה על לבבכם ועל נפשכם ומשרתם אתם לאות על ידכם והיו לטוטפת בין עיניכם ולמדתם אתם את בניכם לדבר בם בשבתך בביתך ובכלכתך בדרך ובשכבך ובקומך וכתבתם על מזוזות ביתך ובשעריך למען ירבו ימיכם וימי בניכם על האדמה אשר נשבע יהוה לאבותיכם לתת להם כימי השמים על הארץ

Manuscript on parchment of Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and 11:13-21, which begins, “Hear O Israel, the YHVH our God, the YHVH 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. INTO AND OUT OF AFRICA.

It will come about that just as you were a curse among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel, so I will save you that you may become a blessing. Do not fear; let your hands be strong.’ ([Zechariah 8:13](#))

Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Zambia, Tanzania.

In early July, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu departed for a five-day visit to Africa. It was the first visit by a sitting Israeli PM to the world’s 2nd largest continent in 29 years. During the trip, he visited four east-African states, Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda and Ethiopia. While in Uganda, he took part in a summit with senior leaders from *Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Zambia, and Tanzania.*

Israeli ties with Africa have warmed considerably in recent years. Part of this is related to the common interest between Israel and some African states in fighting Islamic terrorism. And there

is a growing an interest in many of the countries in Israeli technology, especially her expertise in water and agricultural know-how. It is also becoming noticeable that many African nations seated in international bodies have begun to change their voting patterns in regards to Israel, no longer automatically voting against it. (“Netanyahu departs today for 5-day visit to Africa”: *The Jerusalem Post*, 4 July 2016, 9:33 IST.)

While in Kenya, PM Netanyahu met with a group of Christian supporters of Israel, to whom he declared, “Israel is coming back to Africa. Africa is coming back to Israel.” He mentioned the strides in agriculture, milk production and water conservation which have been made there, and said “*we are eager to share all of this with our African friends.*” Regarding religious persecution,

In the Middle East today, unfortunately, the attitude towards Christians and Christianity is not a good one. You see what is happening with Daesh [Islamic State] in Iraq, what is happening to Christian communities and to the Yazidis and others...There is one place in the Middle East where the Christian community is not only not shrinking, it’s thriving and it’s expanding and it’s safe, and it’s welcome and that place is Israel. You’re welcome in Israel. I’d like to receive you there, in Jerusalem. (“Netanyahu to Kenyan Christians: Israel Coming Back to Africa”: *The Algemeiner*, July 6, 2016 9:58 AM).

Togo, Nigeria, West African States

This week, President Faure Gnassingbe of Togo visited Israel. While here, he proposed the first African-Israeli “security and development” summit be held in his nation’s capital Lomé next year. African leaders and business people from throughout the continent would be invited to the conference, and it is expected that the Israeli Prime Minister will attend. A member of his party stated that Togo considers itself a “good friend” of Israel, and “*wants to become a hub of friendship between west Africa and Israel.*” (“Togo proposes hosting Israeli-African summit in its capital next year”: *The Jerusalem Post*, 14 Aug 2016, 11:30 IST). ***This invitation comes only two weeks after Netanyahu was invited to attend a summit in Nigeria later this year.*** The invitation came from the commissioner of the 15-member Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Netanyahu’s visit last month was to leaders of East Africa states, but he has expressed a desire for a similar meeting in West Africa. (Ibid.).

South Africa

In our April 4 *Update*, we reported upon a visit of Israel’s Director General of Foreign Ministry to South Africa, the first such visit in a decade, for the purpose of improving relations in that nation.

Links in the Spirit!

During the past year we have reported about some remarkable movements of the Holy Spirit connecting believers in Israel with those on the African continent. Last fall, leaders from a house of prayer in Jerusalem traveled to two Muslim Brotherhood dominated cities down the Nile, linking with and encouraging the brothers and sisters there. There have also been comings

and goings with houses of prayer in Alexandria and other places in Egypt. Teams of believers have gone into Ethiopia, Mozambique, and other countries. (Last year the writer was privileged to address a large group visiting from Nigeria.) And the strong back-and-forth flow of believers from South Africa continues. On a particular day in early November, following the vision of a leader in Jerusalem, members of the Body of Messiah were mobilized from the tip of South Africa to Egypt to take part in a prophetic act of striking the waters and calling on God for release of a light and a shaking which would reverberate northward through the continent, causing walls of witchcraft to crumble, idols to fall, and people to repent and worship Jesus—a shaking which would result in a “domino effect,” proceeding through Egypt where ancient occult powers would be brought down—preparing the way for breakthrough along the Isaiah 19 Highway which passes from there through the Middle East. As we reported in our 4 April *Update*, in a remarkable progression of circumstances, believers had, within the space of a month, been contacted all the way from Cape Town through the continent, gathering together (sometimes in groups reaching 1000), for a prophetic day to come before God. One of the revelations coming out of this was the existence of a network of Holiness the Lord has already begun putting in place through the length of Africa and up the Mediterranean coast to Jerusalem!

PLEASE PRAY:

- * That networks be strengthened and established between believers in Israel and throughout the African continent.**
- * That the Lord continue to strengthen relations between believing brothers and sisters in Africa and Zion—both through prayer and the internet and physical intercourse between the two lands.**
- * That believers in Israel be sensitive to the Holy Spirit regarding our vast neighbor to the South. That we realize that our call involves being a blessing to all families of the earth (Gen. 12:2-3), and that includes holding them up in our prayers when God brings them to mind!**
- * That, as our Prime Minister said to his Cabinet before leaving for Africa, and repeated to the Christians in Kenya, “*Israel is coming back to Africa. Africa is coming back to Israel.*” Let us pray that the God over all the Earth, will bless Israel in fulfilling her part of that pledge—in truth and integrity, and will move on the hearts of the African peoples towards Zion.**
- * That Israel’s leaders will receive divine guidance in dealing with the large number of people of African origin, who have crossed our borders illegally. It is His Land—Israel is called to steward and oversee it. Pray for leaders and laws to be raised up which will administer this charge in integrity, righteous, and mercy.**

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 14-20 August 2016 is called *Va'Et'chanan*- "And I Pleaded..."

TORAH: Deuteronomy 3:23—7:11

HAFTARAH: Isaiah 40:1-26 (*Shabbat Nachamu*)

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 next Sabbath is therefore sometimes called *Shabbat Nachamu*—the "Sabbath of Comforting."

TORAH

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 one 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 of 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. *Pray that barriers will come down which presently seek to prohibit Messianic Jews [i.e. those who believe in Yeshua/Jesus as Messiah, Savior and Lord] from immigrating to Israel!*

***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 one years ago, the Israeli government under Yitzhak Rabin actively engaged in negotiations to return 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 having allowed 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 extend the borders of Israel to encompass all the lands promised to His Covenant people.

***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!

HAFTARAH

****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 this 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.’”(Genesis 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.”*



*Martin & Norma Sarvis
Jerusalem*

[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week (21-27 August 2016) are called *Ekev*—“In Consequence Of...” TORAH: Deuteronomy 7:12—11:25; HAFTARAH: Isaiah 49:14—51:3]

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