

PRAYER UPDATE FROM ISRAEL (August 22, 2011)



Wings over Jerusalem

***“Don’t be afraid! Those who are with us are more than those who are with them.
O LORD, open his eyes so he may SEE!” (II Kings 6:16-17a.)***

(Note: This week’s Torah Portion is entitled “R’eh!”—SEE!)

1. “ROCKETS RETURN—‘THE ARROWS THAT FLY BY DAY’”

Strangely, the heading above, which describes the situation in Israel for the past four days, was lifted from our *Prayer Update* (Item No 1) sent out the week of the “R’eh” Torah Portion a year ago. This past weekend nearly 100 rockets fired from the Gaza Strip rained down onto cities and towns in the Negev, with longer-ranged “Grad” missiles hitting Ashdod, Ashkelon, the Eshkol and Lachish districts and Beer Sheva. The “Iron Dome” defense system purchased from the U.S. last year has brought down several of the rockets, but many got through. Saturday night a 38-year-old man from Ofakim, on his way to his 9-month pregnant wife after hearing the sirens, was killed and several others critically wounded by a rocket. In another neighborhood a home and vehicle were destroyed; television footage showed the burned-out structure and vehicle along with shell-shocked residents.

Five days of awakened chaotic violence began last Thursday, when squads of terrorists who had made their way from Gaza, crossed through the Sinai into Israel. Arriving at Rt 12, a road near the border just north of Elat, they first fired into an Egged bus, filled with Israeli civilians and soldiers. Although a number were injured, the bus driver knew not to stop and with bullets exploding through his window and his passengers hugging the floor, he plowed forward and escaped. The assailants, armed with automatic weapons, mines, anti-tank shells, mortars, and in one case a suicide bomb belt then continued their assault both from across the border and within

Israel, attacking civilian and military vehicles and another bus. One car with two married couples (including two sisters) heading for Elat for holiday was stopped and the four brutally murdered; outside another, a woman lay wounded alongside her slain husband in the desert heat, pretending herself to be dead until the attackers left and help arrived over an hour later. Israeli security forces responded, and in the ensuing firefights a number of the terrorists were killed—but also two Israelis, a 22 year old soldier, Moshe Naftali, and 49 year old Pasqual Avrahami, a legend among Israel Special Forces. The most decorated soldier in the *Yamim* SWAT team, he had participated in most of its more important missions over the past 30 years. In the end eight Israelis were dead and dozens injured. Israel surmised that the terror cell had escaped from Gaza through the maze of tunnels perforating the border into Egyptian-controlled Sinai—a region which, since the fall of the Mubarak regime is descending quickly into a state of uncontrollable violence and anarchy. They were dressed in military uniforms and thus evaded the Egyptian soldiers stationed there. While pursuing the murderers, Israeli planes evidently mistook a group of Egyptian soldiers for the uniformed terrorists, resulting in the tragic deaths of at least two. This has in turn opened up a diplomatic crisis with Egypt (Israel has apologized for the error, and is doing what it can to maintain the already fragile relations with its neighbor to the southwest).

Meanwhile, Israel attacked targets in Gaza, and within a few hours the leader of the Popular Resistance Committee responsible for the Elat attacks and five of his staff had been destroyed. Prime Minister Netanyahu instructed the military to make pinpoint, surgical operations into Gaza...targeting those responsible for attacks on Israelis, and also to prevent the launching of missiles and rockets on Israeli cities, while trying to avoid casualties amongst civilians. Hamas militants have, however, taken the killing of the senior operatives as opportunity for lifting the 'cease fire' which has been somewhat in effect since the end of Israel's ground incursion into the Strip in the "Cast Lead" operations 2 ½ years ago. Thus, the incessant barrages of rockets over the past four days. Last night (Sunday), Hamas called for a cease fire—this may be partly influenced by intense efforts underway between Washington and Cairo to effect a truce—it may also be due to the fear of what may have been awakened by strikes which have resulted in deaths and severe woundings of Israeli citizens as well as destruction of property.

For now, Israel senses a trap and is not planning a fresh ground incursion into Gaza. After a meeting ending at 3:00 a.m. this morning, a spokesperson for the Prime Minister's office said, "Hamas is trying to draw Israel into fighting in the [Gaza] Strip, so as to weaken its power in the international arena in preparation for the Palestinian statehood decree in September," "This way Hamas will be seen as leading the way for the establishment of a Palestinian state."

Meanwhile, although slowing, the rocket attacks continue. There has been little coverage of the ambushes or the massive rocket barrages in the international press. The Palestinian Authority failed to issue a condemnation of Thursday's attacks. The Prime Minister's office called this silence "deafening" and questioned whether their failure to condemn the attack on civilians doesn't "raise serious questions about their readiness for independence, and their commitment to fight terrorism. A call by Israel for the UN Security Council to issue a condemnation of the attacks, although agreed upon by the 14 other members, was vetoed by the Hezbollah-controlled

Lebanon—which, incidentally, will hold the rotating Presidency of the Security Council come September.

As a sizable portion of our nation is presently under a constant tension of alarms and the possibility of death from the skies, the Body of Messiah is awakening to its place in the midst of it all. An e-mail drawn from a Facebook message sent by our friend Howard Bass and his wife Randi, Messianic leaders in Beer Sheva, has come to our attention. It describes the attacks, the atmosphere in the streets, the house-shaking vibrations of impact; it stresses the necessity of neighbors getting into shelters when the alarms sound (not doing so has already resulted in death and injury). A particular paragraph stands out, which for us as Israelis rings true and important to reproduce here. We of course look to our God as our shield, our place of refuge...we are protected by His angels, and we believe that our trust and prayers and those of others on our behalf hold back the darkness, so that we may fulfill His call. Yet there is a deeper charge for us to keep when under attack:

“I do not believe that any believer is exempt from being harmed, either directly or indirectly. What will distinguish us is our reaction and response in the event of personal suffering, and how we relate to others who do suffer: the issue is glory to our Father in Heaven, and honor to the name of the Lord Yeshua Messiah/Jesus Christ. Before the event, it is difficult to ‘plan’ for our reaction, but the Holy Spirit within us wants to steady us as quickly as possible on The Rock of our salvation.”

PLEASE PRAY:

***For the Lord YHVH, the *Shield of Abraham* (Genesis 15:1), *El Elyon*—God Most High who protects Israel from “*the arrow that flies by day or the terror by night*” (Psalm 91:5) will cover Israel and be her guard from these increasing attacks.**

***That He answer back those who are coming against us.**

***That Israel’s leaders have clarity and strategy released to them from the LORD of Armies...to know how and when to respond to such attacks; to receive accurate ‘intelligence’ reports.**

***To have prophetic voices raised up and recognized and respected by our leaders—like Elisha, who could “tell the king of Israel the words his enemies spoke in their bedrooms” (II Kings 6:12).**

*** That He will show Israel how to be protected from infiltration. “*He makes peace in your borders...*” (Psalm 147:14).**

***That the Body of Messiah in Israel be prepared for and move in maturity during for future spiritual and physical warfare.**

***Divine mercies of comfort and a way of hope and life for those suffering the loss of loved ones during the attacks. Healing and restoration from trauma for those who have come through them alive.**

2. ESTABLISHING DAVID'S HOUSE

“And now, YHVH, the word which You have spoken concerning Your servant and concerning his house, let it be 1 established forever, and do as You have said. So let it be 1 established, that Your name may be magnified forever, saying, ‘YHVH of Armies, Elohei-Israel [the “Israel-God”—God of Jacob], is God of [the nation of] Israel.’ And let the house of Your servant David 2 be established before You. For You, O my God, have 3 revealed to Your servant that You will build him a house. Therefore Your servant has found it in his heart to pray before You (I Chronicles 17:23-26).

After David found himself King over Israel, the LORD sent word to him through Nathan the prophet promising to plant Israel in a place of her own, where she would not be oppressed by the sons of wickedness any more, and to build and establish David a “house” which would last forever. David comes before the LORD with a prayer of great wisdom and humility. We find within that portion of his prayer printed above some keys for praying for the continuing of that “establishment” in the restored Israel of our own day.

1. ***“Let it be established forever...so let it be established, that Your name may be magnified forever.”*** The word used twice here for “be established” *ne’eman* has much deeper associations than some other words often translated that way. These include the concepts of being *fostered, nurtured—trustworthy, found true, verified*. The root of the word is the same as that of “*amen*” “*faith*” and “*faithfulness*.” **In praying for modern, reborn Israel to be established let us ask that she be fostered and nurtured in that which is True. Pray for believers to mature and multiply so as to move about in that honest nurturing work. Pray that Israel come into a place in which she may have faith in Her God and be found faithful and trustworthy...Placing her trust and security in Him, the great Amen!**
2. ***“And let the house of Your servant David be established before You.”*** A different word is used for “established” here—*nachon*. *Nachon* is the word most often used in Modern Hebrew to affirm truth—“that is true, that is correct”. It means *right, correct, true, proper, just, well*. A related word can also mean *ready, prepared*. **Please pray that the House of David would be established in its way in truth, right-ness, justice, wholeness. This must involve a work of grace and revelation from above. Zechariah 12:10 speaks regarding a time when the LORD will “pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for**

Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.” That One to whom they will look is the Way, the Truth and the Life!

3. ***“For You, O my God, have revealed to Your servant that You will build him a house.”*** The literal Hebrew says, “You, my God, *revealed the ears* of your servant.” One more often thinks of revelation coming to the eyes...but this place as well as I Samuel 9:15 speak of *ears* which through which God is capable of releasing revelation to His children. **Please pray that God will release amongst His servants in Israel, prophetic ears to hear what He is saying to His congregation. Part of her being Established in Truth will be her ability to hear with “revealed ears.”**

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 21-27 August is called *R’eh*—“See!”.

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, 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 with the coming anointed One. Certainly, the Messianic Jews of the 1st 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 she has been resisting for 2000 years is the very *One* who longs to make her beautiful...and will!

[The readings for next week **August 8-14** are called *Shophetim* (“Judges”): **TORAH:** Deuteronomy 16:18—21:9; **HAFTARAH:** Isaiah 51:12—5:12]



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[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week **28 August—3 September** are called *Shophetim* (“Judges”): **TORAH:** Deuteronomy 16:18—21:9; **HAFTARAH:** Isaiah 51:12—5:12]

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