

# ISRAEL PRAYER UPDATE

*Glory of Zion International Ministries*



## **PRAYER UPDATE FROM ISRAEL** (April 24, 2018)

*Acharei Mot--Kedoshim*



April 23 is Day #23 of “*Counting the Omer*” to Pentecost!  
(Leviticus 23:9-16)

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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. 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.*

(NOTE: Because of the extra day of Passover Week observed outside of Israel, the present readings will be one week behind those read in Jerusalem for each week until that of 12 May.)

The *Parashah* for this week 22-28 April again contains a “double reading”:

I. *Acharei Mot*—“After the Death”

TORAH: Leviticus 16:1—18:30

\* HAFTARAH: Ezekiel 22:1-19

II. *Kedoshim*—“Holy Ones”

TORAH: Leviticus 19:1—20:27

HAFTARAH: Amos 9:7-15

\* On weeks in which a “double reading” occurs, only the Haftarah of the second reading is generally used.

*\*Leviticus 16:21-22. “Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send it away into the wilderness...The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness.”*

*This portion begins with instructions for the most holy day of the year, Yom Kippur –“Day of Atonement”. A goat was sacrificed and its blood applied to the Mercy Seat as atonement for the sins of the people. In some English translations of Leviticus 16:15, this is referred to as the “goat of the sin offering.” The more literal rendering of the Hebrew would be “the sin goat” or “the goat of sin”—which is slain to cleanse the people and make them clean. II Corinthians 5:21 reads of the Messiah Yeshua, “He [i.e. God] made him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him”. While the blood of this goat made atonement for sin, a second “scapegoat” bore the sins of the people away into the desert. Psalm 103:12 tells us that “as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.”*

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#### **YOM KIPPUR IN ISRAEL**

This Fall at sundown on Tuesday evening, September 18 will begin *Yom Kippur* —the Day of Atonement. At that time, the entire public Jewish sector of Israel will essentially close down. **Leviticus 16:31** and **23:26-32** solemnly command Jews to deny themselves and to abstain from work on this day, with dire consequences if they don't. Except for the occasional non-Jewish driver or an emergency vehicle, the streets of Jerusalem will be free of traffic (In fact, later in the evening and on Saturday morning many streets will be filled with children on bicycles and skateboards). Millions of Jews will humble themselves by fasting for 25 hours from both food and water. *Kippur* comes from a Hebrew root which means “to cover over; to pacify; to make propitiation; to ransom by means of a substitute.” On this day in Biblical times a goat was slain and its blood sprinkled by the High Priest on the Mercy Seat in the Holy of Holies. A second goat, with the sins of the nation confessed over it, was led far into the Judean desert and released—to “bear away” the sins of the people. It was considered ‘damned’ (In modern times, a common curse word in Israel contains the word *Azazel*--the Hebrew word translated into English “scapegoat”).

As the ninth chapter of a First Century epistle written to Messianic Jews emphasizes, “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness” (Hebrews

9:22). Yet with the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E. blood sacrifice in Judaism came to an end. On *Yom Kippur* all religious Jews (and many non-religious) will spend the day in synagogue, confessing their sins, seeking forgiveness and a “Good Signature” in the *Book of Life* for the coming year. Yet something is missing. A question which rabbinic Judaism has never been able satisfactorily to answer is, “But, where is the *sacrifice*? Where is the *blood*?” There are various ways in which its necessity is traditionally argued away. Yet many obviously do not find these explanations convincing. Each year, during the days before *Yom Kippur*, a place in Jerusalem’s large *shuk* (open-air market) may be found reserved for stacks and stacks of coops bearing live chickens. Here an ultra-Orthodox man may be paid to swing a chicken over one’s head as he or she recites the following, “*This is my substitute, this is my commutation; this chicken goes to death; but may I be gathered and enter into a long and happy life and into shalom.*” The bird is then slain and its body given to the poor for food. We do not ridicule those blindly seeking cleansing through this practice; yet such sacrifices cannot, any more than those in ancient times “*which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near*” (Hebrews 10:1).

It is not an uncommon testimony among Messianic Jews that awareness of this question rising in a young heart, “*But where is the sacrifice, where is the blood?*” would later be recognized as having been one of the earliest stirrings of the Holy Spirit in preparing the way to discovery of the true Messiah.

As exemplified by the two goats, both a blood sacrifice for sin and a “sin-bearer” were necessary. Yochanan (John) saw Yeshua coming to him as he was immersing in the Jordan River those who had repented for sins; and he called out, “*Hineh! Seh haElohim ha’noseh hatat ha’Olam!* — “**Look! The Lamb of God who carries away the sin of the world.**” King David understood this. In **Psalm 25** he twice asks for forgiveness of sins...yet the word often translated forgiveness in verse 18 is different than that used in vs 11. In vs 11 the word *salakh* means “forgive”; yet in vs 18, the word *sah* is used, which literally means “bear away”. Forgiveness of sin requires both a blood sacrifice to cleanse, and a sin-bearer to take it away. Verse 22 of Psalm 25 calls on *Elohim* (God) to ‘**Redeem** Israel from all his troubles.’ Israel can never do it herself—only her God can provide the complete redemption—and that through the work of His Son.

***“Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people...  
He will provide atonement for His land—His people”  
Deuteronomy 32:43***

**PLEASE PRAY:** For Jews, who so recently have read of the “blood of the Lamb” during their Passover seders, that they will have revelation as the Parasha is read—that *Yeshua* (Whose name means, “The LORD is Salvation”) is the “Lamb of God” who became a ‘curse’ for us, making atonement in His blood and bearing away the sin of the world (John 1:29)!

**\*Leviticus 17:11.** *“For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.”*

The word translated “life” here is not *chaim*, the word normally used, but *nephesh* which is usually translated “soul” (See Genesis 2:7: *“And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life (“chaim”); and man became a living soul (“nephesh”).*” We are not here suggesting that the “soul” of man’s being is centered in his blood—but the life-factor of his physical body is, as is that of animals. *“Behold, all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine; the soul who sins shall die.”* (Ezekiel 18:4). Because death reigns in all human-kind (for all have sinned), God has chosen that this death be atoned for by life-blood which “sustains the soul” (vs 14:b). Nor was the blood, with its special value as life-force or atonement, to be treated carelessly or indiscriminately. Atonement required a mediator-priest, so blood wasn’t to be shed at home for that purpose by one’s self (vss. 1-6); nor was that which redeems the soul to be used as physical food to sustain the body (vss. 10 & 14—see also Genesis 9:4 and Acts 15:20).

**\*Leviticus 17:7.** *“They [i.e. “All the children of Israel”] shall no more offer their sacrifices to demons, after whom they have played the harlot.”*

“Demons” here is not the usual *sheddim*—but instead, it is actually the same word translated “goats” in the observance of Yom Kippur in 16:8. Satan not

only comes as an “angel of light”—but among the pagan peoples sought worship in the form of the same animal which would be used as a symbol to pay for and to bear away sin.

**\*Leviticus 17:13-14.** *“Whatever man of the children of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you, who hunts and catches any animal or bird that may be eaten, he shall pour out its blood and cover it with dust; for it is the life (“nephesh”) of all flesh. Its blood sustains its life (“nephesh”).”*

The practice of *sh’chita*—the slaying of an animal for food in accordance with certain stipulations which include bleeding it—is still practiced in Jewish (and some Islamic) communities today. Although historically considered humane, it is presently coming under fire in a number of countries which contest this and, in some cases, have succeeded in forbidding it. It is troubling to see how in several western countries over the past five or six years both *sh’chita* and another Jewish religious tradition *brit milah*—the “covenant of circumcision,” have been coming under increased criticism and in some cases legislation to be banned on the basis of alleged violation of “rights” (of the animal or the baby boy). In recent years Denmark banned Jewish ritual slaughter on the grounds of animals’ rights (This, while being not only one of a few NATO countries which continue to practice vivisection, but also a country which has legalized bestiality, a practice which of course has nothing to do with the rights of the animal (“Jewish groups excoriate Denmark over legalized bestiality”: *JPOST.com*, 6 April 2014 12:51 IST). Both the blessing for Israel of *sh’chita*, and the forbidding of this abominable perversion are dealt with in this week’s Torah Portion (Leviticus 17:13; 18:23).

**\*Leviticus 18:21.** *“And you shall not let any of your descendants pass through the fire to Molech, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I am YHVH.”*

The name *molech* is actually the singular present tense of the verb *Limloch* —“To Reign” (“king” is the noun form *melech*). As the name *Baal* is really the word for “lord-master-husband”, but taken by an evil demonic deity which presumed its right to be called such by those held under its deception, *Molech* was a demonic monarch which assumed the title “The One Who Reigns”. Sadly, Israel would eventually embrace this power (Jeremiah

32:35) and come under God's severe judgment. Because of a strong revulsion against this sin, Hebrew worship songs today, both amongst Orthodox Jews and most Messianics do not make use of this present-tense form of the verb "to reign" when referring to deity, substituting instead *malach* (He reigned) or *yimloch* (He will reign), *melech* (He is King).

**\*Leviticus 18:3,4.** *"According to the doings of the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, you shall not do; and according to the doings of the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you, you shall not do; nor shall you walk in their ordinances. You shall observe My judgments and keep My ordinances, to walk in them: I am YHVH your God. You shall therefore guard My statutes and My judgments, which if an "adam" does, he shall live by them. I am YHVH. Leviticus 20:22.* *You shall therefore keep all My statutes and all my judgments, and perform them, that the land where I am bringing you to dwell may not spew you out."*

***Between these verses are enumerated a wide array of practices related to idolatry, sexuality and occult activity which although prevalent in Egypt or Canaan, were forbidden to the Israelites.*** Whether or not it may have been to some degree permitted in earlier days, sexual relations (marriage) with near blood relatives was no longer allowed for Israel. Indeed, here there is clarification as to whom "nakedness" belongs, and this was not to be violated. Certain sexual acts are labeled "wickedness" (18:17), others "abomination" (18:22) or "perversion" (18:23). Genesis 2:24 states, ***"Therefore a man (Hebrew: ish) shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his woman (Hebrew: isha) and they shall become one flesh."*** No other physical "joining" was allowed. In Yeshua's time, He said this had been the rule from the beginning (Matt. 19:4-5; Mark 10:6-9). Israel was warned that indulgence in these practices had resulted in pollution of the very land itself, and the previous inhabitants being spat out of that land. Eventually (See the usual Haftarah for this first portion from Ezekiel 22:1-16) indulgence in these would bring about the expulsion of Israel herself.

**PLEASE PRAY: for conviction of sin and for repentance leading to revival in Israel. Many of the same abominations mentioned in this passage are prevalent in our Land today. God's law regarding such behavior has not**

changed...nor the judgments He has ordained regarding those who embrace it. If we are to become rooted soundly in the land and remain, their practice must be seen as sin, confessed and put aside.

**\*Leviticus 19:1-2**. *“YHWH spoke to Moshe, saying: ‘Speak to the entire community of the Children of Israel, and say to them: “Holy are you to be, for holy am I, YHWH your God!””*” (Everett Fox Trans.).

As Everett Fox points out in the commentary to his translation, *“As the key chapter of this part of Leviticus, Chap. 19 is wide-ranging and rhetorically powerful. It extends holiness to virtually all areas of life—family, calendar, cult, business, civil and criminal law, social relations, and sexuality. Most (but not all) of the laws deal with what we would term ethics, that is, relations between people...As such, they have become an exemplar and a cornerstone, at least in idealized form, in Western thinking about these issues.”*

For Chapter 20, *“We move now into laws dealing with some of the more serious offenses against God in the biblical view: idolatry (including worship of the “Molekh” and consulting spirits), insulting parents, adultery, and sexual crimes. These are distinguished from the previous chapter by the inclusion of punishments; their seriousness is indicated by their capital nature.”* (Fox, Everett: The Five Books of Moses...©1995, Schocken Books, New York).

**\*Leviticus 19:3** (Fox Translation). *“Each-man—his mother and his father you are to hold-in-awe, and my Sabbaths you are to keep: I am YHWH your God!”* (Everett Fox Trans.).

The first specific directive in this chapter (regarding the initial call to holiness) combines the reverent respect for one’s parents with that of the first thing ever recorded as being “holy”—the Sabbath (*“Then Elohim blessed the seventh day and sanctified it [i.e. made it holy, VaYekadesh], because in it He ceased from all His work which Elohim had created and made.”*—Genesis 2:3). The phrases *“I am YHWH!”* or *“I am YHWH your God!”* are used at least 15 times in this chapter. YHWH (The exact pronunciation is today uncertain, some scholars

think *Yehovah*, others *Ya'hweh*) is different than all the other gods served by the inhabitants of the lands Israel would be entering. As He is different, so the life-styles of His followers must be different! ***He is YHWH!*** The very power of that NAME released with His directives would provide sufficient grace and authority for those who would be willing to obey.

***\*Leviticus 19:17-18. "You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him. You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of Your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am YHVH."***

Yeshua would equate this command to *"love one's neighbor as one's self"* with the First Commandment, to *"Love YHVH our God with all our hearts, souls and minds"* (Matthew 22:39). In the New Covenant, John would teach further that

*"He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes"* (1 John 2:9-11).

***\*Leviticus 19:32. "You shall rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man, and fear your God: I am the LORD."***

The first part of this verse, ***Mifnei seva takum!***— ***"Before the aged, Arise!"*** is today posted on little signs (see below) in public buses in Jerusalem over the first seats behind the driver!

**PLEASE PRAY** for the aged in Israel—that they will draw near to their God. Pray for the younger, that there will be a renewal of respect and honor for age in the Land—with the realization that this is linked to the "Fear of God" and honoring the Name of the LORD.



**\*Leviticus 20:7-8. “Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am YHVH your God. And you shall keep My statutes, and perform them: I am YHVH who sanctifies you.”**

The words “consecrate”, “holy” and “sanctifies” in this passage all have within them the root of the Hebrew word *kadosh*. Here we have man’s responsibility in “setting himself apart”—by guarding and walking in God’s directives—but we also see that becoming truly Holy will ultimately require a work of the LORD Himself!

**\*Amos 9:11. “In that day I will raise up the fallen sukka [hut, temporary shelter, tent, tabernacle] of David, and wall up its breaches; I will also raise up its ruins and rebuild it as in the days of old. That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and all the Nations who are called by My name.”**

***This passage has traditionally been interpreted as relating to the restoration of Israel in her land.*** We believe this to be true. David built his first palace on Mount Zion, just south and below Mount Moria where his son Solomon would eventually raise the First Temple. Zechariah 12:10 makes clear that a day of grace for conviction and repentance is coming to the “House of David” in Jerusalem. And Ezekiel 34:23-30 and 37:22-28 prophecy that in latter days a united kingdom of Israel under David will be restored.

**Yet, in Acts 15:12-17, we find James (Jacob) a leader in the early Messianic congregation in Jerusalem,** applying this passage to God's raising up of a spiritual structure within which not only Jews, but also *"the rest of humankind may seek the LORD, even the Nations who are called by My name."*

**And within the past 30 years, the Holy Spirit has revealed yet another aspect of the "Tabernacle of David." David was "a man after God's own heart."** As such, he was first and last a worshipper "in Spirit and in truth". He brought the Ark of the Covenant, above which dwelt the Presence of the LORD, up to Jerusalem, placed it in a tent (a temporary dwelling, *sukka*), and stationed worshippers around it ministering continually before the LORD for some 32 years (I Chronicles 16:1). We see in this the phenomenon in our own day of the Holy Spirit's raising up places of continual Davidic worship and intercession, in Israel and around the world, as an earnest of—a "prelude to—the ultimate fulfillment of the Amos 9:11 prophecy, which will be a blessing to Israel and all of the World.

**PLEASE PRAY: that God's "Kingdom Come!" over the Covenant Hebrew people and the land which He has promised to them forever. Over the City of David,** the ancient location just south and below the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, where David built his first palace and erected the tent for the Ark. The area is currently home to both a Muslim Arab and an Orthodox Jewish population. Pray for God's righteousness and justice, His wisdom, courage, compassion and timing over Israel's Prime Minister and Jerusalem's Mayor, who continue to face decisions of great import regarding this area. Pray for the Arabs and Orthodox Jews who are often hostile neighbors on this tiny strip of land...that a Light would shine in their darkness—a revelation of the Son of David who is also the Son of God, who came once as a Man into this world, and who will one day return to rule.

**For barriers to come down between the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the other Nations—that they draw together as One New Man in the mercy of God the Father for all the descendants of Adam in the work of His Son.**

***Pray that houses of corporate praise, worship and intercession, as modelled by David and nourished by the Holy Spirit of Truth, will continue to be established and grow in Israel and around the world!***

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***Martin & Norma Sarvis***

Jerusalem

[The *Parashah* for next week 29 April—5 May 2018 is called *Emor*—“Say!”  
TORAH: Leviticus 21:1—24:23; HAFTARAH: Ezekiel 44:15-31]

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