

Prayer Update From Israel (January 19, 2016)



1. A LIGHT GOES OUT IN OTNI'EL.

This morning (Monday) as we write, a funeral is going on in Otni'el, a Jewish community in the hills just south-west of Hebron. Yesterday evening a Palestinian terrorist entered the community and stabbed Dafna Meir, a beautiful 38-year-old mother of four and two foster children, to death. Three of the children who were at home witnessed the attack, before being herded upstairs by the eldest—an action which probably saved them. In the past hour, in Tekoa, a few miles to the north, a pregnant Israeli woman in her 30's was seriously wounded in a stabbing in the clothing warehouse where she worked. Her attacker was shot and killed; the murderer of the lady in Otni'el is still at large. These terrible attacks continue in Israel and the contested territories. Those which take place in the territories receive little if any coverage abroad, the sentiment of much of the media being that Israel has no right to be there in the first place, and is bringing them on itself.

Otni'el is first mentioned in Judges 1:13, as being a warrior in Judah, a nephew of Caleb. In Judges 3:9-11 he is raised up as a judge/deliverer for the children of Israel after they cry out to YHVH the LORD. The Spirit of YHVH comes upon him, granting him grace to judge Israel for forty years.

PLEASE PRAY:

*** For God's mercies over Israel and the Land He has bequeathed to her. That violence against her be stopped; that he grant to her leaders a way for protection against the current so-called *Knife Intifada*.**

*** For a spirit of grace and supplication to fall on Jews in Israel and Judea and Samaria, that they will cry out to the LORD for deliverance, that He be her defender.**

*** That He will raise up godly leaders like Otni'el with the Spirit of the LORD upon them to be strong, judge wisely, and point Israel towards a way of deliverance.**

*** For the true Light (John 1) to shine in the darkness of the religious Jews living in the settlements of Judea and Samaria. They are zealous, many are deeply sincere and have a form of righteousness--but without knowledge.** In Otni'el there is a renowned Yeshiva (religious training school) which on its website lists among its goals, to “*encourage our students to immerse themselves in all areas of Jewish thought, from Gemara and Halacha to Tanach and Midrash, as well as philosophy, Hassidut and Kabbalah.*” The problem with this is that it seeks to propagate enlightenment (the goal of *Kabbalah* is ‘receiving special revelation’), but without the Light of the World as Guide. After His resurrection, Yeshua opened the minds of his disciples to understand what was written about *Him* in the Torah, Prophets, and Psalms (Luke 24:44-45).

*** For Natan Meir and his six motherless children. Meir means “illuminating”. Pray that the supernatural light of God’s mercy, His strength, comfort and guidance would be over them. That they will become lights of God in their community.**

*** That the Light will shine into the Islamic darkness throughout the Middle East. That Arab Muslims in the Promised Land will come to the light—and be freed from their hatred for the descendants of Israel.**

2. THE IRANIAN SANCTIONS ARE LIFTED.

This past weekend the “deal” reached by six world powers with Iran to curtail its efforts towards development of a nuclear arsenal went into effect. This was two months after Iranian testing of an *Emad* ballistic missile, banned under international law, “capable of delivering a nuclear payload and uniquely designed for that task.” Plans by the U.S. Treasury Dept. to roll out new missile-related sanctions were reportedly scrapped at the last minute by the Obama administration so as to not endanger the nuclear deal. (1) Shortly after the Deal went into effect, token sanctions were indeed levelled against “Iranian companies and individuals” in relation to the test, but these pale in relation to the green light granted to the Islamic Republic as a whole. On Saturday night, the office of Israel’s prime minister warned that “Iran has not abandoned its aspirations to acquire nuclear weapons and continues to destabilize the Middle East and spread terrorism throughout the world.” It emphasized that it is now crucial that the powers responsible for the deal insure that there is an appropriate response to each Iranian violation. Public Security Minister Gilad Erdan pointed out how, along with its billions of restored revenue, Iran “*continues supplying arms to Hezbollah, Hamas and other terrorist groups, intervening in Gulf States’ internal affairs and violating UN Security Council decisions about developing ballistic missiles.*” (2)

Nor was it reassuring for Israel when it was announced this week that two weeks before International Holocaust Remembrance Day, Teheran has announced a cartoon contest for creation of caricatures denying the Holocaust, with the winner’s prize this year upped from \$12,000 to \$50,000. (3)

PLEASE PRAY

We are not cursing the implementation of this week's plan. For whatever good may come from it for pushing back the Iranian program, we are thankful. We thank the Lord for the release of the prisoners; and we are grateful for any easing of the hardships on the vast civilian populace of that nation. But of course we must remain alert and aware that there is a spiritual battle of much more portent involved here. Under the influence of that battle, nations are aligning, juxta positioning themselves. For our part, we pray God grant us His "bigger picture"—so that our prayers (which play a crucial part in the heavenly battle ahead) will be effective in releasing His will on earth. In protecting, strengthening and mobilizing His Body. In protecting the harvest in all nations. In seeing Israel come into her essential end-time calling as a burning torch shining truth and hope into all the earth.

**1) "After US exercises restrain on new sanctions, Iran reveals new missile silo":
JPOST.com, 01/05/2016.**

**2) "PMO: Iran continues to pursue nuclear weapon, will destabilize Middle East":
JPOST.com, 01/17/2016.**

3) "Iran holds Holocaust-denying cartoon contest": ynetnews.com, 01/13/16 22:39.

3. ALIYAH FROM WESTERN EUROPE IS INCREASING.

The Jewish Agency is reporting an all-time rise in *Aliyah* (immigration to Israel) from Western Europe. Last year 9,880 western European Jews immigrated to Israel. Of these, close to 8,000 came from France, where the sharp rise in anti-Semitic attacks has shattered the sense of security enjoyed until now in the world's third-largest (500,000) Jewish population. **(1)** All in all, there were around 30,000 new arrivals from around the world (especially from economically-troubled Russia and war-torn Ukraine). **(2)** Following the attacks in Paris a year ago, Prime Minister Netanyahu extended an 'open arms' invitation to Jews in France to "come home to Israel". Yet, it must be recognized that although coming to Israel may cut back on anti-Semitic targeting, the transition is not always a happy one. Many doctors and dentists among those moving to Israel have run into walls here in passing the tests to get into the Medical field. As a matter of fact, getting a job remotely in line with what one was doing in another country is rare, especially for those over 30. Jobs are already filled; plus for most, language is a deciding issue. As we pray for the promised return of the Hebrew people to their land, we must pray for physical space for them, and space in the work-force. We must pray for "absorption" into the society.

PLEASE PRAY:

*** That Jews throughout Europe would awaken and prepare themselves for the shifts which are coming. That those whom God is calling to return to the land of their Fathers will get ready.**

*** That non-Jewish believers in these countries will rise up to support the Jewish populace—protect them where necessary, and facilitate their departure for Israel when the time comes.**

* That God will prepare Israel for the influx which is coming. Only He can provide the land to accommodate the coming army. Only He can prepare Israel's economy, its workplace, its present citizens for welcoming those who will be returning.

* The Ministry of Interior and Absorption be prepared to welcome all Jews God is returning to His Land—including Messianic Jews. Pray that any officials who would attempt to thwart God's purposes here will be swept aside and replaced.

* For the Messianic Body of Messiah in Israel...that it will be strengthened and prepared to show mercy and kindness to the new immigrants—including the Good News of their Messiah and King.

1) "Aliyah from Western Europe hits all-time high": Jewish World, 01/14/16, 19:17.

2) "Israel reports record immigration of Jews from France in 2015": ynetnews.com, 12/25/15, 18:29

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 readings for this week 17-28 January 2016 are called *B'Shalach*—"In the Sending" (...of the people away by Pharaoh)

TORAH: Exodus 13:17—17:16

HAFTARAH: Judges 4:4—5:31

Because both the Torah and Haftarah portions contain wonderful prophetic songs,

 this Sabbath is sometimes called

Shabbat Shirah—"Sabbath of Song"

***Exodus 13:18b.** *“And the sons of Israel went up in martial array from the land of Egypt”* (NASB). There was, as of yet, no military experience or discipline in this people (see verse 17), and a furious battle with the Amalekites (Ex. 17:8-16) awaited them just a little way down the road. Yet, somehow, they left Egypt armed and in orderly array. In I Samuel 17:45, David goes out to meet Goliath *“in the name of the LORD of Hosts, God of the Battle-Arraying of Israel (YHVH Tzeva’ot Elohei-Ma’arkhot-Yisrael)”*. It is YHVH of Armies who ultimately brings Israel into array both physically and spiritually to face her enemies.

PLEASE PRAY: For the armies of Israel to come into array under the LORD of Hosts. Pray for the Messianic Believers in the Israeli Defense Force; they have organized, and many get together regularly on weekends for praise, worship and prayer. Favorable articles have appeared in Israeli newspapers in recent years about the Messianic presence in Israel’s military. Many of these soldiers have excelled, gaining rank and favor and with some now themselves in positions of command. We know of cases in which some of these commanders have been actually encouraged by their superiors to share their faith with the others in their company. At present it is estimated that there are more than 300 Messianic believing soldiers in the Israeli military! But the battle against them by the Enemy is fierce. Please pray courage, integrity, cleanness, and close fellowship for these young men and women both with their LORD and each other, that they be a light of Truth and Life to their comrades.

***Exodus 13:21-22; 14:19-20.** *“And YHVH went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night. He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night from before the people.” “And the Angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud went from before them and stood behind them. Thus it was a cloud and darkness to the one, and it gave light by night to the other, so that the one did not come near the other all that night.”*

PLEASE PRAY: for Israel to be aware that God’s presence is with her to lead and give light. For believers to apprehend His Presence...for an awareness of the presence of God’s angels in the heavenlies round about us to lead, encourage and protect!

***Exodus 14:13-14.** *“And Moses said to the people, ‘Do not be afraid! Stand still (NKJV) and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall not continue to see forever and ever. The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace.’”*

We would observe regarding the first part of Moses’ admonition *“Stand Still”* (NKJV), that in the Hebrew this is far from an indolent ‘standing to the side’. Far better translations are ***“Set Yourself”*** (NASB) or ***“Take Your Station”*** (Robert Alter), The Hebrew *lehityatzev* is a military term. It is exactly the same word used by the Watchman standing his post in Habakkuk 2:1, *“I will...set myself- (NKJV) or “station myself- (NASB) on the rampart, and watch to see...”* As mentioned above, Israel was already an army, whether or not she yet realized it, and each member had a positioning within that army, appointed by the Captain of the Host of the LORD. The same is true for those coming into the Kingdom today. As we are watchful at our

stations, the LORD will be working his salvation on the battlefield. At the end of this week's readings, Moses' station will be on the hill with his hands raised, as Joshua (whose name means, "The LORD is Salvation") is prevailing in physical combat on the plain below.

Exodus 15:1-18 contains one of the most exalted, beautiful and truth-filled victory songs in any language:

Shirat haYam—The Song of the Sea

***15:2.** "My strength and song is YAH; and He is become to me salvation (*yeshu'ah*); He is my God, and I will adorn Him with praises." **PLEASE PRAY:** That present-day Israel will recognize that the LORD is indeed become her Salvation (The name Yeshua (Jesus) is a contraction of a compound name combining the name of the LORD—YHVH with *yeshu*—"Salvation").

***15:3.** "YHVH (*the LORD*) is a man of war; YHVH is His name." In this verse, the LORD YHVH is literally referred to as an *ish*—"man". We do not believe this to be merely metaphorical. How could the *Most High* call Himself a man—unless He would actually become one? **PLEASE PRAY:** That the Holy Spirit will shine divine illumination onto his written Word—that minds will be opened to comprehend what is written about Yeshua (Jesus) in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms (Luke 24:44-45).

***15:11.** "Who is like You, YHVH, among the gods? Who is like You, sublime in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" **PLEASE PRAY:** that these wonderful attributes of the LORD will be released in new understanding in His congregation throughout the world—1. Sublime HOLINESS; 2. PRAISES in spirit and truth which nurture GODLY FEAR in His servants, terror in His enemies. 3. A release of signs and WONDERS in the name of His "holy servant Yeshua" (Acts 4:30).

***15:17.** "You will bring them in and plant them in the mountain of Your inheritance, in the place, O YHVH, which You have made for Your own dwelling, the sanctuary, Adonai, which Your hands have established. YHVH shall reign forever and ever." **This is a prophecy regarding what, many hundreds of years later, would become the "Temple Mount" in Jerusalem.** Since 1967, Israel has claimed sovereignty over this mountain. Yet non-Muslims are only allowed to ascend for a few specified hours on certain days of the week. It has been said that "the Last Battle will be fought over who will be worshipped on this mountain." Over the interior doors of the Dome of the Rock is a passage from the Muslim holy book proclaiming that that religion's deity "has no helper (son)". The Second Psalm of the Hebrew Bible says that the LORD not only has a Son, that Son will reign as King on that Mountain. In Ezekiel 20:40 the Lord GOD (Adonai YHVH) declares that "**On My holy mountain, on the mountain height of Israel, there all the house of Israel, all of them in the land, shall serve Me; there I will accept them...**" At that time, it will truly be said that Israel has been "**brought in and planted in the mountain**". But at present, she is only a wary custodian of a highly disputed area inhabited by structures of desolation. **PLEASE PRAY:** that God's Kingdom come and His will be done on the "mountain of His inheritance" in Jerusalem. We know teams of believers who ascend the mountain weekly to walk round it, praying this. Also, please pray for divine

wisdom and guidance over our nation's leaders in how best to administer Israel's present governance of this holy site.

***Exodus 15:26b.** *“For I am YHVH (The LORD) who heals you.”* **PLEASE PRAY:** For release, revelation and progression concerning the healing gifts in the Body of Messiah in Israel.

***Exodus 16:8b.** *“Your complaints are not against us but against the LORD.”* A similar rebuke and warning is echoed in the New Covenant in Acts 5:4, *“You have not lied to men but to God.”* **PLEASE PRAY:** That the fear of the Lord would be on the Body of Messiah in Israel regarding their honor and conduct towards God's appointed leaders.

***Exodus 16:23, 29.** *“Then he said to them, 'This is what YHVH has said: 'Tomorrow is a Sabbath, a Holy Sabbath to YHVH...' "See! For YHVH has given you the Sabbath..."* (Emphases ours). "Sabbath" (Hebrew: *Shabbat*) comes from a verb meaning "to cease work". The first place in the Bible where the word "holiness" is used relates to this word, *"Elohim blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy"* (Genesis 2:3a). Yeshua taught that *"The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath"* (Mark 2:27-28). **PLEASE PRAY:** For Israel to be freed from the legalistic structures of man, and enter into the true Rest given by God. Pray especially for leaders in the Body of Messiah to not ignore the necessity of availing themselves of the rests from normal work which God has ordained for His children.

***Exodus 17:15-16.** *“And Moses built an altar and called its name, YHVH IS MY BANNER; for he said, ‘Because YHVH has sworn: YHVH will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.’”*

One of the Hebrew words for “banner” is *nes* (“my banner”—*nissi*). In modern Hebrew *nes* has also come to mean “miracle”. The Amalekites were a real people—who throughout the Scriptures epitomize and symbolize a *covenant-hating* spirit, specifically that of anti-Semitism. They were Israel's first enemies after leaving Egypt. They preyed on her, picking off the weak straggling in the rear (Deut. 25:17-19). Because God's covenants bring life to all of humankind, He therefore grants “no quarter” to those who threaten their purposes; their remembrance must be “blotted out from under heaven.” When King Saul failed to do this, it was an Amalekite who in the end claimed to have killed him (II Sam. 1:13). Centuries later, it would be Haman, a descendant of Agag (an Amalekite whom Saul also spared) who, as recorded in the Book of Esther, sought to ignite a Holocaust, to annihilate God's covenant people. With the hatred Satan has for Israel and her redemptive call, it is indeed a Divine Miracle flying over her which has sustained Israel and brought her, still an entity and with her ancient language restored, back to her native Land. **PLEASE PRAY:** For revelation in Israel that it is only the Banner of YHVH (The LORD) flying over her which will protect her from annihilation...that the LORD is fighting for her...that His Banner over her is LOVE.

***Judges 4:8.** *“And Barak said unto her [Deborah]: ‘If you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go.’”*

We would suggest that Barak's error here was not fear or cowardice (he is, in fact, listed among the heroes of Faith in Hebrews 7). Moses had said something very similar to the LORD in Exodus 33:15, *"If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here"*. But there, Moses was dismayed because He longed for the LORD's presence (face), and God had threatened to send an angel instead. In this passage, Deborah, who held the Office of Prophetic Judge over Israel, had released God's Word of command over the warrior. Yet Barak seems not to have realized that in God's *word of command* would be God's presence and authority for the battle. He seems to have identified the divine power and authority with the vessel releasing the *Word*, rather than the *Word* itself, and thus felt it safer to have the prophetess along with the Word she had released (It is significant that when Deborah later released a further command, he corrected his error and without hesitation went like lightning (Hebrew: *barak*) down the mountain (4:14).

PLEASE PRAY: For a maturing in Israel of the Body of Messiah, young and old, to the "prophetic" (I Cor. 14:1; Rev. 19:10b). For re-establishment by the Holy Spirit of the *Office of Prophet* (Ephesians 4:11) amongst both men and women in Israel. Pray for discernment and respect among believers for God's Word and how it relates to His government; how, on spiritual as well as physical battlefields, instantaneous responses to divine instruction released through His ordained authority structures can be critical.



*Martin & Norma Sarvis
Jerusalem*

[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week 24-30 January 2016 are called *Yitro*—
“Jethro”: TORAH: 18:1—20:26; HAFTARAH: Isaiah 6:1—7:6; 9:6-7]

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