

## **Prayer Update From Israel (October 31, 2016)**



***“I set my bow in the cloud,  
and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth”  
Genesis 9:13 (See Torah section below)***

*Beginnings of a rainbow rising from Mount Zion over Mount of Olives  
Jerusalem, 2014. Last Thursday saw the beginning of the “Former Rains” in Israel.*

### **1. THE FORMER RAINS.**

*“For after seven more days, I will cause it to rain on the earth...” (Genesis 7:4).*

***On Thursday it finally rained in Israel.*** There was flooding in the Negev to the south; in Jerusalem it showered, clarifying the atmosphere from the dust which had been sitting over us for several days. This came three days after *Shemini Atzeret* (the eighth day of Sukkot), when observant Jews traditionally pray for God to send rains. In this part of the Middle-East, from mid-May to late October there is virtually no precipitation at all. With Thursday’s showers, we have now entered into the season known Biblically as the “Former Rains”, which come in the fall and winter; the “Latter Rains” arrive in early spring.

***Please pray with us for abundant rains to come to Israel during this season.*** Although we finally received a bit in Jerusalem last year, the northern Galilee area, the agricultural heart of the nation, got hardly any. In fact, that part of Israel has been in a drought for several years, and the Sea of Galilee is again reaching a dangerously low level. In recent years Israel has constructed several evaporators near the coast with which to desalinate the waters of the Mediterranean. These are a blessing, and now supply enough for Israel’s drinking needs. But

the process depletes the water of valuable minerals found in lakes or aquifers replenished by rains. Nor does it supply nearly enough for the agricultural. Israel needs rain.

***As is made clear in the verse printed above regarding the first rains ever to fall, it is God who causes it to rain on the earth.*** Often in Scripture, His withholding of rain is a sign that He is trying to get Israel's attention. He loves this Land, He longs to return it to the place described in Deuteronomy 11:11-12: *A land of hills and valleys, which drinks water from the rain of heaven, a land for which YHVH your God cares; the eyes of YHVH your God are always on it, from the beginning of the year to the very end of the year.*

***But He also loves the people Israel He is bringing back to continue tending it.*** Truly, we are a blind and sinful nation, which must hear and turn to our God. ***Isaiah 41:17-20 speaks of a time when Israel will cry out for water and be heard by her God***—He will respond with creative works to release water in unexpected places to the end *“that they may see and know, and consider and understand together, that the hand of the LORD has done this, and the Holy One of Israel has created it.”*

Meanwhile, in the mercies of our God, there has awakened a growing remnant of believers here, who, together with you in the Nations, may stand in the gap on behalf of both the land and people! Please join us! We have that power! James 5:17 reminds us of Elijah, a man like us, who exercised faith in the timing of God, in a way which could both close and open the windows of Heaven. Zechariah 10:1 calls us to *“Ask the LORD for rain in the time of the latter rain”*—but right now, it is the time of the *former* rains—and Israel is thirsty.

#### **PLEASE PRAY:**

**\* That Israelis would be inspired to call on God for mercy; that the Spirit which convicts of sin and righteousness, would convict people in our nation to know their need and to lift their eyes to heaven.**

**\* That God would have mercy on Israel, and send abundant rains throughout the land during the seasons of Former and Latter rains. That the Sea of Galilee and the aquifers would be filled.**

**\* That these mercies would extend to our neighbors, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Egypt. That Israel will be generous, even with those who are now her enemies (Prov. 25:22), that they may be convicted and be drawn to the God of Israel, the source of all Life.**

#### **2. POPE FRANCIS: “GOD PROMISED THE HOLY LAND TO THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL.”**

This past Wednesday, even as UNESCO was passing still another resolution (see last week's Update), essentially denying a historical relation between Israel and the holy sites of Jerusalem, Pope Francis, delivering a public address at the Vatican in Rome, spoke decisively of ***“the people of Israel, who from Egypt, where they were enslaved, walked through the desert for forty years until they reached the land promised by God.”*** Although Francis has not issued a

statement directly addressing the UNESCO resolutions, these words were seen in Israel as being clearly directed in that direction.

***We are grateful for this affirmation by the Pontiff regarding Israel's divinely ordained relation to the Holy Land, which of course has Jerusalem and the Temple Mount as its center.*** On the same day as he made this statement, and UNESCO issued its newest resolution, Knesset Speaker Yuli Edelstein wrote a letter to Cardinal Parolin from Jerusalem, in which he urged the Holy See to "Use its best offices to prevent the recurrence of developments of this sort." Of the resolution, he said

[It is an] assault on history and is deeply offensive to both Christianity and Judaism. The denial of the historicity of the two Jerusalem Temples and the Temple Mount as recounted in both the Old and New Testaments is a terrible indictment of the international community when repeatedly adopted by an important UN body. The outrageous repudiation of the millennia-old bond between Judaism and its holiest shrines in Jerusalem is a blatant attempt to rewrite history. The annals of both our religions cannot be erased by raised hands and counted votes." ("Pope Francis: 'God promised the land to the people of Israel': *The Jerusalem Post*, 27 Oct 2016, 18:34 IST).

Edelstein went further, calling for the international community to pass a resolution reaffirming Jerusalem as the holy city for the three major monotheistic religions, "*a city where the two Temples stood and from which the Word of God was first promulgated to humanity by our prophets.*" (Ibid.)

***One of those prophets, Zechariah, records the word of YHVH (the LORD) regarding the area in question:***

For behold, I am coming and I will dwell in your midst", says the LORD. Many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and they shall become My people. And I will dwell in your midst. Then you will know that YHVH of Armies has sent Me to you. And YHVH will take possession of Judah as His inheritance in the Holy Land, and will again choose Jerusalem. Hush! all flesh, before YHVH, for He is aroused from His holy habitation! (Zechariah 2:10b-13)

**WE REPEAT THE PRAYER POINTS FROM LAST WEEK:**

**\* That no "unity" of nations will be able to move events in Israel, Jerusalem or on the Mountain of God there outside of the timings of God.**

**\* Psalm 2!!**

**\* Thanksgiving for the voices [including Pope Francis's!] heard round the world during the past week on behalf of recognizing Israel's historical relationship to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. For the courage of those nations which voted against the resolution.**

\* That nations which are “standing in the balance” will make their choices—knowing that in some issues, “abstaining” may be tantamount to voting against the purposes of God.

\* For believers in the nations to be granted grace for strategy in praying, interceding and in some cases, making declarations over their governments.

\* For courage for those believers whose nations are making bad or evil choices towards Jerusalem...that they will be lights in darkness, encouraged that God has a pathway for them and that they, like their brothers and sisters in Israel, may shine and lead many to righteousness (Daniel 12:3).

### **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.*

### *Bul/Cheshvan—the Eighth Month*

This Wednesday November 2<sup>nd</sup> will be *Rosh Hodesh* (Head of the Month) for the Eighth Hebrew month. Today, the Babylonian name *Cheshvan* is used on modern Hebrew calendars; in ancient times the Canaanite name *Bul* was used, as in I Kings 6:38 where, after seven years, Solomon completed the House of the LORD in Jerusalem.

*Let us ask God for grace over this new month—for vision, instruction, courage and love and attentiveness to His ways! To bring to completion all those tasks whose time of fulfillment is come.*

### **NOACH**

The readings for this week 11-17 October 2015 are called *Noach* (Noah):

**TORAH:** Genesis 6:9—11:32

**HAFTARAH:** Isaiah 54:1—55:5

\***Genesis 6:9.** “Noah was a just man, perfect (or, “blameless”) in his generations; Noah walked with God.”

“Perfect” or “blameless” are translations of the Hebrew word *tome*, which may, as in Psalm 25:21, also be rendered “integrity”: “Let **integrity** and uprightness guard me for I wait for you” (NKJV). In Psalm 101 David uses this word three times regarding his every-day walk within his house, “I will ponder the way that is **blameless**. Oh when will you come to me? I will walk with **integrity** of heart within my house. I will not set before my eyes anything that is worthless. I hate the work of those who fall away, it shall not cling to me...My eyes shall be upon the faithful in the land, that they may dwell with me; He who walks in a **blameless** way is the one who will minister to me” (Psalm 101:2-4, 6).

Even as Noah, living in a perverse and exceedingly sinful world, was through his “walk with God” enabled to govern his personal walk and that of his house with integrity, it is of paramount importance that those of us living in a time which is rapidly becoming “as it was in the days of Noah” hold close to our “walk with God”; that we in integrity ponder the way we walk, the things we allow access into our dwellings (and thence into our eyes and those of our families!), and with whom we associate and allow ourselves to be influenced.

**\*Genesis 6:11-13.** “Now the earth had **gone to ruin** before God, the earth was filled with wrongdoing. God saw the earth, and here: it had **gone to ruin**, for all flesh had **ruined** its way upon the earth. God said to Noah: An end of all flesh has come before me, for the earth is filled with wrongdoing through them: here, I am about to **bring ruin** upon them, along with the earth” (Everett Fox translation; emphases ours).

***Flesh, given its lead, brings ruin and destruction.*** As alluded to above, in the New Covenant, Yeshua prophesied that in latter days it will again be “as it was in the days of Noah”. Zechariah 2:11-13 instructs us regarding those days—as the LORD is “aroused from His holy habitation,” as Messiah draws near to “again take possession of Judah and to choose Jerusalem” —it will be imperative for Believers that we say “Hush!” (Hebrew: *Hass!* vs 13) to our flesh. Either we crucify it in the power of the Holy Spirit, or, as in the days of Noah, it will *be our ruin*.

**\*Genesis 6:14.** “Make yourself an ark of gopher wood; make rooms [or nests] in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch.” The English word “ark” is used here for Hebrew *teva* which means a box or case (the word is used for ‘mailbox’ in Israel today). It is the same as that used to shelter the baby Moses in Exodus 2:3 (The “Ark of the Covenant” uses a different Hebrew word).

***There is much redemption pictured here.*** The very Hebrew word translated “cover” and “pitch” (*kopher*) is identical with the word for *atonement*. In I Peter 3:18-22 the apostle Peter pictures the ark as a type of our salvation in Yeshua, our consciences being baptized through His death and resurrection!

**\*Genesis 7:15.** “They (the animals) came to Noah into the ark...of all flesh in which is the spirit of life”.

**\*Genesis 9:4a.** “Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs (NKJV). God is the One who has now “given” humankind meat to eat, as well as plants. We are to honour each man’s conscience

before God with regard to personal decisions to eat or not eat meat (Romans 14). However, it is difficult to reconcile with this Scripture the teachings of some who hold that God's ideal for humankind today is the meatless sustenance afforded them in Eden and before the Flood. That was a season which has been taken away and may not, we suspect, be returned until the final "revealing of the sons of God" (Romans 8:19-25).

**\*Genesis 9:4b.** *"But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood."*

The word usually translated "life" in Hebrew is *chaim*. Yet here, the word *nephesh*—"soul" is used— *"But you shall not eat flesh with its soul, that is, its blood."*

This will be reiterated in 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 soul of all flesh. Its blood sustains its soul. Therefore I said to the children of Israel, 'You shall not eat the blood of any flesh, for the soul of all flesh is its blood.'"*

In Genesis 2:7, *"The LORD God formed man of the dust of the earth and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life [i.e. chaim], and man became a living soul [i.e. nephesh]"*. The animals also were called *nephesh-chayah*—"living souls" (1:24); they also were "formed by God" from the earth (2:19); but God did not release into them a creative act making them into His image as He did to the Man (1:26-27). So "soul" relates to a life-factor in the blood of living creatures—yet different in man from that in animals. We are not implying that the individual spirit of a human being is present in every drop of his blood. But blood carries life throughout the body, it is precious to the God of Life, and was not to be consumed as a nourishment-source for man. This is not just a prohibition under the Mosaic "Law" (Leviticus passage above); it was prohibited here to Noah and his descendants by God long before that Law, and it was prohibited for the Believing Body of Messiah (both Jew and Gentile) after the Lord's return to heaven (Acts 15:20).

When Cain murdered Abel, the *"voice of [his] brothers blood cried out"* to God from the ground.

The *soul* that sins must die. All have sinned, so death reigns in the very blood-line of all children of Adam—***Except for One***. The Blood of the virgin-born Saviour, the "Second Adam", Yeshua, was pure and without sin (**Hebrews 4:15**). Thus, it could *"sprinkle many nations"* (**Isaiah 52:15**) with a *"sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel"* (**Hebrews 12:24**). God made *"His soul an offering for sin"* (**Isaiah 53:10**)—and with the shedding of His blood, *"He poured out His soul (nephesh) unto death"* and *"bore the sin of many"* (**53:12**).

**\*Genesis 10:25.** *"To Eber were born two sons: the name of the one was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided..."* The word may mean "split apart", "broken away into sections." Some have suggested that this may actually allude to a period in which certain of the continental shiftings discernible on modern-day maps took place. Which might explain why, for instance, the four rivers branching out from the large one coming out of Eden (Genesis 2:10-14) no longer appear to be in that same relation to each other. Some even suggest that before this shifting,

Eden was itself located where Jerusalem is today...making the place where the “First Adam” sinned the place where that sin was atoned for in the death of the “Second Adam” *Yeshua*. It is interesting that Jewish tradition teaches that Adam and Eve are both buried in Hebron, only 30 km south of Jerusalem on the plot of land purchased by Abraham (Genesis 23) as a burial place for Sarah, and which eventually held Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, and Jacob and Leah.

### *Haftarah*

**This week’s reading from the prophet Isaiah is filled with God’s heart and merciful plan for His people Israel. Ask God to use these verses to help in your prayers. Pray that the souls of those who hear them read in synagogues this weekend will be quickened with divine revelation! Pray that Israel will know that she is loved, that she will be convicted of her sin and need for a Redeemer, that she will understand that the LORD Himself is her only Redeemer and that her righteousness comes from Him!**

**\*Isaiah 54:5**. *“For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is His name; and your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel; He is called the God of the whole earth.”* The God of *all the earth* has sovereignly chosen to identify Himself with the name He gave to his servant Jacob—Israel. Nations or religions which will not humble themselves to acknowledge this “identification” will find themselves standing against the very God of all nations and the universe itself.

**\*Isaiah 54:7-10**. *“For a mere moment I have forsaken you, but with great mercies I will gather you. With a little wrath I hid My face from you for a moment; but with everlasting kindness I will have mercy on you,” says the LORD, your Redeemer. ‘For this is like the waters of Noah to Me, for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah would no longer cover the earth, so have I sworn that I would not be angry with you, nor rebuke you. For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but My kindness shall not depart from you, nor shall My covenant of shalom be removed,’ says the LORD who has mercy on you”.*

**\*Isaiah 54:13-15**. *“All your children shall be taught by the LORD, and great shall be the peace of your children. 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. Indeed they shall surely assemble, but not because of Me, whoever assembles against you shall fall for your sake.”*

**\*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 55:1-3**. *“Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance. Incline*

*your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you—the sure mercies of David.”*



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**[The readings for next week (6-12 November 2016) are called *Lekh Lekha*— “Go Forth, Yourself!” TORAH: Genesis 12:1—17:27; HAFTARAH: Isaiah 40:27—41:16]**

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