

PRAYER UPDATE FROM ISRAEL (December 6, 2010)



Satellite photo of Israel with the Carmel burning, Friday Dec 3rd

1. THE 'SPLENDOR OF CARMEL' GOES UP IN FLAMES

The Carmel ridge stretching from Caesarea to modern-day Haifa has since ancient Biblical times been a symbol of beauty, life, a garden-land flowering and fruitful. Today around half of that beauty has disappeared, replaced by a blackened lifeless desolation. Five days ago the mountain erupted in flame—"The worst fire Israel has ever known" headlined *The Jerusalem Post* on Friday. The flames spread quickly, fed by strong winds which seemed to change directions every twenty minutes, and fueled by trees and brush parched by the long drought. As the fire leapt down the mountain, a bus filled with Prisons Service staff, most of them young recruits, headed down the road to assist in evacuating inmates from a prison which is in the midst of the forest. A tree had fallen and blocked their road; before they could back up and turn the bus, the flames roared down upon them—they were trapped and in the inferno forty lost their lives. A Haifa District Police Chief who fought heroically on behalf of those in the bus, would finally succumb to her injuries on Monday morning, and a 16 year old boy who volunteered to aid the firefighters died. In the following days the veteran kibbutz of Beit Oren, dating to British Mandate days, went up in flames, completely destroyed. As the roaring furnace went completely out of control, and all of Israel's forces were deployed, the Prime Minister called on nations, both neighboring and far-away, for assistance. Israel simply did not have equipment to deal with something of this magnitude. Assistance began pouring in, including over 24 fire-fighting aircraft from as far away as Russia and the U.S. Even Turkey sent assistance (along with a clarification that this act of charity in no way should be interpreted as a relaxation of her feud with our state). Last to arrive was an enormous 747 from California (hired by Israel), the largest fire-fighting plane in the world, capable of carrying 80 tons of water and fire retardant. By Saturday night more than 17,000 people had been evacuated from 15 communities, and an estimated five million trees had been destroyed, along with the wildlife which once thrived beneath them. At that time some were still estimating that it might take a week to bring the fire under control. But great headway was made yesterday, and Israelis awakened this morning to the news that it was over. Today the

nation mourns...with at least 44 dead , many injured, large numbers left homeless and a vast part of that which once betokened her beauty destroyed.

OUR PRAYERS:

*We are grateful for God’s mercies in the fire being brought under control sooner than had been forecast...and for the large areas which were spared. For courage and stamina in so many who worked wearily through the days and nights under very dangerous and trying conditions. And for those nations which came to our aid.

*Please intercede for comfort and hope for the families and loved ones of those who were lost. At a time like this, such can only come from *Av haRachamim v’Elohei kol Nechama*—the Father of Mercies and God of all Comfort (II Corinthians 1:3). Pray healing for those wounded; physical and spiritual provision, hope and a future for those who lost their earthly possessions and must start over.

*Wisdom for our Government leaders. Already there is much recrimination and leveling of blame for Israel’s lack of preparedness for such a disaster. And there is a jolting unease as we realize how vulnerable we now appear to our enemies. Given our evident inability to cope unaided with such a natural conflagration—what would happen were it caused by war?

* That ears will be able to hear and voices pass on what God is saying to Israel through this tragedy. He is speaking. The following passage of Scripture addresses what He spoke in past times which saw the “withering of Carmel”:

*“The LORD roars from Zion, and utters His voice from Jerusalem; The pastures of the shepherds mourn, and the top of Carmel withers...Surely Adonai YHVH does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets. A lion has roared! Who will not fear? Adonai YHVH has spoken! Who can but prophesy?... ‘I also withheld rain from you...and where it did not rain the part withered...You were like a firebrand plucked from the burning; Yet you have not returned to Me’ says the LORD... ‘**Prepare to meet your God, O Israel!**’”(Amos 1:2; 3:7-8; 4:7, 11, 12b, Emphasis ours).*

A SHORT WHILE AFTER WRITING OUT THE ABOVE VERSE FOR THIS UPDATE, WE OPENED THE HAARETZ ENGLISH NEWS SITE AND SAW THE FOLLOWING HEADLINE AND SUBTITLE:

“THE CARMEL WILDFIRE: APOCALYPSE HERE, AND NOW: Gnarled and sooty trees rested on the ground. A bronze lion roared at the entrance to a house that was totally consumed” (Headline and Sub-title, HAARETZ.com Sun, Dec 5, 2010, Emphases ours).

PRAY THAT ISRAELIS HEAR AND INTERPRET THE ROAR OF THEIR LORD...AND FOLLOW HIS DIRECTION.

* *“For the sake of Zion I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not remain quiet, until her righteousness goes out as brightness, and her salvation as a blazing torch...You shall no longer be termed Forsaken nor shall your land any more be termed Desolate. . .”* (Isaiah 62:1).

What “blazes as a torch” in the satellite photograph at the top of this Update is certainly not Zion’s righteousness nor her salvation—yet it is our prayer that the destruction and suffering it represents may awaken in us a new longing to pursue the knowledge of the One “*who will come*

to us like the rain, like the latter and former rain to the earth” (Hosea 6:3). Then Israel shall become a blazing torch of life to the world!

NOTICE: We would remind our readers who have internet, that you may keep up-to-the-minute with Israel’s news in English by going to the website www.jpost.com

2. ANNUAL HANUKKAH YOUTH CONFERENCE HAS BEGUN

The following was sent by our friend Eitan Shishkof, who is senior overseer of the conference which began yesterday:

Our annual national Chanukah youth camp begins [Sunday] and lasts for 3 days. Please pray that the Spirit of the Lord will rest upon each young person. Our theme is taken from the story of Elijah, which took place, as you know, on Mt. Carmel...the very site of the forest fire. Fittingly, the parallel extends to the fact of a lengthy drought and subsequent intense rain after the prophet prayed when there were no clouds. May there be a rain of the Spirit upon our youth camp, with all counselors and young people engaging in deep bible discussions, worship and team building recreation. And may there be a physical rain upon today's Mt. Carmel.

3. WEDNESDAY IS ROSH CHODESH *TEVET*

Wednesday is the Head (*Rosh Chodesh*) of the Hebrew month *Tevet (or Tebeth)*. The month is mentioned only once by name in the Hebrew Bible, Esther 2:16-17:

“So Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus, into his royal palace, in the tenth month, which is the month of Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign. The king loved Esther more than all the other women, and she obtained grace and favor in his sight more than all the virgins; so he set the royal crown upon her head and made her queen instead of Vashti.”

It is a month in which God in His precise timing granted grace to

- *A chosen Jewish maiden of character through the agency of her godly uncle Mordechai –
- * --bringing her into favour and influence with Persian (i.e. Iranian) royalty—
- * for the eventual purpose of uncovering and defusing a plot to exterminate the Hebrew people.

This “plot” begins to manifest in Ch 3:10 as the king (Esther 3:10) gives his signet ring to the evil Haman...whose intent is to destroy the Jews. In the end, Haman is himself destroyed and that signet ring of authority transferred to the godly Mordecai (Esther 8:2). In this past week’s Torah Portion (Gen. 41:1-44:17), an Egyptian king hundreds of years earlier, removes his signet ring and places it on the hand of Joseph, who will be used to save the Hebrew people from the famine which is to come.

PLEASE PRAY:

***Thanksgiving to God for His faithful care and blessings over us during the past month of Kislev.**

***For grace over Israel during this coming month of Tevet; for vision, hope, encouragement and guidance for believers here to walk in the ways God has prepared for them this month.**

***For protection and nurture of those whom God is raising up “for such a time as this.”**

***Psalm 25:22: That God “redeem Israel out of all his troubles.”—that He uncover plots, and hear and turn the threats of a new leading figure in Persia (Iran) who has publically advocated the destruction of Jews in Israel.**

***That “Josephs” and “Mordecais” and “Esthers” be sustained through tempering trials to the day when they may be raised into positions of governmental authority and influence which will release God’s favour and protection over His people Israel.**

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 readings for this week are called *Vay’yiggash* (“came near”):

TORAH: Genesis 44:18—47:27

HAFTARAH: Ezekiel 37:15-28

***Genesis 44:18; 46:28.** *“Then he [Judah] drew near to him [Joseph]...”* There is no question that the story of Joseph and his brothers provides a prophetic picture of Yeshua/Jesus and His “own” (i.e. the Hebrew people) who rejected Him—but to whom He will one day be revealed as “risen from the dead” to provide salvation. In a special way, He loves them with an everlasting love and draws them with lovingkindness. In His grace, many are already drawing near to Him, confessing their sin as did the brothers...and as they do so, He, like Joseph, miraculously reveals Himself to them! (Zechariah 2:9, 11). **PLEASE PRAY for more and more in Israel to be led in God’s kindness to repentance and to respond to His call to “draw near.”**

***Genesis 46:28.** *“Then he (Jacob) sent Judah before him to Joseph, to point out before him the way to Goshen. And they came to the land of Goshen.”* Beginning in Chapter 43 and more strongly emphasized here, the mantle of leadership shifts from Reuben to Judah. From here on, a special precedence will be given to this tribe, “Judah goes first”: from Jacob’s blessing regarding a scepter of royalty (Gen. 49:8); to leadership of the armies marching towards Canaan (Numbers 10:14); to the securing of the land in the time of the Judges (Judges 1:2), to the Kingship of

David; to the birth of the Messiah in the City of David; to Zechariah's prophecy of the Last Days when "The LORD will take possession of Judah as His inheritance in the Holy Land, and will again choose Jerusalem" but "will save the tents of Judah first, so that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem shall not become greater than that of Judah" (2:12; 12:7). There is much of significance which may be drawn from this...but perhaps the most immediate point would be related to the name itself which Leah gave at his birth—*Yehudah* (Judah): *Thankful praise expressed by the raising of the hands*. **PLEASE PRAY for a fresh awakening of thanksgiving and praise amongst the Body in Israel, an awareness that this must come first (II Chron. 20:21-22)—Praise will lead her into victories and her true place of inheritance in her Messiah. Pray that the Lord will indeed "take possession of praise" in the Holy Land (Zech 2:12) and that it will be released in Spirit and in Truth.**

****Ezekiel 37:21-23. "Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel [Note: this expression always bears with it a relation to Judea and Samaria, the present day so-called 'West Bank']; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again. They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will purify them. Then they shall be My people, and I will be their God."***

PLEASE PRAY: that the Spirit who 'convicts of sin and righteousness and judgment' would be poured out on Israel in increasing measure, bringing her to a place where God can reveal the Purification which has been prepared for her—so that she may dwell in their land of covenant forever (vs 25).

*Martin & Norma Sarvis
Jerusalem*

[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week 12-18 December *VaYechi* ("and lived") will be TORAH: Genesis 47:28—50:26; HAFTARAH: I Kings 2:1-12. NOTICE: In last week's Update, we listed the special Hanukkah Haftarah as Zechariah 2:14—4:7. While correct in the Hebrew Bible, the correct verses in English Bibles should have been 2:10—4:7.]