

Prayer Update From Israel (December 8, 2014)

1. AGAIN TO EARLY ELECTIONS.

This past Tuesday Prime Minister Netanyahu came to the end of his rope with Finance Minister Yair Lapid, leader of the *Yesh Atid* “There is Future” party and Justice Minister Tzipi Livni, leader of *Ha-Tnu’ah* “The Movement”. Both had been leaders with whose ideologies he had been in disagreement from the start. But two years ago, because Lapid allied himself and his party (temporarily) with Naphtali Bennet of *Bayit Yehudi* “Jewish Home” (each of these parties had received a large number of seats in the last election), Netanyahu was forced to compromise and bring them into the government, leaving the ultra-Orthodox parties out. In recent weeks, both Lapid’s and Livni’s public rhetoric against the Prime Minister and his policies increased, to the point that last week Netanyahu finally felt himself undermined beyond endurance and (probably also suspecting treachery from Lapid after the minister’s budget was passed), decided to fire them. *Yesh Atid* members holding ministry portfolios resigned shortly thereafter, and on Wednesday the Knesset voted overwhelmingly to disperse itself, paving the way for early elections.

So, it now appears that on 17 March, Israelis will once again go to the polls to vote. Israel’s government allows for a large number of parties, each with differing interests and goals. Since there are 120 seats in the Knesset, a new government is only formed after a coalition has accumulated at least 61 seats. Citizens vote for a party. The party which gets the most seats usually is the one to put forward a Prime Minister candidate. But unless that party has received a really overwhelming number of seats, its leader-designate will find him/her-self faced with the daunting task of inviting a number of parties, with varying special interests, to join his coalition, bringing in however many seats they won in the election. Of course, this means there will be much bargaining—a chief aim for each party considering joining the coalition being to be given certain coveted cabinet ministry portfolios in the new government.

And so, after less than two years, Israel finds herself back to three months of political campaigning. It is again a trying time to find this happening. Threats continue from the north. (Only yesterday Israel found it necessary to bomb a number of targets in Syria where presumably missiles and other weaponry, probably from Iran were enroute to Hezbollah forces in Lebanon.) The action has raised a strongly worded response from Russia. There is the still by no means finally resolved threat with Hamas in Gaza in the south. The nations attempts to negotiate with Iran regarding nuclear enrichment remains at a stand-off--while they all the while continue steadily towards their nuclear weapons goal. This week PA leader Abbas divulged his plan to abandon peace negotiations with Israel and to take his case for recognition of a Palestinian State based on pre-1967 lines directly to the United Nations—this while yet another European country joined a growing group who have unofficially “recognized” Palestine. Israel is so weary of these elections. Some of the reasons why they keep happening is related to the very way the electoral system is set up—it needs to be radically altered; but paradoxically, doing so can only take place while a stable and unified government is in place.

Yet God is calling His Body to not be pressed-down by discouragemnt or cynicism. No confusion exists with Him! As Israel gears up for yet another governmental election

PLEASE PRAY:

***Joining us in “asking after the peace of Jerusalem” (Ps. 122:6)—In praying for our people in choosing the next government, “Show us Your ways, LORD, teach us Your paths. Guide us in Your truth and teach us for You are God our salvation, and in You we hope all day long!” (Ps. 25:4-5).**

***For God’s protection over Israel during these next three months—that those manning the interim government will do so with integrity and wisdom.**

***That God would raise up a government for this season which is stable, one whose administration will allow our people a season to “lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence”—a time in which the Truth of the *Meveser*—the “Good News” may grow and spread and flourish in Israel (I Timothy 2:2-3).**

***If it fits with God’s mercies for this nation that Benyamin Netanyahu continue as Prime Minister, that he will receive enough seats in parties which will support him to ensure a strong unified government. PRAY FOR NETANYAHU TO SEEK DIVINE STRENGTH AND GUIDANCE; THAT HE BE PROTECTED FROM SPIRITUAL POWERS WHICH WOULD SEEK TO INFLUENCE HIM ADVERSELY AS HE REMAINS AT THE NATION’S HELM DURING THIS VULNERABLE TIME. THAT HE WILL BE DRAWN TO CONSIDER ISRAEL’S INTERESTS FIRST RATHER THAN HIS OWN POLITICAL AMBITIONS. That he will heed the call within himself, “Seek my Face” and find grace to pray to God for guidance.**

***Against greed and selfish-ambition in the candidates. Of course this exists in any political arena—but pray that God will bring women and men of integrity, of honesty and moral vision into the government.**

***That godly men and women who believe in Yeshua will begin to rise into places of leadership in Israel..**

2. AVNER NETANYAHU JOINS UP.

Last Monday Avner Netanyahu, the Prime Minister’s youngest son, reported to the mustering point at Ammunition Hill in Jerusalem to began his three-year military service in the IDF (Israel Defense Forces). His proud parents Benyamin and Sara were there to see him off. Said his father, “We are moved just like every mother and father who watch their son go off to the army. We are full of pride and naturally worry. Everyone knows this, every home in Israel, and we are no different. I told Avner to take care of the state and to take care of himself.” The Prime Minister went on to wish success to all the soldiers being inducted that day, and to wish calm to all the parents “who are feeling the way we do.” Netanyahu was himself in an elite commando unit during his military tenure; his brother Yonaton became a national hero after he was slain leading a commando rescue operation of passengers on a plane hijacked by Palestinian militants at Entebbe Airport in Uganda in 1976.

It was Avner Netanyahu who four years ago, as a young teenager surprised the nation by winning Israel's Youth Bible Quiz, then going on to take third in the International contest. At that time, we wrote of the Prime Minister's comments that he tries to set aside a time each Saturday to study the Bible with this son.

PLEASE PRAY:

***For Avner Netanyahu's tenure in the military—that he will quit himself well, have success, and become an exemplary soldier.**

That during his time in the service, the Holy Spirit will bring the Scriptures which Avner has studied to mind, and help him to understand and to walk in their truths. That he will himself receive the LORD's admonition to his fore-runner Joshua (Joshua 1:6-9), to *Be Strong and Courageous—to Not allow the book of God's word to depart from his mouth, but to meditate on it day and night.

***That Avner will come to know the "Captain of the Army of the LORD" (Joshua 5:14) in a deep way—and share that knowledge with his fellows.**

3. OIL SPILL IN THE DESERT.

This week, a pipeline carrying oil between Eilat and Ashkelon was somehow disconnected during maintenance work, flooding 200 acres of a desert nature reserve in southern Israel with millions of liters of crude oil. It is already being called "one of the worst environmental accidents in Israel's history." Mercifully, the heavy rains which had covered the state a week before had subsided, else it could have washed the black torrent the twelve miles down to Eilat, contaminating disastrously the fragile life forms in the waters of the Gulf of Aqaba. Crews are working furiously to contain and in some way, begin to clean up the affected areas, but to effectively do this could take a long time. Exacerbating the situation, rain is forecast for Tuesday, which could still cause the spillage to spread.

PLEASE PRAY:

***For wisdom and insight for the workers as they seek to remedy this situation. Pray that the environment surrounding the spill will not be irreparably damaged.**

***For protection in Israel from physical mishaps which defile the land. Zechariah 2:12, the only place in the Bible which specifically calls Israel the "Holy Land" might better be translated, the "Holy Earth". Pray or heightened responsible awareness in Israel regarding our environment, and formation of effective initiatives for its protection.**

4. "LOVE MERCY..."

"He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8).

“A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth (Isaiah 42:3).

Last Wednesday evening a 16 year old Palistinian teenager walked into a large grocery store in the Judean community of Mishor Adumim, just east of Jerusalem, and stabbed two Israelis before being shot in the leg by an off-duty security guard. (Such “lone wolf” attacks against Jewish targets in both Israel and Judea and Samaria have increased markedly in recent months.) As the victims of the attack were lying bleeding, one of the first to come to their aid was a Palestinian Arab named Mahmoud Abu Khdeir, a worker in the supermarket’s storeroom. When he heard what was going on, Mahmoud raced to one of the fallen Jewish customers, helped to stop the bleeding in his head, and got him upstairs for further treatment. ***It was revealed later, that Mahmoud was a cousin of Mohammed Abu Khdeir, the innocent Arab boy who was burned to death by a gang of religious Jewish youths last summer in retaliation for the murder by Hamas of three Jewish teenagers.*** Regarding his actions of mercy, Abu Khdeir responded, *‘That’s how I was taught to behave by my family. When someone is wounded, you help them. It doesn’t matter where they’re from...I was raised in a good family. I’m not at war. At work, when I see something like this, I have to help. It’s a matter of education: I believe that tomorrow the wounded man will see someone else and go help him. I hope that one day the situation will change and we will no longer have incidents such as this. But force brings more force, and peace brings peace’* (“Cousin of murdered Palestinian teen halped supermarket terror victims”: *JPOST.com*; 6 Dec 2014, 12:22 IST).

Loving mercy, and expressing it, even towards those whom we consider our enemies, is a goodness which God requires of those who would please Him (See Micah 6:8 above). James 2:13 shows shows how doing this will serve to open the way for mercy when we are ourselves in need of it--the mercy we showed will serve to triumph over the judgement we deserve.

When God sees a flicker towards following the consciences He has given us in this matter, He will not put it out—but desires to coax it into a flame (Isaiah 42:3 above).

PLEASE PRAY:

***For Mahmoud, that he will receive more revelation regarding the “Father of mercies and God of all comfort” who is also “God and Father of our Lord Yeshua/Yasua, the Anointed One (II Corinthians 1:3).**

***That this knowledge would be released amongst Arabs and Jews throughout Israel and the Judea and Samaria.**

***For racial and even religious stereotypes to be broken which nourish a false assumption that certain people (or peoples) have not been naturally endowed with a conscience capable of responding virtuously in a crisis. God’s love reaches to all His creations; He has “put eternity in their hearts” and is desirous that all men may be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (Ecclesiastes 3:11; I Timothy 2:4).**

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 7-13 December 2014 are called *VaYeshev*—"And He Settled":

TORAH: Genesis 37:1—40:23

HAFTARAH: Amos 2:6—3:8

This week we begin the story of Joseph and his brothers

***Genesis 37:11.** *"His brothers were jealous of him [Joseph's prophetic dream], but his father kept the matter in mind"* (NKJV). A more literal rendering of the Hebrew might be: *"but his father guarded the word."* As the Lord returns to Zion with deliverance and an outpouring of His Spirit, **PLEASE PRAY** for mature instruction in the prophetic among Israelis—when and how to share prophecies and dreams; how to "guard" and save a Word of the LORD until its time comes to fruition; also how to guard against giving place to the flesh which can awaken jealousies towards those more gifted in certain areas than we are.

***Genesis 39:8-9.** *"But he refused [his master's wife's seductive advances] and said, 'Behold, with me here, my master does not concern himself with anything in the house...he has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do this great evil and sin against God?'"* **PLEASE PRAY** for clean minds and hearts and the Fear of the Lord in believing Israeli youth who are under constant temptation to compromise their integrity and sexual purity. Revelation 14 speaks of 144,000 who will not have defiled themselves. Perhaps there are some of that army already alive in the land! If so, of course the evil one will do all he can to divert them from their destiny. Pray for a new wave of bold and victorious youth and young adults governed by godly integrity—who would like Joseph have hatred of the very thought of sinning against their neighbor and their God.

***Genesis 40:8.** *"And they said to him, 'We each have had a dream, and there is no interpreter of it.' So Joseph said to them, 'Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell them to me, please.'"* Joseph's rhetorical question is answered centuries later by another godly young Hebrew captive, Daniel, *"But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets..."* (Daniel 2:28).

***Amos 2:6.** *“Thus says YHVH, ‘For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, because they sell the righteous for silver...’”* This is the usual reason given for the choice of this passage as the week’s *Haftarah*, the connection being the selling of the righteous Joseph by his brothers to Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver (Genesis 37:28). Yet in a strange way, the following verses also make a connection: *“A man and his father go in to the same girl, to defile My holy name. They lie down by every altar on clothes taken in pledge...”* **Genesis 38** relates how a most *un-righteous* Judah would (unknowingly) go in to the same woman as had his eldest son...leaving a signet, cord and staff as pledge. In this story we see many ways in which the righteous Joseph prefigures Yeshua, the Messiah. Here he remains pure in the face of temptation, even though it will mean suffering. On the other hand, Judah, through whose seed the Messiah will someday come, is immediately seen as one enslaved to desires of his fallen human nature. God would work sovereignly through even his sinful failures (Judah would, in fact, later acknowledge his unrighteousness—38:26; 44:16), to guard the passage of the seed He had promised Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to bless. Over 800 years later, a blessing over Naomi (Ruth 4:12), would be *“May your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring which the LORD will give you from this [Ruth] young woman!”* That “offspring” would eventuate in David the King...and finally, Yeshua—the Hebrew Messiah and Savior of the World.

***Amos 2:11-12; 3:7-8.** *“‘I raised up some of your sons as prophets, and some of your young men as Nazirites. Is it not so, O you children of Israel?’ Says the LORD...Surely the Lord YHVH does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to his servants the prophets. A lion has roared! Who will not fear? The Lord YHVH has spoken! Who can but prophesy?”*

PLEASE PRAY for the raising up of sons and daughters in Israel who move confidently and soundly in the prophetic giftings. Pray for the restoration of the office of “Prophet” in the Land. Satan hates this—because the spirit of prophecy involves *“the testimony of Yeshua”* (Revelation 19:10b), and so much of Israel is still behind a veil regarding their Messiah. It is this gift and office which bring clarity, understanding, instruction and encouragement to the Body regarding *“what the Spirit is saying to the congregations.”*



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[The readings for next week (14-20 December 2014) are called *MiKetz*—“At the End Of”: TORAH: Genesis 41:1—44:17; HAFTARAH (Hanukkah): Zechariah 2:10—4:7]

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