

Prayer Update From Israel (March 12, 2013)



*Mount Zion and the Mount of Olives
Jerusalem*

“This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you.” (Exodus 12:2).

*“And it came to pass in the first month of the second year, on the first of the month, that the tabernacle (Hebrew: *mishkan*—“place of dwelling”) was raised up...then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.” (Exodus 40:14—see conclusion of last week’s Torah reading).*

As this Monday evening March 11th, we move into the Biblical beginning of months we pray that many Israeli hearts will be opened to the coming of the Glory of the LORD—who longs to fill His people and to dwell with and within them. *“Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him, that glory may dwell in our land” (Psalm 85:9).*

1. ISRAELI COALITION DOWN TO THE WIRE, BUT COMING TOGETHER

Sunday, Benjamin Netanyahu hosted probably his last cabinet meeting for the outgoing government. The Prime Minister has until the end of this week to form a new government. If it doesn’t happen by then, the President will either appoint a different party to try and form one, or call for totally new elections. Although there are still no more members in his new government than there were over three weeks ago, there have been reported advances in late-night negotiations during the past two evenings, and a new government is expected to be announced late Monday or Tuesday, perhaps Wednesday or Thursday it will be sworn in. It looks that the parties for the new government joining Netanyahu’s own 31-seat *Likud-Beytenu*—“Consolidation”/ “Israel our Home” party will be: *Yesh Atid*—“There is a Future” led by secular t.v. personality Yair Lapid (19 seats); *Bayit Yehudi*—“Jewish Home” led by religious Zionist Naphtali Bennett (12 seats); *HaTnuah*—“The Movement” led by a former Foreign Minister

Tzipi Livni (6 seats); and *Kadima*—"Forward" led by a former Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz (2 seats)---a total of 70 seats (nine above the minimum 61).

If it turns out this way, Israel is in for some changes. For the first time in a Netanyahu government, it appears that the ultra-Orthodox Haredi parties *Shas* (Sephardic) and *United Torah Judaism* (Ashkenazy) will be out of his coalition. Until now these parties have been mutually considered "natural partners" with the Prime Minister. In this past week's March 2013 *Maoz Israel Report*, Shira Sorko-Ram perceptively explained why:

The reason is that the Haredi parties ask for (1) cheap prioritized housing for their large families (2) money (boat loads) for their non-working populations, (3) freedom from serving in the army, and (4) total control over all religious functions in Israel...With all other issues, including the Palestinian conflict, the prime minister can do whatever he wishes. Most of all, if the Haredim get their four demands met, they will never leave him or bring down his government because their benefits would disappear. (From the article: "Our Number One Reality Show Israel's Democracy")

Naphtali Bennett's "Jewish Home" party represents those Zionist Orthodox Jews who see Judea and Samaria as a viable present-day Jewish homeland, and who, unlike the ultra-Orthodox, are prepared to take up arms on behalf of the recognized Israeli government for defense of the land (Bennett himself served in an elite unit). As mentioned in the quote above, the ultra-religious parties have long seen themselves as the 'standard' for religion in the country. When in power, they have usually sought and been granted governmental folios such as the Interior Ministry—which defines "who is a Jew" and, who can be allowed into Israel for citizenship, or even as a tourist. When in control of these folios, their hatred for Messianic Jews and Christian Gentile believers in the land has continually manifested in harassment, intimidation, and often in severe infringement of their civil rights. This is a year when many Israeli Messianic believers seem, as Asher Intrater recently observed, "to be in favor of [Netanyahu] joining forces with Lapid's party and Bennet's party, which would push for social justice, equality of military service and religious pluralism."

PLEASE PRAY:

***That any demonic structures set against the formation of a strong Israeli government will fall; that any ungodly impediments to the formation of a coalition will be moved out of the way.**

***That no witchcraft will be able to prevail against God's purposes for the next Israeli government (Numbers 23:23).**

***That a holy fear of the LORD will fall upon the leaders of each party allying itself with the next government.**

***That sparks of awareness of the need for drawing upon Divine help and favour would be protected and coaxed into flame in members of the next government.**

***For Prime Minister Netanyahu—that he will deal respectfully and prudently with his new partners. That he will become aware of what God is bringing in new—and have grace, strength, and courage to leave old structures and paradigms behind.**

2. THREE WEEKS BEFORE PASSOVER—LOCUSTS IN EGYPT

"There are four things which are little on the earth, but they are exceedingly wise...the locusts have no king, yet they all advance in ranks" (Proverbs 30:24,27).

“The land is like the Garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; surely nothing shall escape them...The LORD gives voice before His army...for strong is the one who executes His word. For the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; who can endure it. “Now, therefore,” says the LORD, “Turn to Me with all your heart...” (Joel 2:3b,11-12a).

Saturday, 2 March, a vast swarm of locusts descended upon Egypt, in the region of Giza and Cairo. The first swarm, comprised of an estimated 30 million insects, began wrecking havoc upon agricultural farms across vast areas and filling the air. Citizens in Cairo burned tires to create a fog in hopes they would be diverted from settling in the city. Swarms also were reported to have reached Zafarana 124 miles away on the Red Sea. The insects had been spotted coming out of Sudan for several months, and a UN food and agriculture organization had reportedly warned the Egyptian government of a threat last November, but were ignored (“Watch: Plague of locusts hits Egypt”: *ynet news.com*, 030313; 14:05). Early last week, the swarms began moving northwards and crossed over into Israel from the Sinai Peninsula, causing hundreds of thousands of shekels worth of damage to Israeli crops in the area—although nothing compared to the damage in Egypt. Israel began spraying large areas of non-agricultural land upon which the locusts descended with insecticide. Saturday, another wave of wind-driven locusts arrived...with some being seen on Tel Aviv beaches in central Israel and even as far north as Nahariya. For the present Israel’s Department of Agriculture believes it has the locusts packs in Israel under control.

It is strange to see these swarms arriving in Egypt just three weeks before Passover. Only a plague of darkness followed the locust plague recorded in Exodus 10:12-20 before the LORD said to Moses, *“I will bring one more plague on Pharaoh and on Egypt. Afterward he will send you away from here”* (Exodus 11:1). Two weeks later came the Passover, the judgment on the firstborn, and the beginning of the Exodus from Egypt.

Plagues of locusts are usually associated with curses and judgment in Scriptures. In Joel (2:11), they are depicted as an army carrying out God’s word. Yet we would be reminded that the plagues which came upon Egypt preceding the Exodus were sent that ***“the Egyptians shall know that I am YHVH, when I stretch out my hand on Egypt...”*** (Exodus 7:5). God was delivering His people Israel from the house of bondage—yet He was also desirous that the Egyptian people see the futility of the gods they served, and come to know Him as well.

Today the Land of Egypt is in turmoil, chaos, lawlessness. With this, there seems to be a deep-seated hatred within the average ‘man on the street’ for Israel (fueled, no doubt, by the four disastrous wars they have been forced to wage against that people). This hatred is reflected in the attitude both of the present new and tenuous government of Egypt and that of those rising up in protest against it—both of which are strong advocates of dissolving the 14-year old peace treaty with their north-eastern neighbor. Might not the present swarms of locusts just before the annual remembrance of Israel’s deliverance be seen as a warning of the judgment and divine curse which Egypt will be opening herself to if she continues in her present stance towards God’s covenant people and land (Genesis 12:3). ***Yet we would hasten to point out that there is a strong and growing remnant of believers in Egypt (including thousands of young people) who have a strong love for Israel...and whom God is presently blessing with incredible growth in His Spirit!*** Some of these have visited us here in the land, and some of our people have visited the houses of prayer which God is currently raising up around that nation. We are aware of the disapproval our God has towards nations which are indifferent to the judgments and sufferings of their neighbors, even those which are considered hostile to them (Obadiah 13; Zechariah 1:15). We must ever bear in land the redemptive purposes God has proclaimed will ultimately

come to fruition in Egypt—a land under His blessing which, like Israel, shall be called “My people” (Isaiah 19:25).

PLEASE PRAY:

***That God would have mercy on Egypt (a nation already suffering from a severe shortage of grain before the coming of this scourge), and that the plague would be staid.**

***That, even as in the ancient day of Pharaoh, revelation would be released with the coming of the locusts,—that Egyptians will know that the God of the Hebrews—*YHVH Tsevaot*—the “LORD of Armies”, is indeed the God who controls the armies of all nature, yet who desires to be known by all the children of Adam, and in that knowledge to show His mercies and goodness.**

***For believers in Egypt, to be strengthened and to be a courageous testimony of the light and life and miracle-power of Jesus in their land. That they would multiply, even under intense adversity, just as did the Hebrews in Exodus 1:7.**

***For a warm and growing fellowship and praying covenant love to be nourished between believers in Israel and their brothers and sisters in Egypt.**

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 reading this week is called *VaYikra*—“And He called (to Moses)”:

TORAH: Leviticus 1:1-6:7

HAFTARAH: Isaiah 43:21—44:23

*This week’s reading brings us into the Book of Leviticus. This name comes from the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures and means “relating to the Levites”. However, the Hebrew name *VaYikra* is drawn from the first word in the book and refers to the LORD “calling” to Moses from the Tent of Meeting to give him instructions. He not only desires to dwell among us—He longs to speak and commune with us. Some 50 times in this book it is written that God “spoke” to Moses. The book’s emphasis is holiness—and regards primarily the services of worship at the Tabernacle—the way that the priestly intercessors or ‘go-betweens’ could accomplish their work on behalf of the people. ***This week’s portion pertains to five specific types of offerings (divided generally by chapters): 1. Burnt Offerings; 2. Grain Offerings; 3. Peace Offerings; 4. Sin Offerings; 5-6:7 Guilt Offerings.****

Haftarah

The Haftarah for the week (Isaiah 43:21—44:23) is filled with powerful passages to assist in our intercession for Israel.

Isaiah 43:21. *“This people I have formed for Myself; They shall declare my praise.”*

Isaiah 43:25. *“I even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins.*

Isaiah 44:1-3. *“Yet hear me now, O Jacob My servant, and Israel whom I have chosen. Thus says the LORD who made you and formed you from the womb, who will help you: ‘Fear not, O Jacob My servant; and you, Yeshurun, whom I have chosen. For I will pour water on him who is thirsty, and floods on the dry ground; I will pour My Spirit on your descendants, and My blessing on your offspring; they will spring up among the grass like willows by the watercourses.’ One will say, ‘I and the LORD’s; another will call himself by the name of Jacob; another will write with his hand, ‘the LORD’s,’ and name himself by the name of Israel.”*

Isaiah 44:6-7. *“Thus says YHVH, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, YHVH of Armies: ‘I am First and I am Last; Besides Me there is no God.”*

Isaiah 44:8. *“Do not fear, nor be afraid; Have I not told you from that time, and declared it? You are My witnesses. Is there a God besides Me? Indeed there is no other Rock; I know not one.”*

Isaiah 44:21-22. *“Remember these, O Jacob, and Israel, for you are My servant; I have formed you, you are My servant; O Israel, you will not be forgotten by Me! I have blotted out, like a thick cloud, your transgressions, and like a cloud, your sins. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you.”*

Isaiah 44:23. *“Sing, O heavens, for the LORD has done it! Shout, you lower parts of the earth; Break forth into singing, you mountains, O forest, and every tree in it! For YHVH has redeemed Jacob, and glorified Himself in Israel.”*

PLEASE PRAY

That God’s own Spirit will be poured out on the dry, thirsty ground of Jacob’s descendants (44:3). That Israel come into realization that the reason for which she was formed, her very destiny and high call is to be *“for Himself to declare His praise”* (44:21)—to bear witness to the virtues of her God, the ‘Rock’ (44:8). That we will realize that all of our efforts, or even her holy laws cannot of themselves save us—it is God *Himself* who has borne our sin, who blots out our transgressions for His own sake (43:25), who redeems us (44:6, 22-23). Pray for the “remembering” and the “returning” of Israel to her God (44:21-22)...a God who as First and Last, and sees her in her completion—*Yeshurun* —“Upright One” in whom He *shall* be glorified! (44:2, 23)



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[The *Parashah* for next week (17-23 March) is called *Tsav*—
“Command!”: TORAH: Leviticus 6:8—8:36; HAFTARAH (Shabbat haGadol)
: Malachi 3:4—4:6]

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