

Prayer Update From Israel (March 28, 2016)



“Thus says Adonai YHVH: This also I will let the house of Israel ask me to do for them: to increase their people like a flock. Like the flock of holy things, like the flock at Jerusalem during her appointed feasts, so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of people. Then they will know that I am YHVH.”

(Ezekiel 36:37-38; See Parasha Below)

1. EAGLES OF LIFE, EAGLES OF DEATH.

“You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and guard My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me before all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation...”

(Exodus 19:4-6.)

“He found him [i.e. Jacob] in a desert land and in the wasteland, a howling wilderness; He kept him as the apple of His eye. As an eagle stirs up its nest, hovers over its young, spreading out its wings taking them up, carrying them on its wings, So YHVH alone led him, and there was no foreign god with him” (Deuteronomy 32:10-12).

“Bless YHVH, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy Name! Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits; Who forgives all your iniquities...Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with kindness and tender mercies. Who satisfies your mouth with good; Your youth is renewed like the eagle’s” (Psalm 103: 1-5).

“Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, YHVH, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary...Even the youths shall faint and be weary...but those who wait in hope for YHVH shall exchange their strength [for His], they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint” (Isaiah 40: 28, 30-31).

Eagles of Life

*As may be seen in the above examples, the eagle is most often seen in Scriptures as a symbol of the God of Life caring for His people—bringing them to Himself, watching over them, carrying them where they could not go on their own, renewing their vigor, exchanging their weakness for His strength so that they may mount up above their obstacles, completing those good purposes for which they have been appointed. Psalm 91 pictures the Lord as a great bird covering those desiring His shelter with His feathers, granting refuge under His wings (vs 4). Because we have made the LORD our refuge, even the *Most High*, no evil shall befall us, nor any plague come near our dwelling. He shall give His angels charge over us, guarding us in all our ways (vs. 9-11). We will tread on the lion and the cobra, the young lion and the dragon will be trampled beneath our feet (vs 13). Because we set our love upon Him, He will deliver us...with long life He will satisfy us, and show us His salvation (*yeshu'ah* vs. 14, 16). This is the portion of those who place their trust in the *Eagle of Life*, the LORD God Most High.*

Eagles of Death

*This week it was confirmed that the California rock band *Eagles of Death Metal* has scheduled itself to perform in *Hanger 10 Tel Aviv* on *September 5th*. The band performed in Israel last July. It was four months later on November 13th that it gained world-wide notoriety when, at the Bataclan Theatre in Paris, the darkness its lead singer called for was suddenly manifest in a terrible way. As they sang “*Who’ll love the devil? Who’ll sing his song? Who’ll love the devil and his song? Who’ll kiss the devil? Who’ll kiss his tongue?...I’ll love the devil! I’ll sing His Song! I’ll kiss the devil...*”—as the frenzied sold-out audience joined in and sang along, many waving a “devil’s horn” gesture with their fingers, shots suddenly rang out. Within the next half hour death reigned in the hall as Islamist terrorists with machine guns, grenades and bomb-belts wrecked carnage among the revelers. In the end, the hall was awash in blood, eighty-nine were slain, over 350 injured.*

The group has since recovered from the trauma, last month playing a so-called ‘healing concert’ in Paris. It is now preparing a world-wide tour—including Israel in September “*Eagles of Death Metal to fly again in Tel Aviv,*” was a headline in Thursday’s *Jerusalem Post*. The band and its message exude a confusing array of contradictions. EODM are actually far-right in many of their political and sociological leanings, the lead-singer actually claiming to be a committed Christian—for all the obscenity of the group’s cd and web-sight illustrations, and the pornographic, often blasphemous direction of its lyrics. (The recent Paris concert ended with a song based on lude innuendo called “*Speaking in Tongues.*”)

Yet many secular Israeli young people are insensitive to all this. For them, here is a group which stands against the flow of societal mores, which evinces a kind of heroism in “coming

back” to the stage so soon after the attacks in Paris—and one taking a courageous stance towards Israel by resisting calls to boycott the nation which have kept back many popular music groups this year.

Nor is there an awareness of spiritual realities—that there exists a real devil, which hates humans made in their Creator’s image—who hates in a particular way those born into a Covenant people, set apart to a holy purpose for the End of Days.

PLEASE PRAY:

* That this evil band and the falsehood it defiantly brandishes will not “fly again in Tel Aviv.”

* That there awaken in young Israelis a hunger for “Life”. An awareness that there *are* spiritual powers in the universe—including powers of hate, deceit, uncleanness and death ruled by a leader who does not love and cannot be loved, “*who prowls about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*” ***That there is a great Power who is supreme above all***—a power Whose throne is based on righteousness and justice—and from whom kindness and truth go before Him (Psalm 89:14-17). That that kindness and truth have been released to all humankind in His Son *Yeshua* (John 1:17)—and it is through this name that we have victory over death and hell.

* For those musicians the LORD has been and is presently raising up to release and sing His *sound* over Israel—a prophetic sound, a sound of power, a sound of truth—a sound which breaks the atmosphere, brings forth new life and praise to the God of Life, and releases the rhythms of Heaven! (Psalm 29, 150)

* For revelation of the place of safety, freedom and rescue to be found upon, beneath and within the power of the wings of the God of LIFE! (Ex. 19:4; Deut. 32:11-12; II Samuel 22:11 & Psalm 18:10; Psalms 17:8; 36:7; 57:1; 61:4; 63:7; 91:4.).

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. 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 27 March—2 April 2016 are called *Shemini*—“Eighth Day”:

TORAH: Leviticus 9:1—11:47

Shabbat Parah: Numbers 19:1-22

HAFTARAH: Ezekiel 36:16-38

NOTE: This is one of two special Shabbats before Passover having additional Torah and replacement *Haftarah* readings. This one is called *Parah* (Cow) and recalls the ritual involving the ashes of a red heifer for purification from defilement by death. It contains an additional Torah reading (see above); and the usual *Haftarah* (II Samuel 6:1—7:17) is replaced by the reading from Ezekiel.

***Leviticus 9:4, 6, 23b-24.** “...for today, the LORD will appear to you.” “...and the glory of the LORD will appear to you.” “Then the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people, and fire came out from before the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the fat on the altar. When all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces.”

It had been the LORD’s desire to dwell in the midst of His people, and, as we saw in Exodus 40:34, after they had done their part in preparing the way, the Glory of His presence came into and filled the mishkan (dwelling place, tabernacle). But it was also His desire that his people be able to minister to Him personally through bringing their offerings, which would then be presented before Him by the priests—and that the *glory* of His presence and acceptance of these gifts and sacrifices be witnessed and experienced by all the congregation. Here it finally takes place—and as the holy Fire appears and consumes the sacrifices, the people can only respond with a shout and with falling down under the weight of His Glory (Interestingly, the root for this Hebrew word “glory” *kavod* is also the root for the word “weight”). And it is intriguing that the word for the “shout” the people release is quite often in Scripture (Job 38:7, Prov. 29:6; Isa. 35:6, I Chron 16:33...) translated “song”. When God’s glory falls on His people, they often can no longer remain standing—and sometimes its coming is accompanied by release of the *Song of the Lord!*

HOLINESS

This week’s readings center upon the Holiness of Israel’s LORD—including the consequences to his children, especially those who minister on His behalf before the people, of not honoring that holiness:

***Leviticus 10:3b.** “By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy, and before all the people I will be honored.”

***Leviticus 11:44-45:** “For I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. And you shall not make yourselves unclean...For I am the LORD who brought you up from the land of Egypt to be your God; thus you shall be holy, for I am holy.”

Aaron’s two eldest sons Nadav and Avihu had been granted a high and exalted “positioning” of ministry before the LORD, second only to Moses and to their father the High Priest. For them

there was clothing and anointing (8:13, 24, 30) providing them special protection to minister in ways not granted to the other Levites. However, they were not commanded nor were they clothed and anointed to draw near to God in that specific ministry assigned to their father Aaron the High Priest.

Yet, discontent with the appointed “place” God had chosen for them, they presumed to operate in the ministry of their father’s office rather than being faithful to that of their own—they offered “*strange fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them.*” In doing so, they dishonored God in the eyes of the people who looked up to and depended upon them. They also stepped into a place where the unique protection provided for their assignment of ministry was no longer effective, and the very fire from God’s presence which showed his favor in devouring the sacrifices in 9:24, devours in judgment these two sons who had abandoned their appointed places. There is no reason to see in this passage a portrayal of severe judgment upon those who are novices and have accidentally slipped and made a mistake while attempting something new. James 3:16 and 1:13-15 shows how “*where envy and selfish ambition exist, there is confusion and every evil thing*”, and how “*each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed, Then when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.*” At this crucial time of testing, the darkness which had been growing in Nadav and Avihu was manifest and they were betrayed.

Today our Lord has provided a way for us also to come into His presence safely, through the finished work of Yeshua. But we are to do so in reverence, not in presumption or disobedience. ***Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire***” (Hebrews 12:28-29).

Malachi 3:2-3 says that the coming LORD “*is like a refiner’s fire*” and will “*purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver that they may offer to the LORD an offering in righteousness.*”

PLEASE PRAY: *for a sense of the ‘holy’ in the Body of Messiah in Israel—that we will not be presumptuous in our worship and will not covet positions which God has granted to others, but be humbly thankful for the special responsibilities He chooses for us. Pray that we will at the same time yield ourselves to the refining purifying fire of God’s Spirit; and that the offerings which we offer up will be done in righteousness, in spirit and in truth.*

***Leviticus 10:8-12.** “*Then the LORD spoke to Aaron, saying: ‘Do not drink wine or intoxicating drink, you nor your sons with you, when you go into the tabernacle of meeting, lest you die. It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations, that you may distinguish between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean, and that you may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD has spoken to them by the hand of Moses.’*”

Perhaps intoxication was also a factor in the presumptuous sin of Nadav and Avihu. Although the Bible makes clear that God sanctions the drinking of wine or strong drink by His children (“before the LORD your God”—Deut. 14:22-26), Isaiah 28:7 just as clearly condemns its

misuse, which can spoil our ministry, resulting in “*erring in vision and stumbling in judgment*”, not only in ourselves, but also in those who are looking up to us in seeking to follow His ways.

***Leviticus 10:10.** “...*that you may distinguish between holy and unholy.*” An even better translation would be “*distinguish between the holy and the common.*” The opposite of “holiness” is not necessarily “sinful.” That which is holy is first of all that which is “set-apart from the ordinary.” So for the priests, certain things (such as drinking wine) which might be acceptable under ordinary circumstances were not allowed when they went into the Tent of Meeting to perform their duties there before the Lord.

Chapter Eleven lists ways in which the Hebrews were to be holy or “set apart” from other peoples by their diet.

***Leviticus 11:4, 46-47.** “*Nevertheless, these you shall not eat among those that chew the cud or that have cloven hooves... This is the law of the animals and the birds and every living creature that moves in the waters, and of every creature that creeps on the earth, to distinguish between the unclean and the clean, and between the animal that may be eaten and the animal that may not be eaten.*” The Israelites were forbidden to *eat* these animals, but not from “touching” them. As with Eve in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:3), there would be those who might add such restrictions, but the LORD’s restrictions regarding touch were related to the carcasses of dead animals (11:8).

SHABBAT PARAH

TORAH: Numbers 19:1-22

HAFTARAH: Ezekiel 36:16-38

The additional Torah reading from Numbers 19 deals with the contamination taking place when one comes into contact with a dead human body. For cleansing, a red cow was burned and its ashes mixed with living (flowing) water which was then sprinkled upon the contaminated one, making him or her clean.

Yeshua came be a holy sacrifice, and to in His own body defeat Death, cleansing us with a far holier sprinkling, “For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Messiah, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Hebrews 9:13-14).

THIS WEEK’S SPECIAL HAFTARAH, EZEKIEL 36:16-38, DEALS WITH THIS SAME HOLY SPRINKLING!

We find it especially useful in helping us to pray for Israel as regards the contested “territories” of Judea and Samaria, which she is being constantly pressured to release to be converted permanently into a Muslim state in which no Jews would be allowed to dwell.

All of the prophecies in this reading are centered on an area called “The Mountains of Israel” (Ezekiel 36:1), which exactly constitute this contested area.

PLEASE PRAY: FOR THOSE JEWISH SETTLERS CURRENTLY LIVING IN THESE AREAS, THAT THEY BE GRANTED REVELATION OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH COMES IN MESSIAH YESHUA. THIS PASSAGE STRONGLY IMPLIES THAT IT IS ONLY WHEN THEY RECEIVE THE CLEANSING WHICH HE OFFERS THAT THEY WILL BE ENABLED PERMANENTLY TO “DWELL IN THE LAND.”

Ezekiel 36:24. *“For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God.”*

Ezekiel 36:31. *“Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good; and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities and your abominations...Thus says Adonai YHVH: ‘On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will also enable you to dwell in the cities, and the ruins shall be rebuilt.’”*

Ezekiel 36:37. *“Thus says Adonai YHVH: ‘I will also let the house of Israel inquire of Me to do this for them: I will increase their men like a flock. Like a flock offered as holy sacrifices, like the flock at Jerusalem on its feast days, so shall the ruined cities be filled with flocks of men. Then they shall know that I am YHVH.’* **PLEASE PRAY:** For grace for Israelis to come to a place that they desire and enquire to be a healthy and increasing “flock” of God. That they will long for “*the God of peace, who brought up our Lord Yeshua from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant* (Hebrews 13:20). That they will come to know that Yeshua is the LORD (Yehovah)—that He and His Father are One.



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[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week 3-9 April 2016 are called : *Thazria-*
“Quicken with Seed/Conceive”: TORAH: Leviticus 12:1—13:59; *Shabbat haChodesh*:
Exodus 12:1-20; Numbers 28:9-15. HAFTARAH: Ezekiel 45:16—46:18.]

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