

Prayer Update From Israel (May 20, 2012)



“At the command of the LORD the sons of Israel would set out...even when the cloud lingered over the tabernacle for many days, the sons of Israel would keep the LORD’s charge and not set out.”

(Numbers 9:19. From this week’s Torah Portion; see below. Photograph of pillar-like cloud taken by the authors in the Judean Desert east of Jerusalem.)

1. “WHEN HE UTTERS HIS VOICE...” THUNDER AND LIGHTNING AND UNPRECEDENTED RAINS IN ISRAEL ON SHAVUOT

“When he utters his voice, there is a tumult of waters in the heavens, and he makes the mist rise from the ends of the earth, He makes lightning for the rain, and he brings forth the wind from his storehouses” (Jeremiah 10:13 and 51:16 ESV).

“Ask the LORD for rain in the time of the latter rain. The LORD will make flashing clouds; He will give them showers of rain, grass in the field for everyone!” (Zechariah 10:1).

“Clouds and darkness surround Him; Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne. A fire goes before Him, and burns up His enemies round about. His lightnings light the world; the earth sees and trembles...Zion hears and is glad, and the daughters of Judah rejoice because of Your judgments, O LORD. For You, LORD, are most high above all the earth; You are exalted far above all gods!” (Psalm 97:2-4, 8-9).

We thank and bless those of you who have persevered in “asking the LORD for rain in the time of the latter rain” (Zechariah 10:1). Last week, saw a great rarity for Shavuot in Israel—the very heavens themselves sharing in celebration of the holiday! It is unusual to have substantial rain in Israel after late April. By mid-May the country has already begun to settle into the five-

month dry season during which there is virtually no moisture at all until late October. ***Yet on this Pentecost, truly came the “Latter Rains”***, extending from northern Israel to deep in the deserts to the south. Haifa experienced severe flooding; in the Jezreel Valley all outdoor holiday events were cancelled; near the Dead Sea, people had to be rescued from the torrents pouring down through the wadis and over the roads. Many places throughout the Land these rains were accompanied by enormous sky-filling lightnings and thunder and high winds. ***It is unprecedented for the waters of the Sea of Galilee to rise this late in May.*** (Before now, the latest documented rising came on April 29, 2006.) Yet during the three days surrounding this May 15th, ***the lake rose two centimeters!***

What is God saying with this? Twice in Jeremiah (see above) it is written that such things occur “*when He utters His voice*”. Of course, many will see this as merely poetic phrasing for a natural phenomenon—thunder. Perhaps that is included in the imagery. Yet notice in the three Scripture passages quoted above—***He utters His voice; He makes the mist rise; He makes lightning for the rain; He brings forth the wind.*** The ***LORD*** makes flashing clouds; ***He*** will give showers of rain. Clouds and darkness surround ***Him***; a fire goes before ***Him***; ***His*** lightnings light the world. These things are not mere natural accidents or happenings. They are ***HIS!*** Meant to turn our hearts and thoughts and praises towards ***Him!*** And when they take place in dry and thirsty Israel on one of ***HIS*** feast days, it is important that “***Zion hears and is glad, and the daughters of Judah rejoice because of Your judgments, O LORD. For You, LORD, are most high above all the earth; You are exalted far above all gods!***”

It is certainly an encouragement for us. We endured drought for seven years. Then last year there were “former rains” but few “latter” (none at all after early March). ***Yet this past winter God poured forth the former rains and broke the drought—and now He has given the latter...and on the day celebrating the release of His Spirit, the sea upon which His Son walked has itself risen at the sound of His voice.***

AND YET...at the close of one article which broke the good news came this: “*At the same time, the Water Authority warned of a severe drought period that Israelis should prepare themselves for during the years 2015-2035*” (“Kinneret rises 2 cm. after Shavuot storms”: JPOST.com (*The Jerusalem Post*); May 20, 2013 17:47 IST). ***WHEN WILL WE LEARN?!!*** Only a year ago we were warned of “another dry year”—***Yet a higher “Authority” willed otherwise.*** It is ***this*** Authority in Whom we trust! The One who “utters His voice” and there is a “tumult of waters in the heavens”!!

PLEASE PRAY:

***Thanksgiving and praise for the faithfulness of Our God, which has released both former and latter rains over His land and His people Israel this year!**

***For clarity of discernment in the Body of Messiah in Israel—to understand what He was saying to the Congregations, and to Israel, and to the World when He “Uttered His Voice” last week on Shavuot, when He commanded and the waters were raised higher than ever before at this season!**

***For faith in Israel to trust in her God for her ‘weather’. For grace not to be influenced towards discouragement by the prognostications of the “Water Authority” with their predictions of 20 years of drought.**

***For the prophets to hear and speak forth HIS word. That Word, even when sent forth in warning, will bear also a message of redemption and hope. It is *El Elyon*—the “Most High God”—who will not only tell His people when to prepare, but “how to” prepare before the coming of a year of drought.**

***For a release of the Fear of the Lord and a dependent yearning on His *chesed*—loving-kindness within Israel. “*For the eyes of the LORD are on those who fear Him, on those who yearn for His loving kindness, to deliver them from death, and to keep them alive in famine*” (Psalm 33:18-19).**

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 for this week May 19-25 is *B’ha’alotcha*: “When you Light Up” (the lamps)

TORAH: Numbers 8:1—12:16

HAFTARAH: Zechariah 2:10—4:7

As we travel through the desert of Numbers (Remember, the Hebrew name for the book is “In the Desert”), we will actually discover areas of very fertile soil for understanding both the human condition as manifest in Israel, and the “goodness and severity” (Rom. 11:22) of God as demonstrated towards His chosen people. Of the many important points present in this week’s narrative, we would point out the following:

***Numbers 8:14:** *“Thus you shall separate the Levites from among the children of Israel, and the Levites shall be Mine.”* “God so loved the World”—yet in expressing that Love, He may in His own sovereign, holy purposes choose to set particular peoples (Israel), tribes (Levites), families (*Cohenim*-Priests), prophets (Miriam) and individual leaders (Moses, Joshua) apart. These are only a few examples as related to Israel—and He continues this in the Body of Messiah today. It is extremely important that we accept and honor those lines which it is plain *He* has drawn for us

and for others. By the end of this Torah Portion, both Israel's prophet (Miriam) and her priest (Aaron) get into serious trouble for becoming resentful regarding the 'place' of their brother Moses. **Please pray for a generosity and humility in the Body of Messiah in Israel, with regards to race, spiritual gifts, age, sex, and talents and acquired skills.**

***Numbers 9:18-21; 23:** *"At the command of the LORD the sons of Israel would set out...even when the cloud lingered over the tabernacle for many days, the sons of Israel would keep the LORD's charge and not set out. If sometimes the cloud remained a few days over the tabernacle, according to the command of the LORD they remained camped...At the command of the LORD they camped, and at the command of the LORD they set out; they kept the LORD's charge..."*

The word "charge" is the same as that used for a military "watch", and "kept" also means "guarded". So, twice here an essential element of Israel's camp routine is described as **"guarding the Watch of the LORD" --keeping alert and obedient for His directive, whether it required immediate galvanization into action or the watchful patience necessary for an open-ended waiting.**

***Numbers 10:25:** *"Then the standard of the camp of the children of Dan (the rear guard of all the camps) set out according to their armies..."* We wrote two weeks ago of the place of Judah in taking the lead (followed closely in leadership by Issachar and Zebulun). Dan was to bring up the rear. His name is related to "godly judgment" (Genesis 30:6). The word for "rear guard" (Heb: *me'aseph*) bears within it the concept of "gathering". A rear guard not only protected the rear from outward attack, it also kept stragglers from fraying-out behind—it was responsible for "gathering" loose ends, keeping the rear tight and pressing forward. Often, the older more-experienced warriors held oversight of this position.

***Numbers 11:1a, 4, 33-34 (NASB):** *"Now the people became like those who complain of adversity in the hearing of the LORD"... "Now the mixed multitude who were among them yielded to intense craving....the LORD struck the people with a very great plague. So he called the name of that place "The Graves of Cravings" because there they buried the people who had yielded to craving."* "T'veh—Cravings" is related to physical appetites awakened into strong lusts.

***Numbers 11:29:** *"...O, that all the LORD's people were prophets and that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!"* (cf: I Corinthians 14:5; 39-40: *"I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied...Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak in tongues. Let all things be done decently and in order."*).

This section and all of chapter 12 show that prophecy—the proclaiming forth in spiritual authority and timing of what the LORD is speaking—is an important part of His government for His people. But it is essential that recognized prophets know and work within their place of authority. When Miriam leaves that place, it is, because of her recognized position, an extremely serious matter which must be dealt with strongly and, in her case, publically.

A REPEATED WORD FROM THE PROPHETS

It seems safe to assume that when the Holy Spirit allows God's Word to be repeated twice, there is something within it which warrants His people's special attention and understanding (Genesis 41:32). This week's *haftarah* from Zechariah is exactly the same passage as that used during the week of Hanukkah. This is presumably because the Zechariah 3:2 mentions a *menorah*—"lampstand" (This week's Torah Portion begins with instructions regarding the menorah in the Tabernacle; the Hanukkah season is traditionally celebrated with a special menorah). This passage contains so very much prophetically about the "Light" who would come into the world to cleanse us from our filthiness, whose Word which would be our defense against that of our Adversary, whose oil would "keep our lamps burning", whose Spirit would be our Victory! **PLEASE PRAY: *the illumination of the Holy Spirit on these words as they are read at the close of Hebrew services around the world this weekend. Pray that many Jews will realize and believe that the LORD has come to dwell in their midst--the BRANCH whose name is Yeshua, and that His Father, the LORD of Hosts, has sent Him!***

***Zechariah 2:10-11.** " *'Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion! For behold, I am coming and I will dwell in your midst,' says YHVH, 'Many nations shall be joined to YHVH 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.'*"

We find this passage to be "Messianic" indeed! First, YHVH-the LORD says, "I am coming and I will dwell in your midst"—then presumably the same Speaker says, "Then you will know that YHVH of Armies has sent me to you." There is nothing in the construction of this passage which demands that the last sentence is by Zechariah and the next-to-last the LORD. Only one who was "One with" the LORD would fit here. Yeshua/Jesus said something remarkably similar in John 11:41b-42, immediately before calling Lazarus forth from the grave, " *'Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me.'*"

***Zechariah 2:12-13:** " *And the LORD will take possession of Judah as His inheritance in the Holy Land, and will again choose Jerusalem. Be silent, all flesh, before the LORD, for He is aroused from His holy habitation!*"

As the warfare intensifies over Israel, Jerusalem, the ancient City of David and the Temple Mount, **PLEASE PRAY for believers here—that we will not pray nor worship nor act out of our emotions—that in the power of the Spirit we will *silence our flesh* so as to hear clearly what the Spirit is saying to the Body of Messiah, finding our confidence in God alone who will 'take possession' and 'again choose Jerusalem'.**

***Zechariah 3:1-2:** " *Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the LORD, and the satan standing at his right hand to "satan" (i.e. be an adversary to) him. And the LORD said to Satan, 'YHVH rebuke you, satan! YHVH who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?'*"

All of Israel today stands as a 'brand plucked from the fire' (The Hebrew for this expression is in fact sometimes used as a euphemism for 'Holocaust Survivor'). She is continually under accusation. Yet within her is an awakened Messianic Body, coming into its place as a "Kingdom

of Priests”. This remnant is also bombarded by the satan (the adversary, accuser). **Please pray for grace and growing maturity in spiritual warfare in the Body of Messiah in Israel to stand against the Adversary in the name of the LORD—while allowing, as did Joshua in this chapter, the LORD to provide constant cleansing from sin and clean garments—including a head covering to protect her mind.**

****It rings significant to us** that part of the “word” wielded against the Adversary by the Angel (“YHVH rebuke you, Satan!”) is the LORD’s identity as *the One who has Chosen Jerusalem* (“YHVH who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you!”). Today, we may use the Name *YESHUA*, which bears within it in condensed form the “YHVH Saves”. From this example it can be inferred that a part of the “Word of our Testimony” (Revelation 12:11) which defeats the Enemy is a *confession of the LORD’s choosing of Jerusalem!* Suspicion of the truth of this terrifies the evil one, who knows that Yeshua will one day dwell and rule from there!

***Zechariah 3:7.** *“If you will walk in My ways and guard my watch, then you shall also judge My house and likewise have charge of my courts; I will give you places to walk among those who stand here.”* It is God’s desire that we walk in His path and watch over the things He assigns us to. As we are faithful in this, we will grow in judgment so as to be entrusted with other responsibilities and positionings—even when necessary among and in harmony with those other “armies”—the angelic beings.

***Zechariah 4:6b:** *“ ‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ says the LORD of Armies.”*

This Scripture is written across the bottom arms of the menorah which stands in front of Israel’s Knesset Building. **PLEASE PRAY:** *that more and more in Israel will come to see the necessity of spiritual power for finding hope and a future—and that through a HOLY spirit provided by her Father!*



*Martin and Norma Sarvis
Jerusalem*

[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week 26 May—1 June will be *Sh’lach L’cha*—“Send for Yourself” (men to spy-out the land of Canaan): TORAH: 13:1—15:41; HAFTARAH: Joshua 2:1-24.]

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