

## *Prayer Update From Israel (May 25, 2015)*



### 1. SHAVUOT.

**THIS YEAR SHAVUOT (FEAST OF WEEKS/PENTECOST) BEGAN AT SUNDOWN SATURDAY 23 MAY AND CONTINUED THROUGH SUNDAY MAY 24<sup>TH</sup>. SYNAGOGUES IN THE DIASPORA (i.e. OUTSIDE ISRAEL) FOLLOWS A RABBINIC TRADITION AND ADD A SECOND DAY, 25 MAY.**

*“You shall count seven weeks for yourself; you shall begin to count seven weeks from the time you begin to put the sickle to the standing grain. Then you shall celebrate the Feast of Weeks to the LORD your God with a tribute of a freewill offering of your hand, which you shall give just as the LORD your God blesses you; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God, you and your male and female servants and the Levite who is in your town, and the stranger and the orphan and the widow who are in your midst, in the place where the LORD your God chooses to establish His name. You shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and you shall be careful to observe these statutes...” (Deuteronomy 16:9-12 NASB).*

*Seven weeks [Hebrew: Shavuot] from the day following Passover, when the Priest cut the first sheaf for the Ceremony of Firstfruits, comes the spring harvest festival of Shavuot (Greek: Pentecost, after the 50 days of Leviticus 23:16). On this same day, seven weeks after the risen Yeshua had presented Himself as a firstfruits to God from the dead, Ruach haKodesh—“The Holy Wind/Holy Spirit”—was released from Heaven out onto His Body here on earth. Leviticus 23:17 tells of another “firstfruits” offering made on this day...but this time involving fresh bread baked with leaven. Some see here a picture of the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing in a harvest in Messiah of One New Man, containing both Hebrews and those from the Nations! In the power of that Holy Wind, the Mevaser—Gospel, Good Tidings—quickly spread out, to the*

Jew first and from thence to all peoples, bringing harvest for Salvation, and victory from the slavery of sin.

***There are three Biblical texts traditionally read on Shavuot.*** A prayerful perusal of these passages will assist us all in our celebration of this Feast of the LORD, and we believe will also provide us with guidance in our prayers over Israel at this time:

**a. Exodus 19-20.** Calculations made from ancient times concluded that the *Torah*—“Law” was released to Moses from the LORD at Mount Sinai on this day. This passage (Ch. 20) describes that releasing. It describes the tenderness with which Israel’s God has already “borne them on eagles’ wings and brought them to Himself” (19:4). It depicts the glory and power, the thunder and lightning and ever-increasing *shofar*-shout with which YHVH descended in fire onto the mountain (19:16-21).

**PLEASE PRAY:**

**\* For the Spirit of Truth to minister to Jews in Israel during this season...convicting of sin, righteousness and judgment (John 16:8).**

**\* For enlightening regarding the love that the Father has for Israel.**

**\* For an awakening awareness that even as the LORD came down once onto Mount Sinai, He is coming again, also in fire and with the sound of the shofar.**

**\*That those who will endure the Day of His coming will only be able to do so clothed in the righteousness of the One of whom the Torah testified (Malachi 3:2; Luke 24:27).**

**b. Ezekiel 1:1-28; 3:12.** This “Haftarah” also describes a “coming” of the LORD in power and glory...but this time hundreds of years later in the land of Babylon, witnessed by the prophet Ezekiel in exile . Much speculation has been made over the centuries by Jewish religious, Jewish mystical, Christian and secular writers regarding this strange, awe-full and fascinating passage—over the nature of what the prophet called “*mar’ot Elohim*”—visions of God, and attempted to describe here. He himself dared not claim his descriptions as replicating *exactly* what he was vouchsafed to view—rather, all was “the appearance of” or “the likeness of”. In 1:26, he describes a Figure, seated high on a throne atop the holy *merkava* or chariot, “a figure with the appearance of a man [Hebrew: *adam*]”.

**PLEASE PRAY: That the Spirit released on Pentecost would awaken Israel (now returned to her ancient land) to a new sense of Holiness and of the Fear of the LORD. Pray for ‘visions of God’ to those Hebrews still in the nations. Pray for revelation amongst Israelis of the Son of God, who is the “Second Adam”, who carries away the sin of the world, who is both *Son of Man* and *Son of God*.**

**c. Book of Ruth.** This beautiful book (still referred to as a ‘scroll’ in Hebrew) is always read at *Shavuot*. It takes place during the grain harvest. Ruth, a Gentile woman from Moab (now a portion of modern-day Jordan), comes with her Hebrew mother-in-law Naomi to Bethlehem (Hebrew: Bet-Lehem—House of Bread) in Judah at the beginning of the barley harvest. Her

love for Naomi is expressed in the immortal words, “*Do not urge me to leave you or turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Thus may the LORD do to me, and worse, if anything but death parts you and me*” (1:16-17). We do not believe that in doing this, Ruth *became* a Hebrew (through ‘conversion’ as is taught by the Rabbis. She could not change her DNA to become the seed of Jacob...and she continued after her arrival to be referred to as “Ruth the Moabitess”). But through marriage to Boaz, God nevertheless brought her seed (4:12) into the house of Israel,—and the great-grandson of Naomi, borne in Ruth’s body, would be David the King. A thousand years later, through his line and in this same “house of bread”—Bethlehem, the *Bread of Life* would be born into the world.

We see in this marriage of Boaz and Ruth (along with the offering of bread made with yeast, mentioned above) a picture of the “One New Man” which would come forth in Messiah.

**We and many others see also another picture—very relevant, in fact vital for our day. Naomi was old and broken, unable to conceive and bring forth life—yet Ruth young and strong offered her womb to bear the seed and bring forth life on behalf of Naomi, which would, as it were, *revive* her line to its place in God’s purposes. Today Israel, returned to her homeland, is for the most part old, exhausted, bitter and unable to reproduce. Yet, there is a way, as the “Body” of Messiah in the Nations loves Israel, her people, her God enough to come alongside and offer herself as a “womb of intercession” in which to carry the burden which Israel herself is incapable of bearing—to even endure travail on her behalf until new life comes forth and her line is restored. And what will this rebirth mean but “Life from the Dead”!**

## **2. FOR SHAVUOT—THE WORLD’S OLDEST MANUSCRIPT COPY OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OPENED FOR PUBLIC VIEWING IN JERUSALEM.**

The Shavuot season is thought to be the time when the Word came down on Mount Sinai, and the Ten Commandments—God’s plumb-line of righteousness, corresponding to which His people would be able to become a society based upon righteous judgments—were released to Israel and the World. To correspond with this, the Israel Museum is placing on display in Jerusalem the oldest known complete copy of the Ten Commandments. Found amongst other ancient manuscripts near the Dead Sea, this precious bit of parchment—over 2000 years old—is kept almost exclusively in a dark place to prevent its further deterioration. This will be the first time it has ever been displayed in Israel; it will be on display for around a month. A few years ago, we were privileged to partake of the blessing of seeing the Dead Sea Scrolls copy of the complete Isaiah scroll on display (usually the museums only display facsimiles of these incredible fragments). It was a deeply moving experience to see and read the old Hebrew letters, and then to see suddenly leap forth, **“Kumi! Ori! Ki va Orekh!—“Arise, Shine—for Your Light has Come...!”**, all hand-written down on that piece of parchment over a hundred years before the True Light came into the World! Now visitors may view the Ten Commandments—copied around the same time that the Living Word took on bodily Flesh. *“For the Torah was given through Moses; Loving Kindness and Truth came through Yeshua the Messiah!”* (John 1:17).

**PLEASE PRAY:** That the Spirit of Truth would attend those viewing this holy treasure—awakening gratefulness that Our God has not left us with no absolutes—but has given us a measuring line whereby we may be a society which adheres to eternal righteousness and justice. Pray for revelation of the Living Word--the Son, in whom we may receive Grace and Power to individually live and walk in that righteousness (II Cor. 5:21).

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### **THIS WEEK’S TORAH PORTION:**

*From ancient times there has been a weekly portion (Parasha) 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, and follow the texts read in Ashkenazy Jewish synagogues..*

The Parasha for this week 24-30 May 2015 is called *Naso*—“Elevate”:

**TORAH:** Numbers 4:21—7:89

## HAFTARAH: Judges 13:2-25

**Numbers 5:11-31 “The Law of Jealousy”.** This difficult and for many highly-offensive passage deals with what has been called “the only clear-cut instance of trial by ordeal in the Bible” (Robert Alter). It describes a ritual for determining a woman’s guilt or innocence after a spirit of jealousy has aroused within her husband a suspicion that she has “gone astray and behaved unfaithfully toward him” (5:12-13, 29) by having physical relations with another man, yet there being no physical or circumstantial evidence of this. Verse 14 alludes to the possibility of a “spirit of jealousy” coming upon men, both when their wives are guilty or when they or innocent of this sin.

The man is to bring her to the priest with an appropriate offering. The priest then brings her near and sets her “before the LORD” (5:16). He takes holy water in an earthen vessel and sprinkles in it dust from the floor of the tabernacle. The woman is bound under an oath that drinking this water will bring a curse upon her body if she has lied and is guilty—the oath is written into a book and scraped into the mixture, a grain offering of jealousy from the woman’s hand is waved before the LORD, and a portion of it burnt on the altar—and the woman is required to drink the bitter water. If she is guilty, her stomach will swell, her thigh rot, and she will “become a curse” among her people. If she has not defiled herself and is pure, she will be clean and able to conceive seed, her stomach to swell with the blessing of children.

The situation described in this passage strikes many commentators as bazaar, primitive, superstitious, not to mention demeaning, unfair and irrational in the extreme; for some, it seems an ordeal “based on a kind of archaic magic” (Alter). But that is through the paradigm of a modern mind not used to taking into consideration such factors as the existence of a supernatural God of love, truth and justice, the Creator and Lord of the universe, One able and determined when necessary to intrude what appear to be supernatural and marvelous ways into the affairs of those He calls His children. Consider the following:

***\*This was not some arbitrary, occult divination, but a directive of the Creator of the world who was present and traveling with His people in a real and tangible way.*** The dust the lady was to drink was not mere filth from the ground, it was from the floor of the *mishkan* (dwelling place, tabernacle), sanctified by the manifest presence of the God of Gods who dwelt there—and who had molded man from the same dust and breathed into his nostrils the breath of Life.

***\*Even as the Creator had placed “light-bearers” to illumine the heavens (Gen. 1:14), It was the destiny and high call of the Israeli women to bear within their wombs progeny through whom the families of the world would experience illumination into God’s nature and blessing for all humankind (Gen. 12:3; 26:4; 28:14)—Indeed, one would eventually bear and bring forth the Light of the World.*** Satan hated this destiny and its fruit. He had sought to thwart it from the beginning by attempting to violate the wombs of both Sarah and Rebekah (Gen. 12:10-20; 20:1-17; 26:6-11). He had attempted to slay all the male children in Egypt. After God had delivered His people from Egypt, the nature of their call and destiny began to clarify—***they were to be a special treasure to Himself, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation before the whole world*** (Exodus 19:5-6). Vital to this was that the bearers of that treasure keep themselves pure.

***\*In this circumstance, the wife is obviously seen as being “under” her husband’s oversight*** (vss 19, 20, 29). Verse 31 seems to imply that that oversight extended to being held responsible before God if she defiled her body by adultery, and he failed to take action. If he did so and she were convicted, “Then the man would be free from iniquity, but that woman shall bear her guilt.”

***\*Ultimately, rather than an abuse of the woman, it in fact served as a protection for her***—the God of Heaven would be her supernatural defense and vindication—even when her honor was impugned by the Accuser working through the fallen nature of her husband under whose authority she had been placed. ***And what of the man? Were they free to be sexually unfaithful with impunity, while the onus for unfaithfulness rested only upon the wife?*** Again, the God of Israel was dwelling in their midst. He released directives for maintaining order and governance in the society through responsibilities appointed to those positioned at every level—including over families. The righteous God who worked supernaturally to convict or vindicate the actions of a woman of His people through laws He had laid down regarding the conduct of His people, would surely be also faithful to see and judge the actions of those He had appointed to administer those laws.

**\*Numbers 6:1-21—“The Law of the Nazirite”.** *Nazir* has to do with “separation”—in this case by a person consecrating him- or her-self with a special vow, usually for a specific period of time, for devotion to God. Another word for separation or “being set apart” used in verse 2 is linked with that used in Psalm 4:3, “*But know that the LORD has set apart for Himself him who trusts in His lovingkindness.*” But here, the person chooses to set himself apart. One outward mark of one engaged in this vow was his abstinence from eating or drinking anything related to the grape. Another, in the case of a male, was abstinence from allowing his head to be touched with a razor for the duration of the vow. In the case of Samson (see this week’s Haftarah) and probably Samuel (I Samuel 1:11) and John the Baptist (Luke 1:15), the person was dedicated to the Lord in this way for life.

**\*Numbers 6:22-27.** *And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ‘Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, “This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel. Say to them:*

***‘YHVH bless you and guard you  
YHVH make His face shine upon you and grace you  
YHVH lift up His face to you and give you Shalom.’***

“So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them.”

With this blessing the LORD’s holy name YHVH was placed over the Israelites by the priests as a covering and protection. No other name would have true power to bless them, to be their guard and keeper, to release grace upon them, or to guard their hearts and minds with true *shalom*. Twice this blessing refers to the LORD’s *face* in relation to the one blessed. The absolute necessity of being in the light of that face permeates the Hebrew Bible from beginning to end. Without God’s face (sometimes in English translated ‘presence’) attending them, Moses prayed to God not to bring himself and the people up to the Promised Land (Exodus 33:14-15). Three times in Psalm 80 the minstrel Asaph equates God’s causing His face to shine on Israel with “salvation”, while in Psalm 44:3 the sons of Korah attribute Israel’s winning of the

Land to YHVH's "right hand, His arm, and the light of His face, because he loved them". There is a voice, sang David, crying out within every man, "*Seek My face*"...and his response, whenever He recognized it, would be "*Your face, LORD, I will seek...do not hide Your face from me*" (Psalm 27:8).

So this was the blessing which would attend the Children of Israel when the priests placed God's name YHVH over them. Today Israel has lost the pronunciation of that Name; when the blessing is recited, it is usually replaced by another name for deity, *Adonai* (Lord/Master). However, the root of the original Name it is hidden within the Hebrew name for Jesus. *Yeshua*, a contraction for *Yehoshua*, means *YHVH Saves!* **He** is "*the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being, sustaining all things by His powerful word*" (Hebrews 1:3). **He** is *Sar Shalom*...the Prince of Peace. **As members of a Holy Priesthood (Rev. 1:6), we would encourage you to pray this blessing over the Jewish people, placing The Name conjoined with Salvation—Yeshua—over them. Pray for the veil to be removed from Jewish eyes through the power of the Holy Spirit that they may come into His presence, to know their LORD face-to-face. "And I will not hide my face from them anymore; for I shall have poured out my Spirit on the house of Israel," says Adonai YHVH—the Lord GOD" (Ezekiel 39:29).**

**\*Numbers 7:6-9.** "*So Moses took the carts and the oxen, and gave them to the Levites. Two carts and four oxen he gave to the sons of Gershon, according to their service [i.e. transfer of the outer coverings, etc., of the tents of the Tabernacle]; and four carts and eight oxen he gave to the sons of Merari, according to their service [i.e. transfer of the skeletal structure of the Tabernacle, bars, pillars, etc.], under the authority of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest. But to the sons of Kohath he gave none, because theirs was the service of the holy things, which they carried on their shoulders.*" Deuteronomy 17:18 would require future Kings of Israel to hand-write out a copy of the Five Books of Moses, the Torah, so that its instructions would be infused into every aspect of their reigns—yet David evidently failed to do this—or at least attend to this graphic directive that carts were ok for everything else, but the "holy things" (including of course, the Ark of the Covenant) were to be "*carried on their shoulders.*" His failure to follow God's special instructions for dealing with The Holy, resulted, even in the context of genuine ardent praise and worship in other ways, resulted in disaster (II Sam 5:13; I Chron 13:5-14).

**Numbers 7:89.** "*Now when Moses went into the tabernacle of meeting to speak with Him, he heard the voice of One speaking to him from above the kaporet ["mercy seat"] that was on the ark of the Testimony, from between the two cherubim; thus He spoke to him.*" Centuries later, the word of the LORD here had become "rare" and there was "no widespread revelation" (I Samuel 3:1). Yet here, "*before the lamp of God went out in the tabernacle of YHVH where the ark of God was...YHVH called Samuel. And he answered, 'Hineini—"Here I am!"*" **PLEASE PRAY: for believers in Israel to keep themselves pure—and to be willing to wait in the Presence of the LORD to "hear what the Spirit is saying to the congregations."**

**\*Judges 13:6.** "*A man of God came to me, and his appearance was like the appearance of the angel of God, very awesome...*" In this recounting of the coming of the angel/messenger of God to Manoah's wife to herald the conception of Samson, at least five times he is referred to as a '*man*'. Two of those times he is called a "Man of God"...which, interestingly, could just as

easily be translated from the Hebrew “The God-Man” (*Ish ha-Elohim*). Later in the story he refuses to give his name, since it is ‘wonderful’—and at the end Manoah is convinced that he and his wife must die, “*because we have seen God.*” Of course, at this time Yeshua/Jesus had not yet taken on human flesh. But it appears, nonetheless, to be an instance of a pre-incarnate manifestation of the One who was to come. **PLEASE PRAY for the understanding of Jews who read or hear these words next weekend to be opened, that they may comprehend the identity of the *One* who came to Manoah and his wife and ascended in the flame—of the *One* who was seated on the throne of the chariot in the Ezekiel passage—of the *One* who came down in flame onto the mountain in Exodus 19 (Luke 24:44-45)—of the *One* who has come in the flesh once before, and *Who is coming again!***



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**[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week (31 May—6 June 2015) are called *B’Ha’alotcha*—“When You Light Up”: TORAH: Numbers 8:1—12:16; HAFTARAH: Zechariah 2:10—4:7.**

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