

Prayer Update From Israel (June 16, 2014)



“He is coming with clouds, and every eye shall see him, even they who pierced Him”

(Revelation 1:7)

Recent photograph of the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem

A QUICKENING

The landscape is changing quickly in the Middle East—spiritually, demographically, perhaps soon to be geographically as well. As fierce new military forces are arising, coming into array and beginning to devour territory as well as lives, those nations outside, which until now were considered to have strong interests in the area, are finding themselves in sudden *dis*-array—wavering in their former alliances, in some cases on the brink of making almost farcical turn-arounds. Only a few months ago Sunni Muslims were seen by the West as being for the most part the more “moderate” of the two divisions of Islam—ideal partners in its rush to contain the alarming religious zealotry threatening the world from Shi’ite Iran. Now the mask has come suddenly off—revealing a burgeoning charismatic Sunni movement with its own high religious-fueled goals (along with chillingly barbarous means already being employed to achieve them). Certain western countries this week are said to actually be seriously considering allying themselves with the once-threatening Iran in order to stem the Sunni tide. Yet it is a dual storm-tide which is arising, out of which “giants” are soon to be striding the earth from both sides. As believers, in order to see these giants in a true perspective, it is essential that we come ourselves “into array”—but in the “different spirit” of Caleb and Joshua—each knowing, valuing and attending to his or her own divine positioning, that we may “know our God, be strong and do” what God is calling us to do—having that Divine insight which will teach and lead many out and

into righteousness! (See Numbers 13:30; 14:7-9, 24 of last week's Torah Portion, this weeks Portion below, and Daniel 11:32-35; 12:3)

This week we present for your prayerful consideration a thoughtful, timely and we believe illuminating analysis of this situation written by our friend Avner Boskey (see below).

We also ask for you to be in prayer for our nation regarding a serious development which began last Thursday night when three teenage yeshiva students were abducted by Hamas terrorists from a point in Judea just north of Hebron. Israel has mobilized on an enormous scale, deploying over 2,500 soldiers around Hebron and already arresting a large number of Hamas operatives. Yet, as of this writing, there is still no sign of them. The Chief Rabbis have called for special prayers, and last night thousands gathered at the Western Wall in Jerusalem to pray for their safety and return.

PLEASE PRAY:

***For Prime Minister Netanyahu and the Israeli Defense Forces, that they be given divine insight into where these boys are. Pray for guidance in deployment of the forces in searching for them (Daniel 2:22)—that the investigations be done in discretion with as little violence and injury to innocent parties as possible.**

***For Gil-Ad Shaer and Naftali Frenkel (both 16 years old) and Eyal Yifrach (19) and their families. Pray that they be protected by angels (who 'minister on behalf of those who will inherit salvation').**

***That God look down from His sanctuary, "to hear the groaning of the prisoner, to release those appointed to death, to declare the name of YHVH in Zion, and His praise in Jerusalem" (Psalm 102:19-21).**

Rumble in Nineveh

This past week has seen the collapse of central U.S. strategies in the Middle East. Ayatollah Khomeini's fateful plane ride from Paris to Tehran in 1979 generated a spiritual earthquake in the region. Current events in Iraq are a similar major shock.

The Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS – a group spiritually connected with al Qa'eda) have taken over Iraq's second largest city Mosul, as well as Tikrit, Saddam Hussein's ancestral town. They have stampeded over a half million mostly Muslim refugees who have fled from before the black flags of jihad, the jihadi convoys of captured American Humvees leave bloody trails of decapitated opponents in their wake. Nineveh, once ancient Assyria's proud capitol city, has witnessed Christians fleeing for their lives and sharia law being imposed with much savagery (<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/iraq-isis-crisis-medieval-sharia-law-imposed-millions-nineveh-province-1452401>).

The ISIS now controls vast swaths of territory in both Syria and Iraq. Its goal is to establish a jihadi caliphate in both countries and then to spread al Qaeda influence further across the entire Middle East.

The U.S. invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan had different original goals originally – the establishment of a threefold cord – Western democracy, a solid economy and a pro-Western military power. This week all three of those pillars have shattered.

Rather than Iraq turning to Americans for military support, they have invited Iran's top Shi'ite Major General Qassem Suleimani (the head of the Quds Force arm of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards) who touched down in Baghdad this week. His job – to help oversee the defense of Iraq's Shi'ite government from the Sunni jihad forces of ISIS (<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jun/14/iran-iraq-isis-fight-militants-nouri-maliki>).

Iraq is shuddering in the gory throes of a religious and civil war, one which pits jihadi (Iran's Shi'ites) against jihadi (al Qaeda's Sunnis). Western dreams of peace, prosperity and economic windfall have vanished like a desert *sciocco*. The 2003 military defeat of Saddam Hussein has fatefully led to this writhing Middle Eastern can of worms – one that threatens to engulf the entire region in flames.

Asleep at the wheel

Yet on Wednesday on this same week, just hours before this news broke, U.S. President Obama spoke to David Karp, CEO of Tumbler at a White House interview:

“And if there's one message I want to deliver to young people like a Tumblr audience is, don't get cynical. Guard against cynicism. I mean, the truth of the matter is that for all the challenges we face, all the problems that we have, if you had to be – if you had to choose any moment to be born in human history, not knowing what your position was going to be, who you were going to be, you'd choose this time. The world is less violent than it has ever been. It is healthier than it has ever been. It is more tolerant than it has ever been. It is better fed than it's ever been. It is more educated than it's ever been”

(www.realcrapolitics.com/video/2014/06/11/obama_the_world_is_less_violent_than_it_has_ever_been.html).

One is reminded of the quiet observation of William Ralph Inge, former Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral in London, “It is useless for the sheep to pass resolutions in favor of vegetarianism, while the wolf remains of a different opinion.”

The Scriptures are full of references to being asleep while on duty. Jonah slept during the storm (*Jonah 1:5*), while the shepherds of Assyria (to whom Jonah was sent) were also lost in slumber (*Nahum 3:18*).

Israel's leaders were sometimes caught snoring in the middle of crisis: “For the Lord has poured over you a spirit of deep sleep, He has shut your eyes, the prophets; And He has covered your heads, the seers” (*Isaiah 29:10*). “His watchmen are blind, all of them know nothing. All of them are mute dogs unable to bark, dreamers lying down, who love to slumber” (*Isaiah 56:10*).

Nahum and Nineveh

Though Assyria was once the world's greatest superpower, a God's-eye view shows that this mighty nation was being weighed in the balances and found wanting. The prophet Nahum pronounced judgment upon Nineveh and Assyria for ignoring Israel, and for weakening and harming His chosen Jewish people. In God's foreign policy department dissing the Jews is a big no-no.

Nahum described Nineveh's heart as prideful and boastful, and declared that even its military prowess would not protect Assyria when it violated God's prophetic ways. The judgment of YHVH, the Day of the Lord, was on its way.

Today the nations of the world still "mock the words of God, despise His words and scoff at the prophetic message" (*Jeremiah 28:8*). This is especially true concerning scriptural teaching concerning the chosenness of the Jewish people, their restoration to their Promised land, and their salvation. God informs us that His prophetic word still has supreme relevance. The words of God are not only targeted at those who congregate within 'holy buildings.' They are also aimed at the hearts of the world's political and religious leaders.

God's prophetic perspectives on world events have been around for a long time – "from ancient times...(prophetic words have been directed) against many lands and against great kingdoms, regarding war and of calamity and of pestilence" (*Jeremiah 28:8*).

The Bible has great relevance to us in these challenging days. It offers us clarity, perspective and strategy – for individuals and governments. It is very important to wake up and take hold of what the word of God is saying about current events and those soon-coming down the turnpike.

When you gonna wake up?

Bob Dylan once said, "When you gonna wake up and strengthen the things that remain?" These words remind us of two scriptures:

"Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; for I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of My God" (*Revelation 3:2*).

"But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light. For this reason it says, 'Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Messiah will shine on you.' Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is" (*Ephesians 5:13-17*).

Yeshua said to His disciples "Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not enter into temptation" (Luke 22:46).

As the enemy rages in Iraq, Syria and Iran, and as terror raises its ugly head again in Israel,

- Ø we need to fight off spiritual slumber (*Mark 13:36*)
- Ø we need to be on the alert (*1 Thessalonians 5:6*)
- Ø we need to devote ourselves to prayer (*Colossians 4:2*) with thanksgiving in our hearts.

“On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have appointed watchmen. All day and all night they will never keep silent. You who remind the Lord, take no rest for yourselves, until He establishes and makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth” (*Isaiah 62:6*).

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THIS WEEKEND’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 June 15-21 is called *Korach*—“Korah”:

TORAH: Numbers 16:1—18:32

HAFTARAH: I Samuel 11:14—12:22

This week’s Portion focuses on the rebellion of Korah.

***Numbers 16:3; 16:7b: Korah and His Followers to Moses:** “*You take too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation is holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?*” **Moses:** “*Take censurers, Korah and all your company; put fire in them and put incense in them before the LORD tomorrow, and it shall be that the man whom the LORD chooses is the holy one. You take too much upon yourselves, you sons of Levi.*”

Perhaps we see here one reason for the severity with which the LORD dealt with Miriam and Aaron in Chapter 12. If those in the *office* of Prophet and Priest are discontent with their “place” in relation to the positions of others whom the LORD has chosen and appointed, will not their behavior be seen as license by their followers to do likewise. Moses had not appointed himself

as leader over Israel, God had. Ironically, Korah was speaking a truth when he claimed that “*all the congregation is holy, every one of them*”.

The congregation as a whole *was* holy (i.e. “set apart”) from other nations, and within that congregation tribes and families and individuals were also “set apart”. Being set apart implies boundaries both from without and from within which must be respected by those whose “setting apart” is to other purposes and responsibilities.

PLEASE PRAY: for unity amongst believers in Israel—for humility, respect and honor towards the gifts and callings of each. For realization that it is the Holy Spirit who makes these distinctions; it is ‘taking too much upon ourselves’ when we criticize or envy them. PRAY ALSO that within the congregations godly discipline be exercised in the love and fear of the LORD. It may be helpful to read the *Book of Jude* in this respect (especially vss 8-11) which prophecies how “rejection of authority” and “speaking evil of dignitaries”—the *rebellion of Korah*—will resurface in latter days. Verses 20-22 address how it must be responded to when it occurs

***Numbers 16:22.** “*Then they fell on their faces, and said, ‘O God, the God of the Spirits of All Flesh, shall one man sin, and You be angry with all the congregation?’*” As we have noted in past readings, throughout the Torah names for God surface whose elements reveal new perspectives on His attributes. This name—*God of the Spirits of all Flesh* will appear again in Numbers 27:15-16, “*Then Moses spoke to the LORD, saying: ‘Let YHVH, the God of the Spirits of All Flesh, set a man over the congregation, who may go out before them and go in before them, who may lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of YHVH may not be like sheep which have no shepherd.’*” This man was, of course, Joshua—“*a man in whom is the Spirit...*” (vs 18).

***Numbers 16:30.** “*But if the LORD creates a new thing, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into Sheol, then you will understand that these men have rejected YHVH.*” Better renderings of the Hebrew word here rendered ‘rejected’ would be “*spurned*”, “*abused*”, “*treated with contempt*”, “*blasphemed.*”

***Numbers 16:48:** “*Then Aaron took the censer as Moses had commanded, and ran into the midst of the assembly; and already the plague had begun among the people. So he put in the incense and made atonement for the people. And he stood between the dead and the living; so the plague was stopped.*” In the midst of a rebellious people, the LORD is searching for those who will “stand in the gap” on their behalf and on behalf of His land (“*So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found no one. Therefore, I have poured out My indignation on them...*” –Ezekiel 22:30). **PLEASE PRAY: For sensitivity and readiness on behalf of God’s Intercessors—willingness, surrender and resolve to share His burden, so as to be released at just the right time to “stand between the dead and the living” (and with discernment to differentiate between the two)—to “make a wall” and stand in the gap so that plague will be stopped.**

***Numbers 17:10.** *“And the LORD said to Moses, ‘Bring Aaron’s rod back before the Testimony, to be kept as a sign against the rebels, that you may put their complaints away from Me, lest they die.’”* “Rebels” is literally *b’nei-meri*—“sons (or children) of bitterness”. Lest we be too quick to distance ourselves from those who fell in Korah’s rebellion and the mutinous disruptions which followed, we should note that in the Hebrew translation of Ephesians 2:1-3, exactly the same words *b’nei-meri* are used to translate “sons of disobedience”—*“And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. But God...*”(Emphasis ours).

***I Samuel 12:21-22:** *“You must not turn aside, for then you would go after futile things which cannot profit or deliver, because they are futile. For the LORD will not abandon His people on account of His great name, because the LORD has been pleased to make you a people for Himself”* (NASB). The word “futile” or “emptiness” is in Hebrew (“*tohu*”) the same word used of the state of the earth (Genesis 1:2) before Elohim began breathing His Life into it (Psalm 33:6).

PLEASE PRAY: For Israeli believers and those who intercede for her, that our faith not be distracted into reasonings which are emptiness and void—but rather that we base our hope and prayers on God’s faithfulness to honor His Name, that we be encouraged in the knowledge that it is “His pleasure” to make Israel a “*people for Himself.*”



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[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week 22-28 June will be *Chukat*—“Ordinance Of” (i.e. the “Red Heifer”): TORAH: Numbers 19:1—22:1; HAFTARAH (Rosh Chodesh *Tamuz*): Isaiah 66:1-24, 23/I Samuel 20:18, 42.]

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