

## *Prayer Update From Israel (June 26, 2013)*



A narrow gorge near SdeBoker in the Negev south of Beer Sheva.

### **1. THE 17<sup>TH</sup> OF TAMMUZ—THE “FAST OF THE FOURTH MONTH”—AND THREE WEEKS “BETWEEN THE STRAITS”.**

*“From the straits I called to Yah. Yah answered me in a wide-open place. The LORD is for me, I shall not fear. What can humankind do to me...All the nations surrounded me. With the LORD’s name I cut them down. They swarmed round me, oh they surrounded me. With the LORD’s name I cut them down...You pushed me hard to knock me down, but the LORD helped me. My strength and my might [song] is Yah, and He has become my rescue [Hebrew: yeshuah—‘salvation’]” (Psalm 118:5-14—Robert Alter translation).*

On June 9<sup>th</sup> we entered into the Hebrew month of *Tammuz*. It is not mentioned in the Bible by this (Babylonian) name—yet most certainly “*the Fast of the Fourth Month*” in Zechariah 8:19 refers to an ancient memorial set within this month to soberly remember the breaching of the walls of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. (II Kings 25:3-4; Jer. 39:2; 52:6-7). The fast, observed originally on the 9<sup>th</sup> of this “Fourth Month”, has since the destruction of the Second Temple been observed on the 17<sup>th</sup>. It falls this year on Tuesday, June 25.

The 17<sup>th</sup> of *Tammuz* marks the beginning of a three-week period (June 25—July 16 this year) ending with the 9<sup>th</sup> of *Av* when the First Temple was actually burned, a period sometimes known as “the Dire Straits” or in Hebrew *Bein haMetzarim*—“between the narrow places”. The expression comes from Lamentations 1:3: “*All her persecutors overtake her in dire straits*” (NKJV), and alludes to terrible things which according to tradition have historically overtaken Jews and Israel itself during this time of the year.

We do indeed believe these three weeks (beginning this evening) to be a time for special sobriety and watchfulness—especially as regards Israel and the seed of Jacob. Yet it is a time attended often attended by unease, dread and superstition—especially as it culminates with the 9<sup>th</sup> of

Av. God has not given us a spirit of fear. We believe it to be a time for stressing the sovereignty and omnipotence of *Elohei-Yisrael*—The God of Israel! Of *Magen-Avraham*—the “Shield of Abraham!” The Earth is the LORD’S—and He is expanding His Kingdom through both space and time! It is a time for believers in Israel to look forward with the spirit of Caleb and Joshua, to ‘take the territory’, and the very giants which loom shall be “*our bread; their protection* [Hebrew: “shadow”] *has departed from them, and YHVH is with us. Do not fear them!*” (Numbers 14:9).

#### **PLEASE PRAY:**

**\*Angelic protection over Israel, over her borders, over the minds and integrity of her leaders during this three-week period.**

**\*Protection over Jews throughout the world during this time.**

**\*For spiritual discernment and integrity over the Body of Messiah in separating the true from the superstitious!**

**\*For the merciful conviction of Jewish hearts during this period by the Holy Spirit (*Ruach haKodesh*) of God—conviction of sin and righteousness and judgment—and revelation of the ONE who came to redeem us from the straits of sin to release us into a place of freedom and life!**

**\*We would strongly recommend praying Psalm 118:5-14 (See beginning of this section)—and Psalm 4:1:**

***“When I call, answer me my Righteousness-God—In a narrow place you have made wideness for me. Grace me and hear my prayer!”***

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#### **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 of June 23-29 is called *Pinchas*—“Phinehas”:**

**TORAH: Numbers 25:10—29:40**

**HAFTARAH ("Haftarah of Affliction"): Jeremiah 1:1—2:3**

(Usual Haftarah: I Kings 18:46—19:21. During the three-week period “between the straits”, two of the normal *Haftarah* portions are replaced by readings calling Israel to sober contemplation of her sin and deserving of severe judgment, of the Love of her God which is calling her to repent and return to Him.)

**\*Numbers 25: 11, 13.** *“Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aharon the Priest has turned back My wrath from the children of Israel, because he was zealous with my zeal among them, so that I did not consume the children of Israel in My zeal...He was zealous for his God, and made atonement for the children of Israel”.* The Hebrew word *kinah* may in Biblical usage be translated either **zeal** (NKJV) or **jealousy** (NASB). *Holy zeal is a burning passionate jealousy on behalf of something or someone good and deeply loved.* It is important to know that the same word when ignited by the flesh refers to mere **envy** (Proverbs 23:17). . David sang of his zeal for **God’s House** (Psalm 69:9) which consumed him, a song which would be found to be prophetic of the Messiah, Who was to come (John 2:17). Zechariah 1:14 records YHVH’s zeal for **Jerusalem**—and Isaiah 9:6-7 speaks of His zeal for **His Son** and the establishment of His **Righteous Kingdom** on Earth. Phinehas was zealous for **“the honor of his God”** (25:11,13 NIV).

**PLEASE PRAY:** For the awakening of a burning zeal, a holy jealousy in believers in Israel for the things of God—based on truth and knowledge (Rom 10:2)—a zeal which will be necessary in turning away God’s wrath so that his people in this later generation are not consumed.

**\*Numbers 26:1-2:** *“And it came to pass, after the plague, that the LORD spoke to Moses and Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, saying: ‘Take a census of all the congregation of the children of Israel from twenty years old and above, by their fathers’ houses, all who are able to go to war in Israel.”*—**Numbers 26:64-65:** *“But among these there was not a man of those who were numbered by Moses and Aaron the priest (Numbers 2) when they numbered the children of Israel in the Wilderness of Sinai. For the LORD had said to them, ‘They shall surely die in the wilderness.’ So there was not left a man of them, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun.”* With the 24,000 who died in the plague brought on by the seduction of the women of Moab, the older generation which had rebelled is finally passed. A new numbering takes place

**\*Numbers 27:16.** *“Then Moses spoke to the LORD, saying ‘Let YHVH, the God of Spirits of all Flesh set a man over the congregation...’*” This name, almost exactly the same as was used in Numbers 16:22, only this time using the personal name YHVH, implies the sovereign knowledge the LORD has of the inner workings of all human beings. It is noteworthy that Moses uses this name in requesting the LORD’s appointment of a new leader—and the Lord responds by referring specifically to the “spirit” within Joshua (27:18).

**\*Numbers 27:18-20:** *“Take Joshua the son of Nun with you, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him; set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation,*

*and inaugurate him in their sight. And you shall give some of your authority, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient.”*

It was not enough that Joshua was skilled and experienced after serving over forty years under Moses' leadership. Something more was necessary; something beyond Moses' natural abilities, something bespeaking the high authority of Heaven had affected the rebellious people in such a way that they had continued to follow and respect him in the desert for 40 years. This particular “authority” (NKJV) of which he was to pass some on to Joshua is Hebrew *hod* –“a grandeur or majesty related to royalty” (“splendor” in Psalm 45:3 NASB); this would result in the congregation listening to and obeying his word. This sovereign enabling for leadership was passed on here by the laying on of hands and public releasing of God's charge (“inaugurating”) into Joshua.

**PLEASE PRAY:** For leaders in the five-fold offices of the Body of Messiah in Israel, that they will be faithful in mentoring and in God's timing “passing on” their mantles to faithful ones God shows them in the generation rising up behind.

**\*Numbers 28:2.** *“Command the Children of Israel, and say to them, ‘My offering, My food for My offerings made by fire as a sweet aroma to Me, you shall be careful to offer to Me at their appointed time.’* Timing is an important aspect of our worship. Ecclesiastes 3:1-11 speaks of times and seasons, and of the necessity of timing in the manifesting of the beauty God desires to bring forth in His creation. Here in Chapters 28-29 are presented anew for the *next generation* the “appointed times” of the LORD: **Daily** (morning and evening), **Weekly** (Sabbaths), **Monthly** (*Rosh Chodesh*—Head of the Month), **Springtime:** *Pesach* (Passover), *Matzot*(Unleavened Bread), *Shavuot* (Weeks, Pentecost); **Fall:** *Yom Teruah* (Feast of Trumpets), *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement), *Sukkot* (Feast of Booths/Tabernacles, containing instructions for each of the eight days)—all these times of the Lord and their relevant offerings are here laid out fresh before His army goes into their new Land.

**\*Jeremiah 2:1-3 (ESV):** *“The word of the LORD came to me, saying, ‘Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem, Thus says the LORD,*

*“I remember the devotion of your youth, your love as a bride, how you followed me in the wilderness, in a land not sown. Israel was holy to the LORD, the firstfruits of his harvest. All who ate of it incurred guilt; disaster came upon them, declares the LORD.”*



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[The readings for next week, 30 June—6 July (Double Reading) will be:

**I. *Matot/Tribes.* TORAH: Numbers 30:1-32:42**

**II. *Massei/Journeys.* TORAH: Numbers 33:1-36:13; HAFTARAH ("Haftarah of Affliction": Jeremiah 2:4-28; + (Ashkenazy Synagogues) 3:4; (Sephardic Synagogues) 4:1-2]**

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