

Prayer Update From Israel (June 9, 2014)



1. AUSTRALIA BREAKS WITH THE INTERNATIONAL STATUS QUO BY REFUSING TO REFER TO EAST JERUSALEM AS “OCCUPIED.”

“The description of East Jerusalem as ‘occupied’ East Jerusalem is a term freighted with pejorative implications which is neither appropriate nor useful. It should not and will not be the practice of the Australian government to describe areas of negotiation in such judgmental language.”—Statement read by Attorney-General George Brandeis in a senate meeting last Wednesday.

In what is being described as a “massive” and “dramatic” shift in Australian policy on Israel since 1967, that country this week publically declared itself in opposition to usage of the phrase “occupied East Jerusalem” in regards to that part of Jerusalem taken by Israeli troops from the Kingdom of Jordan in 1967. Australia’s announcement of its new policy came 47 years to the day after the outbreak of the Six Day War. Although Israel in 1980 declared all of Jerusalem, east and west, as its undivided capital, that designation has by and large remained unrecognized by the international community. It has been argued that since Jordan did not have recognized legal authority over the city (or Judea and Samaria) and came into the 1967 war unprovoked, Israel had a right under international law to displace her in an act of self-defense. But this has not been accepted in the nations, who have generally referred to Israel’s presence there as in violation of international law.

It is not the first time this year that Australia has taken a stance towards Israel contrary to what has come to be expected in the international community. In January her Foreign Minister Julie Bishop caused a stir when, upon hearing Israeli settlements beyond pre-67 lines referred to as “illegal under international law” responded, “I would like to see which

international law has declared them illegal.” This was seen by Palestinian officials as suggesting that an Israeli presence in the areas of Eastern Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria might in some cases have warrant or viability—a notion which is simply not supposed to be voiced these days. Then in May, Australia’s ambassador to Israel Dave Sharma visited Israel’s housing minister Uri Ariel in his East-Jerusalem office—a move again causing an uproar as giving legitimacy to Israel’s maintaining any governmental presence there.

Regarding Australia’s brazen move this week, one newspaper commented, ***“The step cements Australia’s position as one of the Israeli government’s closest friends in the international community”***; observing further that Prime Minister Netanyahu is scheduled later this summer to be the first sitting Israeli prime minister to visit the Australian capital Canberra (“Miffed by Palestinian criticism, Aussies boost pro-Israel stance”: *The Times of Israel*, June 5, 2014, 6:43 pm).

It should be noted that Australia is reportedly one of the ten top donors to the Palestinians, donating about \$50 million in aid to the PA in 2013. ***However, unlike the UN, the EU, and many countries including the US, they did not welcome the recent Palestinian unity government which is backed by Hamas (Ibid.)***

Taking a stand with Israel in this increasingly anti-Zionist age will not be without its consequences, and sharp criticism has been quick in coming. *“It is absolutely disgraceful and shocking that on the 47th anniversary of Israel’s military occupation of the West Bank, and Gaza, Australian Attorney-General George Brandis is issuing such inflammatory and irresponsible statements...Such pronouncements are not only in blatant violation of international law and global consensus, but are also lethal in any pursuit of peace and toxic to any attempt at enacting a global rule of law,”* Such was a part of the response of PLO Executive Committee member and politician Hanan Ashrawi. Saturday came an official rejection by the Jordanian government of the move, adamantly asserting that all territory gained by Israel in the “Six Day War” is considered “occupied territory” by international law. (This ironic, since Jordan herself claimed sovereignty over and occupied all of those territories between 1948 and 1967, a sovereignty never sanctioned by international law.) Interestingly, amid the nebulous “international law” which Israel is accused of violating, no mention is made of the “international law” formulated in San Remo and laid down by the League of Nations in 1922 (and never yet rescinded), giving the Jewish people right to dwell in all the lands between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River.

PLEASE PRAY:

***Blessing on the government of Australia for the stance they have taken against accusing and maligning Israel with a *“term freighted with pejorative implications which is neither appropriate nor useful”*.** It is worth pointing out that in Genesis 12:12 (*“I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you.”*) the Hebrew word for “curse” made against Abraham, which will result in God’s curse (different word) means at its root, “to dishonor” (ESV) or “revile” (NASB, note).

***That God bless those in that government who desire to bless Israel and stand against injustice to her. (It is noteworthy that the country continues financially to assist the**

Palestinian Arab peoples. Pray that that assistance be administered justly and finds its way to the people in need, rather than being rifled by corrupt leaders as is often the case.)

***For protection of those Australian government officials who have made this initiative to stand fairly with Israel—there is already fierce opposition from political forces in that government who disagree. Pray for courage. Pray for young leaders with “Joseph” and “Daniel” mantles to arise in favor to guide that nation on a course whereby it may be blessed.**

***For leaders in wavering nations to be encouraged by the stance of such countries as Australia and Canada—realizing that a “separation” is coming, and the direction their nations go in relation to God’s land and people is being decided now. Those which harden against His covenant land and purposes will bring judgment upon their own lands, causing them to be held back from their own redemptive calls in days ahead.**

2. THE U.N. AND YOM KIPPUR

Recently a letter was sent to all UN member states by Israel’s Ambassador Ron Prosor, to the effect that while there are three major monotheistic religions, only two—Christianity and Islam—are recognized by the UN calendar. There are currently ten official UN holidays; of these, four are religious: Christmas and Good Friday (Christian), and *Eid ad-Fitr* and *Eid al-Adha* (Muslim). Yet things go on as usual at the U.N. on Yom Kippur—the holiest day of the Hebrew Calendar, in which Jews fast, spend the day in confession and contemplation, and are strongly forbidden in their Scriptures to do any work. At times Yom Kippur conflicts with the annual General Assembly of world leaders in September. To recognize it as a holiday would likely require a vote by the UN General Assembly. Prosor reasons, “On the one hand, the United Nations advances values of cooperation and engagement among nations, on the other hand, it is prioritizing one religion over the other. It is about time Jewish employees at the UN won’t be obligated to work on Yom Kippur.

We are encouraged to see this issue coming to the fore. We are aware of work which has been going on for some time at high levels behind the scenes by believers on behalf of bringing this inconsistency to light. Now it is being recognized by Israel herself as a cause which is right and just for her (“Israel seeks to make Yom Kippur a UN holiday”: *ynetnews.com*: 16/05/2014: 21:42).

PLEASE PRAY:

***That in the UN the holiest day of the Hebrew Year (and in a certain sense for all humankind) would be acknowledged, and granted the honor of the other religious holidays it observes.**

***Guidance and favor for Israel’s ambassador to the U.N. Ron Prosor and his associates in formulating a wise and effective strategy for having the guidelines altered. Recently, he asked the 192 other ambassadors to join the campaign by signing a letter, urging the UN to recognize Yom Kippur.**

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 8-14 is called *Sh'lach L'cha*—"Send for Yourself" (i.e. Men to spy out the land of Canaan):

TORAH: Numbers 13:1—15:41

HAFTARAH: Joshua 2:1-24

This week's reading focuses on the 12 spies sent out by Moses at the command of the LORD to spy out the land of Canaan soon after Israel left Mt Sinai. It relates the differing reports which were brought back and the spirits behind those reports. It then recounts the judgment released over the entire adult generation of those who followed the spirit of fear and unbelief. In the *Haftarah*, it is almost 40 years later and spies are once again being dispatched, this time from the next generation and from a different border.

***Numbers 13:16:** *"These are the names of the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land. And Moses called Hoshea the son of Nun, Joshua."*

Hoshea means "Salvation". *Joshua* (in Hebrew pronounced *YehoSHUah*), is a contraction for "**YEHOVAH SAVES**". Over 1500 years later a still-shorter form of that name *Yeshua*, would be given by the angel to Joseph (and in Luke 1:31 to *Miriam*—"Mary", his wife), "...and you shall call His name *Yeshua*, for He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

***Numbers 13:30; 14:6-9:** *"Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, 'Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it.'" "Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh...spoke to all the congregation of Israel, saying: 'The land we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. If the LORD delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, a land which flows with milk and honey. Only do not rebel against the LORD, nor fear the people of the land, for they are our bread; their protection has departed from them, and the LORD is with us. Do not fear them.'"*

It is remarkable that the Hebrew root for the word "war" and that for "bread" are identical (The two-edged sword in the hands of God's warriors (Psalm 149:6) is literally a "many mouthed"

sword to devour His enemies, while the mouths of the warriors themselves are filled with His praise!

***Numbers 13:33.** *“There we saw the nephilim—the sons of Anak came from the nephilim—and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.”*

Nephilim are mentioned by name only one other place in the Bible, Genesis 6:4. It is by no means certain that the spies saw *nephilim*—or in fact that these fearful beings have ever existed on earth since the Flood. II Peter 2:4 appears to be referring to them as having been cast into a place “below the earth” where they were delivered “into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment.” The “parentheses” placed around the statement “*the sons of Anak [giants] came from the nephilim*” in many English translations are not in the Hebrew. We believe it likely that this statement was itself made by the terrified spies—allowing stories from antiquity about the monstrous pre-Flood beings to color their perception of the large people they had actually seen. The author of the Biblical narrative itself only mentions the “children of Anak” (13:22) as had the spies themselves earlier (13:28).

***Numbers 14:24** *“But my servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit in him and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land where he went, and his descendants shall inherit it.”*

PLEASE PRAY against Israelis responding to the giants we face in a spirit of fear...that we realize that if we trust in God, he will not allow the land to devour us. Pray against cynical conversation amongst older believers in the Land about the land devouring those within it; this only serves to discourage and dishearten the generation God wishes to raise up for strength, victory and governance here. Please pray that men and women of “a different spirit” , who “know their God” and have godly insight (Daniel 11:32) would rise up in Israel, not focusing on the giants but trusting in the God who made the heavens, and Who has promised to give us a land flowing with milk and honey in which righteousness dwells.

***Numbers 15:38-40:** *“Speak to the children of Israel: Tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a blue thread in the tassels of the corners. And you shall have the tassel, that you may look upon it and remember all the commandments of the LORD and do them, and that you may not follow the harlotry to which your own heart and your own eyes are inclined, and that you may remember and do all My commandments, and be holy for your God.”*

The “blue” thread in these tassels or fringes (Hebrew: *tzitzit*) was “*tehellet*”, a sky-blue dye thought to have been made from a particular species of snail (For centuries this creature was assumed to be extinct and consequently the colored thread was not placed in the fringes of observant Jews. In the past 20 years this crustacean is believed to have been rediscovered in the Gulf of Aqaba, and along with that discovery, clarification about how to make the dye; now many are again wearing the “sky blue” thread in their “*tzitzit*”!). Much of the specific significance for the fringes and the colored thread remains uncertain—some have suggested that they served as a reminder that because of the “harlotry to which our hearts and our own eyes are inclined” victory in overcoming these inclinations can only be obtained by calling on the Holy

One who dwells in the heavenlies (sky-blue). It was these ‘fringes’ on the garment of Yeshua which the woman with the issue of blood (Mark 5:25, Luke 8:43) touched and “power went out of Him” and healed her.

“And you shall have the tassel, that you may look upon it and remember all the commandments of the LORD and do them, and that you may not follow the harlotry to which your own heart and your own eyes are inclined, and that you may remember and do all My commandments, and be holy for your God.” **Please Pray that Israelis would be convicted of their need to obey God, but also aware of their natural “inclination” against doing so. Pray that they would seek salvation in the One out of whom comes power to be Children of God (John 1:12), to please and draw near to the Father.**

***Joshua 2:12; 2:18: RAHAB:** *“Now therefore, I beg you, swear to me by the LORD, since I have shown you kindness, that you also will show kindness to my father’s house, and give me a true token.”* **SPIES:** *“We will be blameless of this oath of yours which you have made us swear, unless, when we come into the land, you bind this line of scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you bring your father, your mother, your brothers, and all your father’s household to your own home.”*

There is a wonderful picture here. Rahab requests that the spies show her and her family “loving kindness” (Hebrew: *hesed*) and give her a token of “truth” (Hebrew: *emet*). The token of loving kindness and truth (*hesed* and *emet*) is a scarlet thread which, when seen, will protect them from a destruction of judgment soon to come upon all of her wicked nation. When God the Father sent His Light into the world, we are told that although the Torah had been given through Moses, “*Loving kindness and Truth* (Hebrew translation: *hesed and emet*) *came through Yeshua the Messiah*” (John 1:17)—“*in Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of God’s Loving kindness* (Hebrew: *hesed*) (Ephesians 1:7). **Please pray for revelation in Israel regarding the urgent necessity of being saved from the wrath to come—and of the loving kindness and Truth which are offered to those who will put their trust in the finished work of the Messiah! Psalm 33:18-19 says that “the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him and whose yearning hope is in His hesed—to deliver them from death and to keep them alive in famine!”**



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**[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week 15-21 June will be *Korach*—“Korah”:
TORAH: Numbers 16:1—18:32; HAFTARAH: I Samuel 11:14—12:22.]**

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