

Prayer Update From Israel (July 17, 2013)

(8th of Av 5773)



“Like a shepherd He will tend His flock, in His arm He will gather the lambs and carry them in His bosom; He will gently lead the nursing ewes” Isaiah 40:11; From this week’s Haftarah (See below).

1. KATZIR SUMMER YOUTH CAMP, “GEARING UP TO THE NEXT LEVEL”

It’s been around eleven years since *Katzir* (Hebrew: “Harvest”) began evolving into an indigenous work among Israeli youth. It had had its beginnings in the summer of 1996, when the leaders of a youth ministry in Chicago with a vision for encouraging believing Israeli teens in the Lord (while at the same time getting a glimpse of God’s heart for Israel into their own youth’s hearts) began coming each summer with a large group of American young people to join with Messianic youth for several weeks of intense working together. This was a great gift to Israel. Slowly, the movement grew, becoming more and more indigenous, with Israeli leaders catching the vision and strengthening in their support and oversight—until the time when our friends in America knew it was time to draw back and released it to fly on its own. Today it is a powerful influence, holding gatherings at Hanukkah in the Winter, Passover in the Spring, and a week-long camp each summer. Over the years, hundreds and hundreds of Israeli teenagers have been inspired, challenged, equipped through *Katzir*. They have then continued on through the military, out into the workplace; many have married—Yet many are eager to come back and sow into the generations coming up behind.

This Thursday some 90 Israeli teens with 30 mostly young-adult volunteers (many of whom were in the teens’ place themselves a few years back!) will gather in the Galilee. For seven days the camp will be immersed in teaching, worship, field trips and various forms of interaction with their peers. A few years back, young Israeli believers had very few who had ‘gone before’ to whom they might look up to be mentored, challenged, encouraged. But now they are there, sowing seeds drawn from their own experiences, depending on *Ruach haKodesh*—the “Holy Spirit Wind” to breathe His life, protection and purpose into this generation coming up behind.

Nor do they wish to stay at the same speed and place where they were last year—the theme for this year shows a picture of a Formula One racing car, with the challenge, *“Moving it on up into the next gear!”*

PLEASE PRAY:

***That God will make a protected way for everyone He has purposed to participate in the Katzir camp this summer.**

***That angels will watch over the camp—and grant wise guidance, patience and insight to all the leaders (Daniel 9:22).**

***For a guard of protection for the families of all the senior adult and young adult leaders—that they will be free to give themselves fully to this work.**

***That spirits assigned by the enemy to stir up rebellion, anger, or any other devices to distract the young people from Truth and wholeness, would be bound in Yeshua’s/Jesus’ name.**

***That young Israelis present who do not have a living relationship with their Messiah and Saviour Yeshua, would come to know Him in a personal way.**

***That young men and women with the spirit of Joshua and Caleb who resolve to ‘follow the Lord fully’ (Numbers 14:24) will influence their fellows—that those who ‘have insight’ both among the young and the older ones, will be used to instruct many (Daniel 11:33).**

That God will pour out His Spirit of holiness on the Praise and Worship—that He will *“inhabit the praises of (young!) Israel (Psalm 22:3); that He will be *“awesome in praise doing wonders” (Psalm 22:3; Exodus 15:11).*

***That this week-long camp will prepare the way in the heavenlies for the three-day *Elav* (“Unto Him”) conference in Haifa in mid-August, when God will be gathering over 500 Jewish and Arab youth and young adults to minister before Him together!**

2. TUESDAY IS *TISHA B’AV*—“THE NINTH OF *AV*”

Tuesday is the 9th of *Av*, the “Fast of the Fifth Month” mentioned in Zechariah 8:19 and elsewhere. It is perhaps the most somber day of the year in Israel. It commemorates the final destruction of the First Temple—from which the Glory of the Presence had departed because of Israel’s sin. Many other catastrophes (some historically verifiable) from both ancient and modern times are said to have occurred on this date, lending to it an atmosphere of uneasiness and in many people, superstitious foreboding.

At the beginning of the fast, on Monday evening, millions of Jews will read or hear recited the *Book of Lamentations*.

PLEASE PRAY:

*That the *HOLY* Spirit, who was mercifully sent to convict a dull and callous world of “*sin and righteousness and judgment*” would attend the reading and fasting of Jewish people around the world on this day.

*That the Holy Spirit would cut through spirits of religion, fear and superstition which seek to Hold people captive from coming to a clear understanding of the truth.

*That the message of hope in the midst of the anguish of *Lamentations* would find its way with holy illumination into the hearts of those who hear it read, “*The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. ‘The LORD is my portion,’ says my soul, ‘therefore I will hope in him.’ The LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD*” (Lamentations 3:22-26 ESV).

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 14-20 July 2013 is called *V’Et’chanan*—“Supplanted”:

TORAH: Deuteronomy 3:23—7:11

HAFTARAH: Isaiah 40:1-26

TORAH

This week’s is a rich and powerful Reading. In addition to the “preparations and warnings for crossing-over and possessing inheritance” (3:27-28; 4:14, 21-22, 26-28; 6:1), it contains the ‘Ten Commandments’ (5:6-21); the *Shema* “Hear O Israel” (6:4); instructions regarding knowing and memorizing God’s Word within the home, and other often touchingly earnest counsels and admonitions of Moses to the young generation preparing to enter Canaan.

***Deuteronomy 3:28.** *“And charge Yehoshua (Joshua), and encourage him and strengthen him; for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which you will see.”*

PLEASE PRAY: for God to raise up spiritual leaders in Israel—that these be noticed by alert and obedient elders who will *charge, encourage and strengthen* them in the power and direction of their calling—that the new godly generation will love and trust their God, fight the battles necessary and inherit the land.

***Deuteronomy 4:7.** *“For who is the great nation whose gods are near to it the way YHVH our God is to us in all the ways in which we call to Him?”*

***Deuteronomy 4:29-31.** *“But from there [i.e. scattered throughout the world] you [the Hebrew people] will seek YHVH your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul. When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you in the last days, when you turn to YHVH your God and obey his voice, (For YHVH your God is a merciful God), He will not forsake you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them.”*

PLEASE PRAY: For awakening of a powerful longing in the hearts of Jews still in the nations, a longing after the God of their Fathers and faith in this word that He will hear when they turn to Him.

***Deuteronomy 4:43.** *“Betzer in the wilderness on the plateau for the Reubenites, Ramoth in Gilead for the Gadites, and Golan in Bashan for the Manassites.”*

These are Cities of Refuge in land taken by Israel from the Amorites, running along the eastern side of the Jordan River to Mount Hermon, an area once known as the “Land of the Giants” (Deut. 2:20; 3:13), until *Og* the last and greatest was defeated by Israel before crossing over into Canaan (3:3-11). The location of the first two lies within land presently claimed by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (Which modern kingdom came officially into being in 1946); the last is the area of the Golan Heights, taken by Israel from Syria in the 1967 War. Zechariah 10:10 prophesies that someday Jews will return to Gilead and even portions of Lebanon.

PLEASE PRAY: That the Israeli government will sense and move in God’s timetable regarding these lands. That they will not despise the land once taken by Moses and bequeathed to Manasseh (the present Golan), now again under the stewardship of His people in these last days. Pray that this strategic land will not be bartered for a false peace with our neighbors. That it will be protected from the forces of violence in Syria which have recently threatened to invade it. Pray that God’s Kingdom come!—that in His way and timing the LORD of Hosts will bring all of the land promised to his Covenant people into the borders He has ordained.

***Deuteronomy 6:4-5.** *“HEAR! [Hebrew: Shma!] ISRAEL; YHVH OUR GOD, YHVH ONE!”*

There are other “*Hear, O Israel’s*” in Deuteronomy (4:1, 6:3, 9:1, 20:3, 33:7)—but this one has become the central cry of Jews throughout the world for centuries, and continues to be sung each week in Synagogues (including most Messianic ones). It takes revelation, removal of the ‘veil’, for this people to realize that Yeshua (Jesus) being the Son of God (Proverbs 30:4) as well as Son of Man does not violate this proclamation. It is a deep, eternal truth that *He and His Father are ONE!* (John 10:30). Satan hates this truth being voiced—when Yeshua proclaimed it, the religious Jews present took up stones to kill him.

PLEASE PRAY for this revelation of the *one-ness* of the Father and the Son, and that the voice and false message of the Deceiver be silenced in the ears of the Jewish people.

***Deuteronomy 6:5.** “*You shall love YHVH your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.*”

Yeshua quoted this verse in the New Covenant, calling it the First and Greatest commandment (Matthew 22:37-38; Mark 12:29-30). “*All your strength*” is unique in the Hebrew. Rather than a usual expression for “strength”, the word *me’od* is used. Elsewhere in both Biblical and Modern Hebrew *me’od* is an adverb meaning “very.” Webster’s describes the adverb “very” this way: “*In a high degree; to a great extent; extremely; exceedingly; used as a qualifier before an adjective or another adverb.*” Yet here *me’od* or “very” is used as a *noun!* To love our God with all of our very “*veriness*”—in every way, “in a high degree”; “to a great extent”; “extremely”; “exceedingly”.

Only once in the Hebrew Bible is this passage repeated—in reference to the Israelite leader, King Josiah (II Kings 23:25), “*Now before him there was no king like him, who turned to the LORD with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the Torah of Moses, nor after him did any arise like him.*” “With all our heart” implies a tender and humble heart. Significantly, 22:19 reveals that God heard and responded to Josiah “*because his heart was tender, and he humbled himself before the LORD when he heard what he had spoken.*” .

Might we not pray for the current leader of Israel that he will have a softened heart like Josiah which might be pierced when he reads God’s word, something which Prime Minister Netanyahu has on more than one occasion claimed that he does with regularity?

***Deuteronomy 6:6-9.** “*And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them (Literally, “teach them by memory”) diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts (Hebrew: mazuzot) of your house and on your gates.*”

שִׁמְעוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד וְאַהֲבַת אֵת
 יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךָ בְּכֹל לְבַבְךָ וּבְכֹל נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכֹל מְאֹדְךָ וְהָיוּ
 הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אִשְׁרֵי אֲנֹכִי מִצִּדְּךָ הַיּוֹם עַל לְבַבְךָ וּשְׁלֹשָׁתָם
 לְבַלְיָד וְדַבַּרְתָּ בָּם בְּשַׁבְּתְךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְלִמְתְךָ בְּדֶרֶךְ
 וּבְשֹׁמְרֵךָ וּבְקוֹמְךָ וּמְשַׁרְתֶּם לְאוֹת עַל יַדְךָ וְהָיוּ לְטֹעֲפֹת
 בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ וּכְתֻבָתָם עַל מַזְזוֹת בֵּיתְךָ וּבְשַׁעֲרֶיךָ
 וְהָיָה אִם שָׁמַעְתְּמוּ אֵל מְצֻוֹתֵי אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי
 מְצַוֶּה אֲתֶם הַיּוֹם לְאַהֲבָה אֵת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וּלְעִבְדוֹ
 בְּכֹל לְבַבְכֶם וּבְכֹל נַפְשְׁכֶם וּלְחַוֵּי טוֹרֵךְ אֶרֶצְכֶם בְּעֵתוֹ
 יוֹרֵה וּמְטַקֵּשׁ וְאַסַּפְתָּ דָגְרֵךְ וְתִירֹשֶׁךָ וְיִצְהָרְךָ וְנִתְתִי
 עֲלֵיכֶם בְּשַׁבְּתְךָ לְבַהֲמֹתַי וְאִבְלֹת וּשְׂבֻעַת הַשְּׁמַרְוֹ לְכֶם
 פֶּן יִפְתָּה לְבַבְכֶם וּסְרַתֶם וּלְעִבְדֹתֶם אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים
 וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתֶם לָהֶם וְחָרָה אַף יְהוָה בְּכֶם וְעָזַר אֵת
 הַשְּׁמַיִם וְלֹא יִהְיֶה טוֹרֵךְ וְהָאֲדָמָה לֹא תֵתֵן אֵת יְבוּלָהּ
 וְאִבְדֹתֶם מִחַרְתָּ מִעַל הָאָרֶץ הַטְּבֵאָה אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה נָתַן לְכֶם
 וּשְׁמַתֶם אֵת דְּבָרֵי אֱלֹהֵי עַל לְבַבְכֶם וְעַל נַפְשְׁכֶם וּמְשַׁרְתֶּם
 אֲתֶם לְאוֹת עַל יַדְכֶם וְהָיוּ לְטֹעֲפֹת בֵּין עֵינֵיכֶם וּמְשַׁרְתֶּם
 אֲתֶם אֵת בְּלוֹכֶם לְדַבֵּר בָּם בְּשַׁבְּתְךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְלִמְתְךָ
 בְּדֶרֶךְ וּבְשֹׁמְרֵךָ וּבְקוֹמְךָ וּכְתֻבָתָם עַל מַזְזוֹת בֵּיתְךָ
 וּבְשַׁעֲרֶיךָ לְטֹעֵן יְרֵבֹו יִסְיֹכֶם וְיִסִּי בְּיָמֶיךָ עַל הָאֲדָמָה
 אֲשֶׁר נָשַׁבְעַת יְהוָה לְאַבְתָּיִם לֵתֵת לָהֶם כִּי־יִשְׁמִי הַשְּׁמַיִם
 עַל הָאָרֶץ

(Photograph of a Hebrew manuscript of Scripture which would be rolled and placed within a *mazuzah*.)

It is so important to read, learn and memorize God’s word. That is obviously the sense here—the placing of portions about the house as an aid in learning. Every Jewish house has a *mezuzah* on its doorpost. This is a little box with the letter *Shin* on it (Standing for *Shaddai*—“Almighty”) and bearing within a tiny scroll of parchment or paper with words from this passage Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and 11:13-21. Observant Jews touch the *mezuzah* upon entering or leaving a dwelling and then touch their fingers to their lips as a sign of love for the Word. There is certainly nothing in and of itself wrong with this. However, as so often happens with such traditions, for many it has become laden with legalism or superstition. People with no belief whatsoever in the Word or the God who gave it will nevertheless touch a *mezuzah* with the hope of its bringing luck. And there is a distressingly frequent scenario in which a family in anguish over a tragedy taking place within their apartment receives the diagnosis from their rabbi that it befell them because of this or that small imperfection in the way their *mezuzah* had been mounted; or it hadn’t been cleaned; or the scroll within it hadn’t been ‘blessed’ properly. Such unscriptural, unfeeling legalism crushes the spirit of those religious Jews trying to do right and brings down the fury and contempt of secular Jews, driving them even further away from the God of their Fathers.

PLEASE PRAY: For Israelis to return to the Word of God; that they will embrace it, and that the Holy Spirit will awaken its life within them. Pray against occult and legalistic deception regarding the Living Word. Pray for Jews to investigate the God-breathed pages of the New Covenant as well as the Old!

HAFTARAH

Shabbat Nachamu

****Isaiah 40:1-2, 9. “Comfort You (plural), Comfort You My people!’ says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem...You who bring good tidings to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, ‘Here is your God!’”***

The Sabbath immediately following the 9th of Av is sometimes called *Shabbat Nachamu*—“The *Comfort You Sabbath*”—after the first words of Isaiah 40 which are read that day. From this Sabbath until *Rosh Hashanah* (5 September this year), the seven readings from the Prophets will be taken from Isaiah, focusing like a balm upon the *comfort* and *love* which God has for His people. **PLEASE PRAY** that Israel’s ears will be opened to the Voice of Good News coming from her Father. **Pray that the voice of the bearer of Good News to Zion (Meveseret Tzion) will be released strong and clear from high places around the Holy City!**

***Isaiah 40:11.** “*He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those who are with young.*” **PLEASE PRAY** for revelation and dreams amongst Jews regarding the One who said, “*I am the good shepherd; and I know my sheep, and am known by My own. As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep*” (John 10:14-15).

***Isaiah 40:26.** “*Lift up your eyes on high, and see who has created these things, Who brings out their host by number; He calls them all by name, by the greatness of His might and the strength of His power; not one is missing.*” **PLEASE PRAY** that Israelis remember God’s word to Abraham our father, how “*He brought him outside and said, ‘Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.’ And He said to him, ‘So shall your descendants be.’*” (Gen. 15:5)...that they realize WHO is the “Word” referred to in Psalm 33:4-6 who made all these, “*For the Word of the LORD is right, and all His work is done in truth. He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD. By the Word of the LORD the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.*”



***Martin and Norma Sarvis
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[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week 21-27 July will be *Ekev*—“In consequence of” (the Children of Israel heeding God’s judgments): TORAH: Deuteronomy 7:12—11:25; HAFTARAH: Isaiah 49:14—51:3.]

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