

## **PRAYER UPDATE FROM ISRAEL (July 18, 2011)**



*A narrow gorge near Sde Boker in the Negev south of Beer Sheva.*

### **1. 17<sup>th</sup> OF TAMMUZ—BEGINNING OF THREE WEEKS “BETWEEN THE STRAITS”**

This Tuesday, July 19<sup>th</sup>, is a “fast day” for observant Jews (the Fast of the Fourth Month in Zechariah 8:19) commemorating the breaching of the walls of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 586 BC. The period between this day and the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av when the Temple was destroyed (9 August this year) has come sometimes to be called “*Bein haMetzarim*” (“Between the straits”, found in Lamentations 1:3 “*All her persecutors overtake her between the dire straits.*”) because of many calamities purported to have occurred to Jews through history during this period. Traditionally, there are no Hebrew weddings, Bar Mitzvahs, and other celebrations during this period. It is indeed a time calling for especial watchfulness over Israel and Jews in the nations.

On this day (Tuesday 19 July this year), observant Jews read a special passage from the Torah, Exodus 31:11-14; 34:1-10 (related to God’s mercies after, according to a Hebrew tradition, Moses, on this date came down Mount Sinai, saw the revelry round the Golden Calf and in a fury broke the first tablets of stone). There is also a special *Haftarah* : Isaiah 55:6—56:8, which begins, “***Seek the LORD while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.***”

### **PLEASE PRAY:**

\*Pray that Israel be protected from evil seeking occasion to be released against her during these three weeks. Pray for believers to have discernment to divide between the necessary, sober awareness and watchfulness of God, and false superstitions which influence and govern many

Israelis during this time: **“Guide me in Your truth and teach me for you are my Salvation-God and in You I have hoped all day long”** (Psalm 25:5).

\*Psalm 118:5: **“Out of the strait (metzar) I called to Yah (the LORD). Yah answered me in a wide-open place.”**

\*For Israel—the People: to be brought into the wideness, the fullness that God has for them—and to survive the narrows she must traverse until then. **“Narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life”** (Matthew 7:14). Yeshua came that His people might come into fullness of joy (John 15:11; 16:24).

\*For Israel—the Land: to come into the wideness which God has ordained. At present it is too narrow to adequately nurture the Jews God has brought from the nations thus far; yet she is under constant pressure from the nations to become narrower still. **“Enlarge the place of your tent; stretch out the curtains of your dwellings, spare not; lengthen your cords and strengthen your pegs. For you will spread abroad to the right and to the left”** (Isaiah 54:2-3).

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## 2. PROVOCATIVE ADS IN ISRAELI MEDIA

The following enormous (15” x 11”) dwarfed a “Sports” page in the first section of Friday’s *Jerusalem Post* (July 15, 2011, p.11). To the right is the same ad appearing last week in the Hebrew newspaper *HaAretz*.



The ad is sponsored by a leading “Anti-Missionary” organization in Israel. It begins, **“Messianic Jews’ Are Pulling the Wool Over Our Eyes!”** This is followed by phrases drawn from four public figures, all very dated, and pulled out of context and presented to serve the purpose of the sponsors in presenting Messianic Judaism in a negative light. The add ends, **“Messianic Jews’ try to entrap Jews by distributing material in the mail and by sponsoring concerts and street performances. The time has come to pass a law that halts**

**the missionaries' destructive activities. Join the struggle!"** – followed by a website and telephone number of the sponsors. The website, reporting on purported responses to its present campaign, claimed that “many callers gladly added their names to a petition...calling on the Knesset to amend the anti-missionary law so that it forbids all missionary activity (and not just that among minors or involving financial inducements to convert).” Ironically, a slogan at the top of its page reads “We don’t give up on even a single Jew.” The “wool” which this organization and others like it pull over the eyes of Israelis is the falsehood that Jews who believe in Yeshua (Jesus) as their Messiah and Savior are no longer Jews. No such accusations are leveled on those of Hebrew lineage who follow the teachings of an Eastern religion, of New Age, of the supposed “Messiah” Shneerson (deceased), or who (like millions of Israelis) believe nothing at all. But one who believes in Yeshua, even if born in Israel of Holocaust survivor parents, is automatically no longer a Jew, but a dangerous person, seeking to “steal the souls” of those who are.

We have seen whole-page ads taken out by certain religious sects in the past to promote their beliefs. However, apart from the effect the content of these adds may have on their readers, it is troubling that such a publication as *HaAretz*, a left-wing paper which prides itself on its stand on behalf of civil rights, would lower itself to permitting within its advertisements such adds, which blatantly vilify, disparage and accuse a particular group of Israelis who serve honorably in the nation’s military and are exemplary citizens in its work force . In some ways such ads bear disturbing resemblances to those which began appearing in certain European countries 80 years ago accusing ALL Jews of having ulterior motives, of seeking to “entrap”, of “destructive activities”.

On a positive note...at least now, the name Messianic Jew (Hebrew: *Yehudim Meshikhim*), is being used within public media even by such organizations (albeit within quotation marks), as that which purchased the ad. This title has not always been allowed in most of the media. Then, in 2008 a young Messianic Jew in Ariel discovered a “Purim gift” on the landing of his family’s apartment. The gift turned out to be a powerful bomb which ignited when he picked it up. Miraculously, this young man has survived. Eventually, it came to light that the perpetrator had been an Orthodox Jewish man, one since alleged to have been associated with one of these same prominent “Anti-Missionary” organizations about which we are writing. Yet, through the many articles which came out as a result of this atrocity, an opening was made in many Israeli papers for articles to appear describing who the Messianic Jews are and what they believe. Today, most of the Israeli secular press has begun to make use of this title (without quotations marks); thus helping more and more citizens to become aware of their presence.

#### **PLEASE PRAY:**

**\*That God will bring these accusations to nothing, make these plans of no effect (Psalm 33:10)**

*\* “Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Yeshua” (Acts 4:29-30). Pray for Divine direction and strategy for Israeli Jewish believers as persecution from the “religious” sector increases.*

*\* “For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge”* (Romans 10:1). **Pray for revelation of the knowledge of Messiah will come into the Orthodox Jewish community, including the ranks of the “anti-missionaries”. Pray that Messianic Jews and Gentile believers in the land would be granted a supernatural love for these people, while not being intimidated by them.**

*\* “And I will dwell in your midst. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you...Be silent, all flesh, before the LORD, for He is aroused from His holy habitation!”* (Zechariah 2:11b, 13). **Pray that eyes will be opened to the many places where Yeshua is present in the Hebrew Bible...and that Jews will realize that it is the LORD they seek to serve Who sent Him.**

**\*That a law banning sharing one’s Faith in Messiah Yeshua with other Jews will not be passed.**

**\*That the Israeli press will not be intimidated by Orthodox anti-freedom of religion organizations and will not allow in their advertising sections large ads vilifying other Jews.**

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### **3. SUMMER “KATZIR” YOUTH CAMP ENDS TUESDAY EVENING...BUT WHAT HAS BEEN WORKED IN THE YOUTH WILL LIVE ON**

The Camp for 65 Israeli teens comes to an end tomorrow (Tuesday) evening with a special presentation at a large Hebrew congregation in Tel Aviv.

#### **PLEASE PRAY:**

*\*For everything God desires to release in and through the camp will be released before its close.*

*\*For protection during this last evening and morning from any attacks of the enemy.*

*\*Joy and success for all in putting on the special presentation Tuesday evening—physical protection in traveling to the venue in Tel Aviv and home afterwards for all the youth and counselors.*

*\*That the Spirit would be poured out on the meeting.*

*\*That truth released into the hearts of the young people will find a secure place in their hearts and be illuminated and clarified by light from the Holy Spirit in weeks after the camp.*

*\*For all of the 25 young adults who took part as counselors. For the first time, there were a large number of couples attending this year.*

*\*For the senior leaders and overseers, especially for Eitan and Connie Shishkoff whose daughter went into the Army this week; after overseeing this huge work, Eitan must leave immediately for speaking engagements in the States.*

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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 17-23 July is called *Matot* ("Tribes"):**

**TORAH: Numbers 30:1—32:42**

**HAFTARAH: Jeremiah 1:1—2:3**

**\*Numbers 30.** Vows to the LORD and Oaths were extremely serious transactions in God's eyes; these words, coming out of the mouth of a person and binding his or her very soul must be honored by all humankind, who were made in His image (vss. 2, 6). They were binding absolutely on all males (30:2). Yet within the authority structure God had set up, there were certain circumstances in which the positioning of a human father or husband could (as with the divine Father/Husband of which they are a reflection) allow release of a special grace to cover the guilt of a young daughter living at home or of a wife, the protection and oversight of both for which God held the father or husband ultimately responsible. Thus, if a father, on the day he heard of a vow his daughter had made, deemed it unwise, he could overrule her and the LORD would forgive her (30:5). Similarly, on the day a husband became aware of his wife's vow, if he believed it unwise, he might choose to overrule (NKJV: Hebrew verb: *lehani*) and make void (NKJV: Hebrew verb: *lehaphir*) the vow which she took ***"and what she uttered with her lips, by which she bound her soul, and the LORD will forgive her."*** It is interesting that both of these Hebrew verbs are used in Psalm 33:10, ***"The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing (Hebrew: *lehaphir*); He makes the plans of the peoples of no effect"*** (Hebrew: *lehani*). **Here also, faulty counsel is cancelled out in an ultimate mercy.**

***"But if he does make them void after he has heard them, then he shall bear her iniquity"*** (30:15). In a holy sanctuary built and maintained by fallen man, the House of Levi were called to ***"bear the iniquity"*** of that sanctuary. (Numbers 18:1,23), and Aaron and his descendants would ***"bear the iniquity"*** of his priesthood. There was a special grace given to those in these positioning—if the rest of the Israelites came near to the tabernacle of meeting, they would ***"bear***

*their sin and die.*” Likewise, it appears here that a measure of this grace was given to a man in his role of “priest” or “Levite” over his home. Ultimately, just as there was goat slain for sin on the Day of Atonement, but another was necessary to be taken to the wilderness to **“bear on itself all their iniquities...”** (Leviticus 16:22), so would come One who would offer Himself a sacrifice for sin—the ***Lamb of God who bears away the sin of the world.***

**\*Numbers 31:1-2.** ***“And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ‘Take vengeance on the Midianites for the children of Israel. Afterward you shall be gathered to your people.’”***

It is important in reading the grim even shocking events of the first half of this chapter, to realize Who had issued the order. In Psalm 94:1 the LORD (YHVH) is twice called *El-Nekamot*—literally, **“Vengeances-God.”** Isaiah 61:2 speaks of the Spirit’s anointing to proclaim *“the day of the vengeance of our God”* as well as to *“comfort all who mourn”*. II Thessalonians 1:8 prophecies a Day when Yeshua will be revealed from Heaven with mighty angels *“in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord, Yeshua the Messiah.”* Rom 12:17-20 cautions against believers taking their own revenge for perceived offenses, quoting Deuteronomy 32:35, *“‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the YHVH”*. Hebrews 10:30 quotes this same verse from the Torah as relevant to those who “know Him” today. It is his and not ours, yet Psalm 149:7 makes clear that “Saints” will on occasion be used to *“execute [His] vengeance on the nations.”* It is obviously this, the righteous vengeance of God which is being released through His people in Numbers 31. *“It is appointed for men to die once...”* (Hebrews 9:27). The time was at hand for these Midianites, including the women who had *“caused the children of Israel...to trespass against the LORD”* (Numbers 31:16)—even as they were preparing to cross into the Promised Land.

**\*Jeremiah 2:2-3.** ***“I remember you, the kindness of your youth, the love of your betrothal, when you went after Me in the wilderness, in a land not sown. Israel was holiness to the LORD, the firstfruits of His increase. All that devour him will offend; Disaster will come upon them,’ says the LORD.”***

In this week’s Torah Portion, the young generation mentioned above has defeated the giants, been delivered from cursings, and the uncleanness manifest by the Midianites has been cut off and purged away. The mantle has been passed from Moses to Joshua, and after a last recounting by Moses of all which has happened (Deuteronomy), they will be ready to cross over into that which was promised. They have been nurtured by the example of Joshua and Caleb who were of a ‘different Spirit’ and have “gone after their God the wilderness”; the delight of their God is in them, and at this time, they are returning that love. Victory is behind and before them as they march forward under His banner of Love.



*Martin and Norma Sarvis*  
*Jerusalem*

**[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week 24-30 July 2011 will be *Massei* (“Journeys”): TORAH: Numbers 33:1—36:13; HAFTARAH: Jeremiah 2:4-28; 3:4; 4:1-2.]**

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