

Prayer Update From Israel (September 3, 2013)

תרועה יום

ד'תשע

(Yom T'ruah/Rosh HaShanah 5774)



L'Shana Tova!

“For a Happy New Year!”

1. IN WARS AND RUMOURS OF WAR, ‘ISRAEL, PREPARE TO MEET YOUR GOD!’

What sort of effective warfare strategy ever sought to publically assure its enemies that an eminent attack (albeit with Cruise missiles) would be “discreet?” Yet a headline in one Israeli Friday morning paper read: **“White House says response to Syrian use of chemical weapons will be ‘discreet and limited.’”** “Discreet” may mean “careful and measured in one’s actions”—but of course the idea the word brings to most people’s minds is “politeness”, or (as with one definition in the *ODE*) care and prudence exercised “in order to avoid embarrassment.” The confusion displayed by western nations this week in their bid to respond punitively to the Assad regime for using weapons of mass destruction against its own people has indeed been embarrassing; it has also spoken loud and clear of the disarray which might be expected when other countries than Syria choose to “cross red lines.” What a scenario: first, America is to quickly lead a coalition in attacking Syria; her usual No. 1 ally the U.K. weighs in (via her Prime Minister) as a strong partner in the attack. But, then the British Prime Minister is astoundingly undercut by his government, which declares it will not allow Britain to join in such an attack. The UN will not sanction an attack. Various other western European countries vow to stand behind America—but not to the extent that they will join in a military exercise unless there is an internationally-sanctioned coalition. Russia and Iran warn against an attack; Iran and Syria go so far as to threaten Israel if one is launched. Shi’ite supporters of Assad and his Shi’ite-derivative Alawite sect (Iran, Hezbollah) gloat over the perceived disarray of Britain and the US;

supporters of the Sunni-dominated rebel forces in Syria (Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey) voice exasperation that the West is holding back on an all-out assault. Then Mr. Obama stuns even his top-aides by deciding not to exercise his Presidential powers to launch an attack; instead sending the issue to the Congress (which won't be back in session until nine days later)—although the President is reported as saying that he might still choose to exercise what he considers his option even if Congress votes against an attack.

For its part, Israel bolstered its anti-missile defenses about the country, called up a number of reserves and strengthened its army in the north. And waited. There has been little real panic here—pictures beamed around the world of seemingly terrified Israelis cueing up for gas masks were misleading; the masks have been available all along and many got them. The ones who foolishly waited find themselves in long lines; but any irritability is as much Israeli impatience at being in long lines on a hot Mid-Eastern summer day as it is 'panic'.

But there are deeper concerns. A serious question is having to be asked here. Can a country which has continually pressured Israel not to attack Iran's nuclear facilities, with assurances that should Iran cross certain "red lines" that country will respond forcibly to destroy the facilities before they can be used to produce the weapons—can such an assurance be counted upon if that same country doesn't respond as promised to Syria when it crosses *its* red lines with weapons of mass destruction, actually using them to kill over a thousand of its own people. Israeli Minister Naftali Bennett voiced it this way, "*The international stuttering and hesitancy on [a] Syria [strike], just proves once more that Israel cannot count on anyone but itself. From Munich 1938 to Damascus 2013 nothing has changed. This is the lesson we ought to learn from the events in Syria*" ("Weak world response on Syria boosts chance of strong Israeli action on Iran": JPOST.com, 1 Sept 2013, 19:30 IST).

It is true that Israel is having to learn yet again that she cannot count on anyone else for her security—but neither is it true that can she find that security in "herself." ***"It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes."* (Psalm 118:8-9)** In a strange side-story, an Israeli communications company successfully launched a state of the art satellite this past Saturday night. The name of the satellite is ***Amos 4*** (The company has previously launched satellites named *Amos 2, Amos 3 and Amos 5*). We don't have any idea for whom "Amos" is named, nor the significance of the "4". But the fourth chapter of the prophet Amos in the Hebrew Bible builds to a climax in verse 12, ***"Therefore thus will I do to you, O Israel; because I will do this to you, Prepare to meet your God, O Israel!"***

PLEASE PRAY:

***That *Sar Tzevah YHVH*—the "Captain of the Armies of the LORD" will dispose His forces to bring about justice in Syria and to protect the people there called by His name. That the armies of man will not be able to destroy or disrupt His redemptive plans for that people and nation and the nations surrounding it.**

***For life and courage and insight and hope for the Body of Messiah in Syria. This week Pope Francis called on believers across the world of whatever branch of the Faith to join in a day of prayer and fasting for Syria.**

***For President Obama as he ponders action against Syria—pray for godly counselors, and that he and the U.S. Congress will act only in the wisdom and counsel of the Lord regarding military action in Syria.**

***Psalm 25:22. “Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his narrow straits.”**

***As one of our Jerusalem Pastors wrote earlier this week, pray that Israeli believers “should not pray out of excitement, or be animated by our emotions or flesh, or even let our prayers be guided mostly by the newspaper headlines...that we be led by His Spirit, that we might pray what is strategic to Him.”**

***That Israel be led to “prepare to meet her God”...and that believers in the land be guided in showing their brothers and sisters the way.**

Yom T’ruah/Rosh HaShanah 5774

2. THURSDAY [BEGINNING SUNDOWN WEDNESDAY] IS THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS AND THE ROSH—“HEAD” OF THE HEBREW YEAR 5774.

“Speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing [of shofars--rams’ horns], a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work; and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD’” (Leviticus 23:23-25; see also Numbers 29:1-6).

Thursday marks the beginning of the Biblical Fall Feasts—*Yom T’ruah*, the Day of Blowing (of *Shofars*)—the Feast of Trumpets. It has also come to be known as *Rosh Hashanah*, the “Head of the [civil] Year”. Although Hebrew months are numbered beginning in the Spring (Exodus 12:2), the numbering for the Hebrew year changes on the first of the seventh month, *Yom T’ruah* [According to Hebrew tradition, the world was created on this day]. This week we enter the Hebrew year **5774**.

***Of first importance, it is to be a day of t’ruah as a memorial** (see Scripture above). *T’ruah* means a *shout*, a *cry*, an *alarm*, a *blast or series of blasts on the shofar* (ram’s horn). Psalm 33:3 says that musicians are to make *t’ruah* skillfully on their instruments together with singers singing a new song! Suffice to say that it is a day on which a ‘sound’ is to go up memorializing the greatness and faithfulness of YHVH, the LORD!

*** The sound of the *shofar* also speaks of the Source of our redemption.** It was through a ram caught in a thicket by its *horn* (from whence is made a *shofar*) that God “provided the lamb” to take the place of Isaac on Mount Moriah (Genesis 22:13-14). We believe that it is this relation to the “Lamb of God who carries away the sin of the world”, who “defeated Death”, who came to “undo the works of the Evil One,” which gives the *shofar* its special authoritative power when

blown in the timing and under the anointing of the Holy Spirit! The sound can be an alarm, a call to battle, a sound of victory, rejoicing and celebration. There were *shofar* blasts from heaven as the YHVH descended upon Mount Sinai to meet with Moses and deliver instruction regarding His Law and how His people could draw near to Him (Exodus 19:16, 19). I Corinthians 15:52 (Hebrew translation) speaks of one *Final Shofar* when the dead in Messiah will be raised and those remaining changed in the twinkling of an eye.

***It is a joyous holiday in Israel**, beginning this year at sundown September 4th, a family-and-friends time of wine and feasting, of giving gifts, of sounding the shofar, of eating apples dipped in honey and wishing each other “*L’Shana Tova!*” – a good year!

***However, with the joy there is to be a certain sobriety**—it is to be a sabbath for taking account, for becoming awake and alert, a day of remembrance but also for looking forward to the Day of Atonement nine days later. As such, it is sometimes referred to as *Yom HaDin*—the Day of Judgment. These ten days are considered “Days of Awe”. We take account of our sins. Many devout Jews partake of an ancient custom called *Tashlikh*—the “casting” or “throwing”. They go to a body of water and empty their pockets or throw stones into the water, repeating the final three verses from the prophet Micah, “*Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in lovingkindness. He will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. You will give truth to Jacob and lovingkindness to Abraham, which You have sworn to our fathers from days of old.*” **PLEASE PRAY: For revelation to Jews during this holy season by the Spirit who was sent to convict of sin and righteousness and judgment—revelation of the One in whom “truth and lovingkindness” were realized (John 1:17)—in whose work God pardons our iniquity and passes over our transgression!**

***Thursday also begins the seventh Hebrew month—Tishri.** In earlier times, the name *Ethanim* was used (I Kings 8:2). *Ethanim* is related to the word *Ethan*, which has to do with steadiness, as an “unwavering flame” or “a steady flow”. Brown-Driver-Briggs (P 250 #388) interprets it in this context as “*a month of steady flow*”. There are presently many forces, both outside of and within Christendom which are working to fragment the Body of Messiah regarding its God-ordained call to bless and stand with Israel and to pray for the Peace of Jerusalem. **PLEASE PRAY: that in this month of new beginnings the Lord bring our streams into a steady flow of constancy. That He focus the prayers of His watchmen and watchwomen into a steady truthful flame—until Jerusalem’s righteousness ignites and “goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a torch which burns” (Isaiah 62:1).**

This week there are special readings in the synagogues on the first and second days of *Rosh HaShanah*:

Day I

(5 September)

TORAH

Genesis 21:1-34
Numbers 29:1-6

HAFTARAH

I Samuel 1:1—2:10
(Rosh Chodesh-Tishrei); Numbers 28:1-15

Day II

(6 September)

TORAH

Genesis 22:1-24
Numbers 29:1-6

HAFTARAH

Jeremiah 31:1-20

***Genesis 22 relates the story of the binding of Isaac on Mount Moriah. “And Abraham said, ‘My son, God sees for Himself (or, “will Himself provide”) the lamb.’”** In the New Covenant (John 8:56), Yeshua declares, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad!” **PLEASE PRAY**: for the Holy Spirit to release revelation into the spirits of many who hear anew the story of Isaac and the “lamb”. **Pray that with the sounding of the shofars, many will be quickened in their inner beings as to the identity of the Lamb which God provided!**

***Jeremiah 31:3. “Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you. Again I will build you, and you shall be rebuilt, O virgin of Israel!”** Although in Messiah all may receive of these blessings, this message was and is first of all over the lost tribes of the House of Israel. **PLEASE PRAY** for Jews throughout the world to hear this call of Love and allow themselves to be drawn. Pray for those both within and outside of Israel to realize that a work has been accomplished by God Himself whereby they may again be called “virgin” and what has been broken down may again be made whole!

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 weekend 7 September is called *Ha'azinu*—"Give Ear!":

Torah: Deuteronomy 32:1-52

Haftarah (*Shabbat Shuvah*—"Sabbath of Return"):

Hosea 14:2-10, Micah 7:18-20, Joel 2:15-27

***The Sabbath falling between *Yom T'Ruah* ("Day of Sounding the Shofar") and *Yom Kippur* ("Day of Atonement") is called *Shabbat Shuvah*—"Sabbath of Return" because the special Haftarah used on that day begins with Hosea 14:2, "*Return O Israel*".**

The Torah Portion this weekend is comprised of what is often called the *Song of Moses* (The song recorded in Exodus 15 after crossing the Red Sea is more often known as the *Song of the Sea*). It is a song of testimony which God gave to Moses to teach to the Children of Israel, who in turn were to teach it to their children after they had crossed into Canaan. Perhaps it is portions of this song which are prophesied in Revelation 15:2-4 as someday being sung with the *Song of the Lamb*. This song contains some of the grimmest promises in Scripture of the consequences awaiting the descendants of those standing before Moses when they choose to go away from the Life-God. But it must be seen in a context of the merciful God calling out to Israel two chapters earlier (30:19-20): "*Choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; that you may love YHVH your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which YHVH swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.*"

***Deuteronomy 32:3-4.** "*For the name of YHWH I proclaim, give greatness to our God! The Rock, whole-and-perfect are his deeds, for all his ways are just. A God steadfast, (with) no corruption, equitable and upright is he*" (Everett Fox Translation).

This word "rock" (Hebrew: *Tzur*—a rock, a cliff, a fortress) is used over *six times* in this song: It is one of the attributes of God's greatness (vs. 4); a source of oil/anointing (vs. 13b); the source of Jerusalem's salvation (vs. 15b); the One from whom Israel was actually birthed (vs. 18); the source of strength for victory in warfare (vs. 30). In verse 13a the rock (a different Hebrew word) is a source of honey or sweetness.

Deuteronomy 32:7a, 9a, 10-14.** "*Remember the days of old...For the LORD's portion is His people...He found him...encircled him...instructed him...guarded him...led him...made him ride on heights...made him suckle honey from the rock..." **PLEASE PRAY: That Jacob "remember the days of old..."

***Deuteronomy 32:21b.** *“But I will provoke them to jealousy by those who are not a nation; I will move them to anger by a foolish nation.”* In Romans 10:19 and 11:11-15, Paul quotes this verse as actually being related to salvation coming to the Gentiles and eventually, through Israel’s jealousy precipitating her own restoration, which will in turn release “life from the dead” throughout the world. **PLEASE PRAY: For the light and truth of Messiah among Gentiles to be seen and to awaken in Jewish consciousness a jealousy, a holy longing, which will draw them back to the Truth.**

Deuteronomy 32:36, 43b.** *“For the LORD will judge His people and have compassion on His servants when He sees that their power is gone, and there is no one remaining, bond or free...He will provide atonement for His land and His people.”* Salvation has always come by Grace through Faith. It is according to His mercy that He saves us. It is interesting here that in the Hebrew the last line of this poem reads literally, ***“and will atone His land His people.” There is no “and” between the Land and the People, they are *together—indivisible—ONE*. The eternal Covenant God made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their seed is forever connected with a certain portion of the earth (*adama*) which He has created. The people are “His”—this particular portion of the earth He had created is His—He has sovereignly determined that they be and remain together. The people sinned; the land was polluted and expelled them. Only God could provide the necessary atonement to cleanse the Land, and the People—and to bring them together again. The people are not yet all clean, they have not all been reunited with the Land. But the *atonement* has been made. The word for atonement here is that from which *Yom Kippur* takes its name—a holy covering. **PLEASE PRAY: For light from above to illumine these words—that Jews, as they experience Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement this year, will gain understanding that the LORD has “judged His people”—has “had compassion on His servants”, and that He has “made atonement for His Land—His People”—and not for them only but for all His world!**

***Hosea 14:1-2.** *“O Israel, return to the LORD your God, for you have stumbled because of your iniquity; Take words with you, and return to the LORD. Say to Him, ‘Take away all iniquity; Receive us graciously, for we will offer the sacrifices of our lips.’”*

***Joel 2:12-13.** *“ ‘Now, therefore,’ says the LORD, ‘Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.’ So rend your heart, and not your garments; Return to the LORD your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness; and He relents from doing harm.”*

***Joel 2:18.** *“Then the LORD will be zealous for His land, and pity His people.”*

***Micah 7:18-20.** *“Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in lovingkindness. He will again have compassion on us and will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. You will give truth to Jacob and mercy to Abraham, which You have sworn to our fathers from days of old.”*



*Martin and Norma Sarvis
Jerusalem*

[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week 8-14 September (Yom Kippur): TORAH: Leviticus 16:1-34; HAFTARAH: Isaiah 57:14—58:14; Book of JONAH]

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