

Israel Prayer Letter

November / December 2011

Dear friends of Israel

Changes in the countries surrounding Israel take place in rapid succession. In Lebanon the terrorist organization Hezbollah strengthens its grip on southern Lebanon more and more. Syria gains more and more influence in Lebanon itself, while the power of Iran is increasing in the whole area. Jordan is heading for the same road as Egypt, where under the pressure of a furious population a cold peace is turning into the hate of former times. Turkey, which until recently used to be a friendly trade partner with good diplomatic relations, is becoming more and more hostile. War rhetoric is the order of the day. The terrorist organization Hamas keeps the population of Gaza in its grip, and week after week fires rockets into the south of Israel. One needs only to click the websites of the several terrorist organizations, of some political parties and of the state-controlled newspapers in the above-mentioned countries. Then we are reminded of Psalm 83 verse 5: *"Come, they say, 'let us destroy them as a nation, so that Israel's name is remembered no more.'"*

For that reason, in this prayer letter you will find much intercession for Israel's soldiers, for the Israeli Defense Force Tzahal. It is remarkable that intercessors from different parts of the country have asked me to give extra attention to this. I feel this as inspiration from the Holy Spirit, to which I want to listen.

Psalm 83 verse 5 gives a reply: *"With one mind they plot together; they form an alliance against you."* Do these people that surround the Jewish state of Israel really think that they can bring to naught God's plans for Israel's restoration? Psalm 2 gives a clear answer to that, find and read it for yourselves. The same applies to many passages of Scripture, referred to in this letter. Because real intercession does not spring from information, but from a relationship - a relationship with Jesus, the living Word. A relationship with the Bible, the Word of God.

"I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem."

Pieter Bénard, prayer coordinator.

THE NATIONS / EUROPE

In our days we see the threat of Nazism before and during World War II, and the threat of Communism after that war, repeated in the threat of Islam to the continued existence of the Jewish state of Israel. For Jewry world-wide, humanism poses a great danger: of assimilation, merging into the nations. Still God has set them apart as a people, and with this He has his purposes. Especially in this time of restoration of His people to His land. Read Ezekiel chapter 36, it contains forty promises and actions of God. Up to verse 16 it speaks of the land, from verse 16 of the people in the land. It also beautifully describes how physical restoration is followed by spiritual restoration. And the fact that God sanctifies His name, by bringing His people back to the land promised to them, for all the nations to see.

Also read Numbers 23:9b, Deuteronomy 7:6-9 and 26:17-19, about being set apart, being God's own people. Pray for the nations, for governments and parliaments. We live in exciting days, where a nation's voting policy in the United Nations, concerning Jerusalem and Israel, may decide the future of that nation. So a great responsibility rests on any head of state. Zechariah 1:12-17.

- Pray for Israel: *"Come, house of Jacob, let us walk in the light of the LORD."* (Isaiah 2:5). So that Isaiah chapters 60, 61 and 62 will be fulfilled. *Nations will come to your light... to you the riches of the nations will come... The nations will see your vindication.* Pray that we as intercessors will learn to look at the world as though from Jerusalem, and not primarily from the place where we live.
- Thank God for the manifold promises for the nations - only they run through Jerusalem, not through New York, Rome or Geneva. Isaiah 2:1-5.

ALIYAH

- Thank God for the more than 2,200 Falashmura that have returned to Israel from Ethiopia over the past few months.
- Pray for the 4,000 Falashmura who yet are to return; pray for their safety, while they are still in Ethiopia or Sudan.
- Give thanks that we are involved in this return, through intercession and by paying for air fares. This in co-operation with Keren Hayesod.
- Pray also for the return of the B'nei Menasheh from Northern India. More than 6,000 of them are hoping to return in the coming years.
- Thank God that we are also involved in this return, in co-operation with Michael Freund's organization 'Shavei Israel'. This is a privilege.
- Pray and give thanks for the return of Jews from Western countries. Highly motivated, they feel they belong in Israel.
- Pray and give thanks for the Jews who are returning from Russia, Ukraine and other former Soviet republics.
- Pray and give thanks for Koen and Ina Carlier, our field workers in Ukraine. Who in co-operation with the Jewish Agency and Ebenezer International put in a lot of work: informing Jews about Israel, helping to obtain the necessary documents, arranging transport to the Israeli embassy, and finally to the airport; delivering food parcels to those who for whatever reason are not yet able or willing to depart.

TZAHAL

In Siddur, the Jewish prayer book, is a special prayer for the soldiers of the State of Israel. I pass it on to you, so that you will be able to pray this prayer daily, Such also is the request of the one that mailed this prayer to me.

Mi-Sheberakh

A blessing for the soldiers of the State of Israel

He who blessed our forefathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob will give His blessing to the soldiers of the Israeli Defense Army, who guard our country and the cities of our God, from the Lebanese border to the desert of Egypt and from the Mediterranean to the 'arava, on land, at sea and in the air. May the Eternal One deliver to them in defeat the enemies that stand against us. May Hakadosh-Barukh-Hoe, the Holy One, blessed is He, keep them and safeguard them from all distress and sorrow, from all discomfort and diseases, and may he grant blessing and prosperity in all that they undertake; may He subject our enemies to them and crown their efforts with salvation and victory. To them will be applied what is written: "For the Eternal One, your God, is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you victory!" (Deuteronomy 20:4) Let us say "Amen" to this."

For more than five years Gilad Shalit was held captive - the Israeli soldier that was kidnapped by the terrorist movement Hamas. Meanwhile he has indeed been released.

- Thank God for his release, and pray for comfort and strength for his parents, relatives and friends. To cope with all upcoming emotions.
- Thank God, that the many prayers from all over the world have eventually been heard; that the many actions and campaigns for Gilad have been successful.
- There are hundreds of soldiers who need psychiatric assistance during or after their term of service. They appear to be healthy, but can suddenly go out of control, posing a threat to those around them and to themselves.
- Pray for these soldiers, that they will be surrounded by relatives and friends. For their partners, to be understanding. For the doctors, to give proper care.

- Pray for the soldiers on the basis of these passages from the Psalms - here questions are worded that are on their minds: Psalm 102:2-3, 109:21-22, 119:25-26. 119:169-170.
- Pray for the soldiers on the basis of these Psalm passages and thank God for His tender replies: Psalms 121:7-8, 131:2, 139:17-18, 147:10-11.

JERUSALEM / ISRAEL

Thank God for the manifestations in The Hague, Netherlands on 13 September and in Brussels, Belgium on 19 September; they passed off safely and remarkably. The weather, the speeches, the audio and video, the atmosphere, the proclaiming of God's Word. But also the unanimity in standing for Israel, it was heart-warming. As was the speech by the new Israeli ambassador in The Netherlands, Haim Divon.

- Pray for the new Israeli ambassador to the Netherlands, that he will represent his country in ours with dignity and courage.

In both cities we corporately proclaimed Zephaniah 3:14-20. We believe in the power of the Word of God. God works something through it, both on earth and in heaven. Therefore use the scriptures in this letter during your personal devotions, in prayer meetings and in church. Zephaniah 3:16-17b: *"On that day they will say to Jerusalem : "Do not fear, Zion; do not let your hands hang limp. The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves."*

We do not need to condemn and criticize Israel, the world will take care of that. By the way, Israel makes the same mistakes as other nations, so when we look at them, we see ourselves! Let us encourage and comfort Israel. And if there really is a matter that bothers us or is totally unacceptable as we see it, then let us speak to them about it in private, with an attitude of friendship and respect, realizing in how difficult a position the country finds itself all the time.

A person strong in this respect is Bart Repko. Together with his wife Joke and many others he daily walks the walls of Jerusalem (except on Shabbat). They proclaim the promises from God's Word, loud and clear. Anyone may hear it, from charismatic Christians to orthodox Jews. Should you want to read more about this and learn from it, refer to www.neverbesilent.org.

As you know, Israel is criticized and stigmatized in nearly all news media. And let us be honest, part of the information and of the facts rendered is correct. It is not at all easy to do what Israel has to do for the defense of its borders; an - being democratic as they are - to tolerate people within their borders, who seek to damage and destroy them. Therefore it is good to have good answers at your disposal to critical questions that are put forward in the media or personally to you..

One intercessor telephoned me, saying that she had received the following Scripture passage in a dream: Psalm 46:2-6. It is special, that this passage speaks of God's help and of the City of God. Verse 6b reads: *"God will help her at break of day."* Israel - which is God's people, but also us, God's Church - apparently have to pass through a dark night first. A parallel with the life of Jesus. The sun breaks through: morning comes, resurrection! new life. Verse 7 indicates reality: reality as it was then, reality as it is now. *" Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts."* Compare with Psalms 2 and 83, and other scriptures.

- Pray about the nations in relation to Israel. About their voting policy in the UNO in the coming month, about the voting policy of your own nation. Jerusalem is a cup of wine that send all the nations reeling, Zechariah 12:1-3.

- Pray for the nations in relation to Jerusalem. Pray: "Keep Jerusalem undivided." Pray: *"Spare your people, Lord. Do not make them an object of scorn... among the nations."*

Jerusalem threatens to be divided; the possession of Judea and Samaria is under severe pressure. Therefore I here give some brief, powerful Bible verses to pray for Israel daily.

(Psalm 86:3)	(Psalm 82:8)	(Psalm 131:3)	(Psalm 130:8)
(Psalm 3:9)	(Psalm 25:22)	(Psalm 35:1)	(Psalm 35:22)
(Psalm 56:4-5b)	(Psalm 83:2)	(Psalm 140:2)	(Psalm 125:2)

[For the sake of brevity just the references are given here. Verse numbers may differ slightly.]

- Pray for a good and safe celebration of the festival of Hanukkah, 21-28 December.

PRAYER / CHURCH OF CHRIST

2 Peter 3:1-2

“Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking. I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles.”

2 Peter 1:19-21

“We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”

- Pray that as the Church of Jesus Messiah we will read the prophetic Word. And examine in what prophetic time we are living. Or is it necessary for Peter to write yet a third epistle?

On Thursday 6 October - two days before Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement - in Gouda and Apeldoorn (Netherlands) we had a day of Humbling. The theme was: ‘For the sake of God’s name’. We remembered the sufferings of the Jewish people and the Church in this world for the sake of the name of God, and prayed for redemption and the coming of God’s Kingdom.

The readings were from 2 Chronicles 6:14, 24-25 and 32-33, and 2 Chronicles 7:11-14; from Psalm 44:14-27, and Zechariah 14:9. We prayed from the liturgy of Yom Kippur, from the Jewish prayer-book Siddur.

- Pray that we will stick to this humbling in our personal prayers and in the prayers in the churches.
- Pray for the traumatized soldiers in Israel, for the survivors of terror attacks, for the very aged survivors of the Shoah.
- Pray for the inhabitants of the south of Israel, who are daily living under the threat of rocket attacks from Gaza, never knowing how their day will end.
- Pray for the Christians that are persecuted, especially in the Islamic world. In Iraq, Egypt, Syria, Gazah.

For more information on persecuted Christians see www.opendoors.org (in English).

World-wide, ever more restrictions are being imposed on the expression of personal faith. This affects Christians and Muslims in many countries, but especially Jews. They form less than 1% of the world’s population, but in more than 75 countries are confronted with limitations and harassment.

- Pray for Jewish populations world-wide, for protection and safety, for tolerance and acceptance in the countries where they live.
- Pray that those in charge in the Churches, but also the church members, will recognize the Jews in their country, in their surroundings as their ‘elder brother’.
- Pray on the basis of the Epistle to the Romans, chapters 9 through 11. And thank God for His grace, to them and to us.

The followers of the ‘only begotten son’, that is us, may accept the special place of the ‘first-born son’, the Jews, in our life of faith. And give thanks that they preserved God’s Word and brought forth the Messiah. We belong to each other, whether we understand this or not.

(John 3:16, Exodus 2:22, Ephesians 2:11-22, Romans 3:1-4).