

# On Watch Jerusalem



Christian Friends of Israel

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## Into Thy Hands

*“In you, LORD, I have taken refuge; let me never be put to shame; deliver me in your righteousness. Turn your ear to me, come quickly to my rescue; be my rock of refuge, a strong fortress to save me. Since you are my rock and my fortress, for the sake of your name lead and guide me. Keep me free from the trap that is set for me, for you are my refuge. Into your hands I commit my spirit; deliver me, LORD, my faithful God” (Psalm 31:1-5, NIV).*



*Child at Prayer by Eastman Johnson*

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*As a child, I prayed every night before going to bed, “Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray thee, Lord, my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake, I pray thee Lord, my soul to take.”* It was a ritual and every good Christian child prayed this prayer. I marvel now, at how close it is to Jewish prayer. My very dear friend, and favorite Bible scholar and professor in Israel, Dr. Eli Lizorkin-Eyzenberg (Israel Study Center [[dr.eli@israelstudycenter.com](mailto:dr.eli@israelstudycenter.com)]) in his teaching of the Jewish Jesus, tells us, “If we take the time to compare the original verse Jesus was reciting from Hebrew, a simple, but significant insight into the words of Jesus on the cross will emerge. The Jewish morning begins with the **“Modeh Ani”** (“I thank”) prayer, which expresses the worshiper’s gratitude toward the Heavenly King for returning one’s soul to him or her. The presumption here is that the evening before, the worshiper has entrusted their spirit to the Almighty for safekeeping. Many observant Jews use the phrase, “Into your hands I commit my spirit” (Psalm 31:5) at the end of their evening prayers. What is interesting is that this ritual includes the same verse that Jesus cried out while dying on the cross (Luke 23:46). It is highly likely that in his agony of pain Jesus was reciting this Psalm from memory as He faced the greatest challenge of His incarnate life. The Hebrew word which was translated as “I commit” is (**afkid**). This word has a meaning that is much closer to **“I deposit”**, which necessarily signifies a future **“reclaiming”** of the thing deposited. A vivid image might be that of checking in a coat at the theater or restaurant, or even

putting money into the bank, with the definite intention of getting it back. While the English word “commit” can also be used to describe giving something in with the purpose of claiming it back at some point in the future – it might just as well mean the giving of something without stating clear intentions for the future. In Hebrew, on the other hand, the unequivocal meaning of this verse is the temporary submission of one’s spirit into the hands of God, into “His custody”, with the definite intention of receiving it back. This of course makes perfect sense that Jesus would quote this psalm in particular, while hanging on a Roman cross. The words Jesus uttered were nothing less than a declaration of His great Israelite faith that as He deposits His soul into the hands of His Heavenly Father, He will surely get it back at His resurrection from the dead. What happened three days later proved that Jesus did not hope in vain.

# It's Time to Pray for Israel



One of the most heartbreaking divisions today is the holy conundrum, or problem, of the firestorm of condemnations and recriminations that erupted recently "...after the indefinite suspension of the Western Wall agreement to formally recognize an egalitarian... (which relates to believing in the principle that all people are equal and deserve equal rights and opportunities) prayer section (at the Wall), it is easy to lose sight of the reality on the ground at the holy site today." (Jeremy Sharon, Religious Affairs). The men and women's sections remain exactly as they were, prayer will continue, all Jews of every stripe and denomination will continue to be able to visit and pray at the site, but not egalitarian prayer. The Women of the Wall prayer group will continue, but efforts to read from a Torah scroll will be blocked. Although it may seem trivial to us as Christians, to squabble over such a matter, I recently received a letter from a member of my family who proceeded to tell me that the Methodist church, in which I grew up, has dissolved, because of disagreements and squabbles among the members of the church. And so, let us pray for our dear Jewish people to find a way in which everyone can beseech and implore the God of Israel, from the depths of his or her heart, wherever they are from and whoever they may be and that joy and gladness at the Wall, will return. I look forward to the day when the Temple Mount will be, **"... these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations"** (Isaiah 56:7, NIV).

- **Praise God** for the three times a day, when the Jewish soul cries out to God. Oh, that the "church" in the nations would be so faithful to pray as the Jewish people do, and also unceasingly, in the spirit. **"As for me, I will call upon God; and the LORD shall save me. Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud and He shall hear my voice"** (Psalm 55:16-17, NKJV).
- **Thank the Lord** that Jewish youth today are searching and wanting the Scriptures. **"When I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know; for God is for me"** (Psalm 56:9, KJV).
- **Praise the Lord** that the God of Israel is faithful to hear the prayers of His People and that He gives ear to those who call unto Him for help. **"Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth"** (Psalm 54:2, KJV).
- **Beseech the Lord** for the safety of IDF soldiers who twenty-four hours a day, guard and keep watch over all borders of Israel, as Israel's enemies surrounding them stand with weapons drawn. **"The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords"** (Psalm 55:21).
- **Praise the Lord God** that His Promises to Israel will stand alongside of His Eternal Covenant with them. His mercy and grace, are the same with them, as it is with us, and when we all trust in Him and our faith is strong, then God will hide us in the secret place of the Most High, as He comes between evil and us, shielding us from all harm and danger. When future calamities and conflict come here (or with each of us in our lives), it is truth that will prevail. God will help us in our times of need and save us from those who would devour, rob and steal from us. Thank God He loves Israel with a passionate and enduring love and His Word is perfectly true. **"...yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be over past. I will cry unto God most High, unto God that performeth all things for me. He shall send from heaven, and save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up..."** (Psalm 57:1b-3).

Wherever we are at this moment, in Europe, America, the Far East, in South American countries or around the world, the God of Israel loves us. We must love what He loves. God loves His Chosen People and we need to continue to fix our hearts, through prayer, song and praise, on all of His Promises for the Nation of Israel. Standing against the tide of anti-Semitism and as Christians, look straight to Yeshua (Jesus), as one day soon, He will return. In the meantime, be sure to “commit your spirit” into the Hands of God when you go to sleep, fully expecting that the “deposit” you have made will be “returned” to you in the morning when you awaken. Knowing Hebrew is wonderful, be sure to go back and reread the “*Modeh Ani*”. You will be blessed.

Watching for His Coming,

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