



February 2019 / Jewish Year 5779

A National Remembrance of God

“When you come to the Land, you shall plant fruit trees” (Leviticus 19:23). “When, in making war against a town in order to capture it, you lay siege to it for a long time, you are not to destroy its trees, cutting them down with an axe. You can eat their fruit, so don’t cut them down... After all, are the trees in the field human beings, so that you have to besiege them too? However, if you know that certain trees provide no food, you may destroy them and cut them down....” (Deuteronomy 20:19-20, CJB; Psalm 1:3, CJB).



January was the month for Tu B'Shvat, which is a Jewish holiday occurring on the 15th day of the Hebrew month of Shevat. It is also called “Rosh HaShanah La'llanot”, literally “New Year of the Trees.” In contemporary Israel, the day is celebrated as an ecological awareness day, and trees are planted in celebration. (*Wikipedia*). People plant trees for their children and grandchildren. Tu B'Shvat has developed into an ecological holiday that reminds Jewish people of their connection to the earth and to their role as caretakers of the environment. On Tu B'Shvat Jewish people often eat fruits associated with the Holy Land, especially the ones mentioned in the Bible (Torah).

It is now February and the Land of Israel is beginning to bloom with the beautiful almond trees/fruit, which blossom early in the year. The Hebrew word for tree is “etz” and the almond tree reminds all who love Torah (the Jewish Scriptures) of the rods of Moses and Aaron that were given power during the time of the Ten Plagues of Egypt. Their rods were like those of the shepherds watching the flocks of Israel - a symbol of authority. I suppose it could be likened to the admonition in Proverbs 13:24 that if one spares the rod, they will spoil their child. The rod was also employed during the Exodus and the Korach rebellion against Moses. During this lovely day of Tu B'Shvat in Israel, one is encouraged to eat the fruits of the new season. About 30 kinds of fruit are growing at this time. We were pleasantly surprised on this holiday, when a friend stopped by to bring us some home-made chicken soup and Tu B'Shvat bread, made from the fruit of Israel's trees. What a treat. And so gratitude is ensured here in the Land for the Creator, and His Creation, which gave us all of the fruit-bearing trees. **What other nation on earth takes the time to thank God through a one-day remembrance of something great He has done? Only Israel.** This is a taste of the Kingdom to come on earth, right here in Jerusalem. A time when not only the Prince of Peace will have ushered in true peace, when He speaks the Torah (the Law) and it goes forth, but a time to be grateful for the many things God has done for us. We will have an eternity to thank God for everything. It is such a joy to live in this Land.

Together in the Spirit of Prayer: Let us Pray!

Since Tu B'Shvat is a time of thanking God – even though Israel is facing great danger from Iran – we must turn to the Holy Scriptures and rejoice with God, our Savior and Lord, that He has told us the end of the story. While we are in the middle of end time events all around us, we can laugh as the Proverbs 31 woman because she knew God would destroy Israel's enemies in the end. Hannah rejoiced also because she knew what the Scrolls told her, that God was in control and would destroy the enemies of Israel. Therefore, in the midst of serious times, let us rejoice in God because it is HE that is carrying out His Word and His Promises for all the world to see He is GOD!!

- **Pray and thank God** for the Prime Minister of Israel who has many burdens on his shoulders. The nation of Iran has said “The hour of Israel's destruction draws Nigh” (*Israel Today*, January 22, 2019). **“I have heard the insults of Moab and the taunts of the Ammonites, who insulted my people and made threats against their land” (Zephaniah 2:8, NIV).**
- **Pray Fervently** for the leadership of Israel to make every decision based upon how God is leading. Prime Minister Bibi Netanyahu boldly proclaims, “Bring It On” (*Israel Today*, January 22, 2019). He knows the Holy Scriptures and that the Protector of Israel has promised to keep Israel night and day: **“He that keepeth Israel shall never slumber nor sleep. Indeed, the Protector of Israel does not slumber or sleep” (Psalm 121:3,4, CSB).**
- **Intercede** for a latter day outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Ruach HaKodesh) in Israel. The prophet Joel has spelled out exactly what will take place in Israel in the end times. **“And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions” (Joel 2:28, NIV).** Let us always remember that along with God wanting to revive His People from the nations, He also wants to revive His Chosen People. What a glorious day that will be!
- **Thank God** that He speaks through His Word to the world. **“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15, NIV).**
- **Rejoice in God's Word** which never changes. Never diminish or take lightly what is called the “Old” Testament by Christianity. It is the Eternal Word of God that never changes.
- **Thank Him** for His Plan for His Coming Kingdom on earth. **“Who can speak and have it happen if the Lord has not decreed it?” (Lamentations 3:37, NIV).**
- **Be Joyous and Thankful** that His Promises are all coming to pass, every jot and tittle. The rejoicing should be in our hearts that we need not fear sudden changes, destruction, nor end time plagues. Faith will take us through the severest of circumstances and will make our faith even more rock solid in Him. The days ahead should only develop our faith and make it stronger. Hallelujah! **“And again it is said, “Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people” (Romans 15:10, ESV). Also Jeremiah 31:7.**

As we all stand at our posts and “watch,” looking for His Coming, let us rejoice in the truth that faith believes God's Promises for Israel, and for the Nations. Please pray for all the nations who are making decisions whether to stand with Israel and bring their embassies to Jerusalem, and for those who are stubborn and rebelling against God and His Chosen People. Pray for eyes to be opened, hearts to be changed, and for Israel's coming redemption. *We all play a part.*

Watching for His Coming,

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