

Isaiah 62 Prayer letter
March 2017

Dear friends,

The Book of Judges records an amazing breakthrough in Israel during the days of Deborah and Barak. Israel was under severe harassment from Canaanite tribes which fought under the leadership of King Sisera. For 20 years their marauding bands, armed with 900 iron chariots, had tormented the people of Israel. The Israelites became a nation under constant threat of terror in their villages and highways from Sisera's forces. Even the walled cities of Israel were not safe anymore. Deborah describes this national crisis:

*The highways were deserted,
And the travellers walked along the byways.
Village life ceased, it ceased in Israel...
They chose new gods;
Then there was war in the gates;
Not a shield or spear was seen among forty thousand in Israel. (Judges 5:6-8)*

The people feared travelling on the main streets and were forced to use rocky paths on the hillsides. Villagers no longer felt secure and fled to the walled cities. Yet in all their troubles, Israel would not turn to the Lord God; rather they tried out new gods and consequently the battle even reached the gates of the major Israeli towns. It was a time of fear and despair, when the people had given up hope.

That is... "Until I, Deborah, arose, arose a mother in Israel" (Judges 5:7). This day became a great game-changer for the entire nation. Like the sound of a trumpet, her voice rang throughout the countryside. It was a wake-up call for Barak ("Arise, Barak" – Judges 5:12) and for all of Israel to say: 'Enough is enough!' To say: 'We will return to the Lord and will trust again in His help. We want to free our highways again and make our villages safe again.' And then the Lord fought for Israel. Sisera and the Canaanite armies were soundly defeated in one single battle. King Sisera was single-handedly overpowered by Yael, a simple woman who dwelt in a tent. And the land had rest for forty years.

This account still speaks to us today. What are the highways and the villages of our days? In most of the Western world, the highways – the mainstream of our countries – were characterized for generations by biblical values regarding our families, morals, personal freedoms and so much more. Yet today, Christian values are not considered mainstream any longer. Governments and scholars speak openly about the post-Christian era. Many European bureaucrats forcibly declare that Europe is NOT a Christian club. Christian life is being pushed back within the safe walls of churches. Even worse, the battle today is being carried to the gates of our Christian institutions, as we saw here in Israel just a few years ago when a Christian community faced a court order for refusing to cater towards a same-sex marriage. Much more could be said about this in most of our Western countries. It is once again a time for Deborah; a time for the Church to arise!

You might also feel under assault on a personal level in your family, church, business or individually. The enemy might harass and torment you as he did with ancient Israel. Let me call upon you today, to make this day – even as you read these lines – a day of decision. Arise! Rise up and declare: 'Enough is enough!' We must take the battle back to the gates.

In Deborah's time, Israel arose and "and down to the gates the people marched" (Judges 5:11). Fear was replaced with faith in a God who was fighting from heaven on their behalf (Judges 5:4ff & 20ff). Deborah rejoiced as "the people of the Lord marched down for me against the mighty" (v. 5:13).

The most powerful weapon that God has given to us is prayer. Today, as we gather in our prayer groups, let us draw a spiritual line in the sand and declare: "Enough is enough!" Today is the day when we arise and take the battle back to the gate. Our calling is "to possess the gates of the enemy" (Genesis 22:17), and not that our gates are harassed by our foes. Jesus himself assures us that "the gates of hell shall not overcome us" (Matthew 16-18 – NASB).

Recently, we have been seeing powerful answers to prayer. Just within the past year, three of our international leaders for the ICEJ (including myself) have experienced miraculous healings contrary to all the predictions of our doctors. But we placed our trust in the Lord who teaches our hands to fight in the day of battle (Psalm 18:31ff), and many of you have been fighting with us.

Let us, therefore, join hands together and turn this Isaiah 62 prayer day into a day of victory, as we declare God's purposes for Israel, as well as for our nation, our church and our families. Let us pray with boldness and together carry out great exploits.

Please let us know if you have experienced a breakthrough or if you need prayer support in your situation. I look forward to hearing great reports of victory from you!

May the Lord bless you out of Zion!

Dr. Jürgen Bühler
ICEJ President

PRAYER POINTS FOR March 2017

The next day of prayer and fasting in our Isaiah 62 Global Prayer Campaign will be on Wednesday, 1st of March 2017.

Please pray with us in the following areas of need:

1) Pray for Israel.

Israel is enjoying a renaissance in its relations with several African countries which were strong in the early 1950's and 60's. Following Israel's victories in the 1967 and 1973 wars, defeated Arab governments put pressure on African countries to sever these ties, but in recent years things have begun to turn around again. This even includes Afriel for the first time ever. Meanwhile, Israel is finding tremendous new opportunities in Asia with great economic and diplomatic potential.

Pray with us for Israel's relations with the many African nations who express a desire to re-connect and expand ties with Israel. Pray that the hearts of African leaders are moved to open new doors for Israel and to strengthen Christian support for Israel in those nations. (Psalm

22:28) Also pray specifically for the governmental and religious leaderships of Niger and the Ivory Coast, both nations which we have been dealing with lately on important matters, that God would direct their decision-making and stir in them a greater desire to connect with and bless Israel.

Also pray for Israel's recent efforts to 'pivot' to Asia, including the many economic, security, hi-tech and diplomatic opportunities now presenting themselves.

Please pray for both the physical and spiritual restoration of Jerusalem, and bless the Body of Messiah in Israel. (Ezekiel 36:24-36; Jeremiah 31; Hosea 6:1-2; Galatians 6:10)

2) Pray for the Middle East.

The endless conflict in Syria poses a growing threat to Israel's safety, such as an increased Iranian military presence on Israel's northern border and greater threat from the Lebanese Shi'ite terror militia Hezbollah. Sunni jihadist groups, including ISIS affiliates, also have targeted Israel from the north and more recently in the south from the Egyptian Sinai. At the same time, there are quiet developments regarding humanitarian assistance reaching southern Syria that holds great promise for Israel going forward.

Pray for Israel's security, both in the south and on the Golan Heights in the north, an area that borders with war-torn Syria; that the threat posed by ISIS and other Islamist militias would continue to be held at bay. (Psalm 94:22) Pray for the wounded Syrians being treated in Israeli hospitals, and for the villages in southern Syria now receiving humanitarian assistance through caring Israelis.

Pray for Arab and Islamic nations to cooperate more closely with Israel for their own benefit, and to accept Israel as a neighbor and partner in the region. (Isaiah 19:23-25)

Pray for the move of the Holy Spirit that is being reported throughout the Middle East, that multitudes living in darkness and despair would come to find hope and peace in Jesus Christ. (Isaiah 49:6-9)

3) Pray for the ministry of the ICEJ.

Pray for our continuing efforts to bring home the last of the Ethiopian Jewish community to Israel. Around two thousand families still need to be transported from Gondar and other regions to Addis Ababa and then flown to Israel over the next few years. The ICEJ has already paid for the first year of flights but delays and hindrances arise from time to time which set back the schedule and prolong the separation and suffering for these families. Pray that they would be kept safe from harm until they are able to fly to Israel, that there would be no more obstacles and delays in their coming, and that they would easily adjust to their new lives in Israel. Pray with Zephaniah 3:10.

Praise the Lord for being faithful and always providing for the needs of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem during our nearly four decades of existence as a ministry. Pray with us for continued and even expanded provision for the many initiatives the Lord is giving us to touch Israeli lives in His name. Pray with Psalm 105:1-4.

Pray for our upcoming Feast of Tabernacles 2017 celebration in Jerusalem, that the Lord would draw believers from all over the earth and open the way for them to attend the Feast. Pray that God's presence and blessing would be over the Feast mightily this year. Pray according to Psalm 84:4-7.