

### The Dark Time For Israel

*"Judah has gone into captivity, under affliction and hard servitude; she dwells among the nations, she finds no rest; all her persecutors overtake her between the straits." (Lamentations 1:3)*

History has shown a pattern of death and destruction that has befallen the Jewish people during the three-week period known as *Between the Straits* or *The Dark Time*, the period between Tammuz 17 and Av 9. On the 17th of Tammuz, the walls of both the First and Second Temples were breached and both Temples were destroyed three weeks later on the 9th of Av.

#### *The Dark Time*

falls during the hottest period of the summer when the heat can be compared to the inferno that consumed both former Temples.

This year, the Dark Time falls on Saturday, July 20 to Saturday, August 11, 2019. It's interesting that the current weather in Israel is very, very hot and dry, reminiscent of the time during which both former Temples were destroyed as well as many other tragedies that happened to the Jewish people at that time of year. Today, Israel is facing imminent wars, both from the north (Lebanon and Hezbollah, Syria, Iran) and from the south (Gaza and Hamas), as "a flaming fire, consuming on all sides". Will Israel be 'between the straits' once again?

One synagogue reading for the day is:

*"In blazing anger He has cut down all the might of Israel; He has withdrawn His right hand in the presence of the foe; He has ravaged Jacob like flaming fire, consuming on all sides." (Lamentations 2:3)*

The Midrash [a Jewish Bible commentary] states that G-d marked the 9th of Av as a day of catastrophe because it is the day the 'spies' returned from the land of Canaan and gave an evil report (Numbers 13). Because they wept without cause on that day, G-d made it an eternal day of mourning. Some other tragic events that occurred on that day were:

- Rome began the construction of a pagan city dedicated to their god, Jupiter, on the site of the Temple in 136 AD.
- The first crusades began in 1096. The crusades were authorized by the church to reclaim the Promised Land for G-d. On their way to Jerusalem, the crusaders murdered entire villages of Jews 'in the name of Jesus'
- The Jews were expelled from England in 1290, from France in 1306, and from Spain in 1492
- World War I began

On Shavuot, G-d came down onto Mt. Sinai in fire and smoke to speak with the Israelites and give them His Law. The Israelites were terrified and told Moses to go find out what G-d wanted, bring back G-d's word to them, and they would listen. So Moses climbed Mt. Sinai to meet with G-d and returned forty days later on the 17th of Tammuz, only to find the Israelites worshipping a golden calf.

The Zohar, a 13th century mystical text, predicted that in messianic times the world would witness a great fiery plume streaking through space, striking a large planet three times daily and sending out great flashes of light in all directions (from the Jewish News of Greater Phoenix, July 29, 1994).□ Beginning on the 9th of Av, 1994 (July 16) and lasting seven days, 21 fragments from the comet Shoemaker-Levy smashed into the planet Jupiter. This phenomenon ended on July 22, the 15th of Av on the Hebrew calendar, a special day of celebration and rejoicing following *The Dark Time*.

*The Shoemaker-Levy comet striking Jupiter, a Roman G-d, on the 9th of Av could be a sign that demonstrates the nearness of the coming of the L-rd.*

The spectacular, momentous physical manifestation of G-d on Shavuot was followed by a 40-day period of total absence, not only by G-d; but by His servant Moses as well. This 40-day period following Shavuot is marked by a sense of loss and abandonment. Then follows a 21-day period of great mourning for having forsaken G-d during this period of testing.

- **G-d Manifest on Shavuot**
- **Moses (and G-d) absent for 40 days**
- **Moses returns to idolatry in the camp on Tammuz 17**
- **21 days of mourning (17th Tammuz to the 9th of Av)**

The months of Tammuz and Av are low points in the Hebrew calendar. Destruction and abandonment are recurring themes of this period. The book of Lamentations is read as well as scriptures from Jeremiah describing the destruction of Jerusalem. In fact, on Tisha b'Av (9th of Av), a full kaddish (prayer for the dead) is recited.

Following Tisha b'Av, there are seven weeks of prophetic consolation from the gloom of *The Dark Time* through the month of Elul to full return to G-d on Yom Kippur on Tishri 10.

### 7 Weeks Of Consolation

9th of Av (Tisha b'Av) <-----> to 10th of Tishri (Yom Kippur)

End of Mourning --Israel Forgiven for Idolatry

The theme of the month of Elul is repentance and renewal, a process of courtship between Israel and G-d. The Hebrew letters for the word Elul are said to be an acronym for the phrase *A ni le-dodi ve-dodi li*, meaning, "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine", referring to G-d and Israel. For 40 days, from Elul 1 to Tishri 10, G-d and Israel rediscover each other. On Yom Kippur, it is said that Israel was forgiven for the golden calf incident.

*"Truly the L-rd has comforted Zion, comforted all her ruins; He has made her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the Garden of the L-rd. Take us back, O L-rd, to Yourself, and let us come back; Renew our days as of old!" (Isaiah 51:3; Lamentations 5:21)*

The Bible predicts that the rebuilt Third Temple will be destroyed and Jerusalem ransacked. It would not be unreasonable to assume it could happen during *The Dark Time* on a future date. Ultimately, though, the L-rd promised to turn Israel's days of mourning into days of great joy.

## Between The Straits - Israel 2019?

Written by Victoria Radin

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*"The fast of the fourth month (Tammuz 17), the fast of the fifth (Av 9), the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall be joy and gladness and cheerful feasts for the house of Judah...." (Zechariah 8:19)*

As we approach the return of the L-rd and at a time when Israel is facing the imminent threat of war, "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem."

*"May they prosper who love you. Peace be within your walls, prosperity within your palaces." (Psalm 122:6, 7)*

Barukh Ha Shem (Blessed is the Name of the L-rd)